**Instructional Context:**

The 2010 and 2011 West Virginia Language Leaper STARTALK programs provided elementary students an opportunity to participate in a two-week space-themed/fantasy summer camp that allowed the travelers to learn Chinese language and culture with the help of their space captains (instructors) and an alien puppet named Nomi. In the process of traveling with Nomi and completing specific space missions, the students gained an opportunity to discover themselves and how they connect to our world. In the program students start each day at the launching pad (gym) and prepare for their rigorous day by performing Chinese Radio exercises. The students then follow their captains to their individual spaceships (classrooms) and blast off into space through a fantasy experience while learning through content-related instruction in Chinese. Each day the participants experience three media-based space adventures conducted at varies times throughout the day. Periodically, the students return to earth (China) for refueling breaks, intensive integrated and connected Chinese culture activities, Chinese-themed lunches and children’s recess games. Students are be able to reflect daily upon what they have learned using their Mission Journals (adapted LinguaFolio Jr. self-assessment tool).

**Sample Plan:**

The STARTALK unit featured in this description was implemented during the 2010 program. An overarching theme titled “Exploring China and Our World Around Us” served as the umbrella unifier. The introductory unit for that program was titled “All About Me & My Friends in Our World”. This initial unit provided the entry point for students to engage in the program.

After developing the theme for the initial unit, the learning objectives were identified. In completing this task, direct “I can” statements taken from the NCSSFL Five States LinguaFolio Jr. model were utilized to identify the broad learning objectives for the unit. In thinking about the introductory nature of the unit theme, learning objectives like: *students can greet people in a polite way* and *students can talk about things they like and dislike*, emerged as logical learning targets. The learning objectives identified for the introductory unit also addressed the three modes of communication (interpersonal, interpretive, and presentational).

Once the broader learning objectives were determined, customized “I can” statements were developed to further contextualize the learning for the program’s young learners. As a result, specific clarifying content was identified for the broader statements. While these clarifying components are not listed with the objective on the unit lesson plan form, they are reflected in the student LF enhancement as represented in the Language Leaper Traveler Mission Journal.

To accompany the fantasy theme of the West Virginia STARTALK program, a Mission Journal (Biography), Passport and Language Capsule (Dossier) were created for students to reflect upon their learning and engage in autonomous self-assessment. The three documents serve as thematic and adapted versions of the NCSSFL LinguaFolio Jr. model.

Embedded within the Mission Journal is a LF enhancement that provides students an opportunity to self-assess their abilities daily during the program. The “Look what I Can Do Today!” pages contains a visual representation that incorporates the Language Leaper character of Nomi. Specifically, students color in the number of heads that corresponds with their current self-assessment of their abilities.