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Final Reflection Paper

Reflecting on my progress throughout this Italian course, I can confidently say that I've grown significantly in my ability to communicate in a new language – especially within the Novice range of the ACTFL proficiency benchmarks. The consistent focus on real-life, everyday topics have helped me gradually build the confidence to understand, produce, and interact in Italian using memorized and increasingly spontaneous phrases. I now feel much more capable of expressing basic information about myself and familiar topics, and I'm able to engage in functional communication across both spoken and written formats.

One of the clearest markers of this growth has been my ability to speak more naturally. I've noticed a real shift during oral exams and classroom interactions – both with classmates and with the professor. These moments have allowed me to put into practice the vocabulary and grammatical structures we've learned in class. According to the ACTFL Novice High benchmarks for presentational communication, learners should be able to present on familiar topics using simple sentences most of the time. I've practiced this skill across a variety of units, describing my daily routine, my hometown, my family, food, clothing, etc. I've also started incorporating transitional phrases and personal expressions like anche, dopo, primo, mi piace, preferisco (and many more) which have helped make my speech and writing sound more fluid and natural.

In terms of interpretive communication, regular exposure to listening and reading activities helped me recognize recurring patterns and develop strategies to understand meaning, even when I didn't know every word. My fluency in Spanish has certainly been a helpful tool in this area, especially when identifying cognates and deciphering context. I now feel comfortable reading short dialogues or descriptions and identifying the main topic and key details – skills that align directly with the ACTFL benchmarks for Novice High interpretive communication.

Interpersonally, I've made steady progress in asking and answering questions. Through in-class partner work, written tasks, and informal class conversations, I've learned to navigate familiar communicative situations – introducing myself, exchanging basic information, and expressing preferences. While I still rely on memorized language in many cases, I'm beginning to form more original sentences, showing signs of moving beyond simply memorization.

This course has also deepened my intercultural awareness. Learning about Italian cities, cuisine, and cultural practices has helped me see how language reflects and reinforces cultural perspectives. I've come to appreciate the ways everyday expressions and customs vary across languages, and this has enhanced both my linguistic and cultural understanding – goals at the heart of ACTFL's intercultural communication benchmarks.

Looking ahead, I hope to expand my vocabulary, develop more control over verb tenses, and speak more fluidly without depending so heavily on a script. Interestingly, the skill I've always felt strongest in with Spanish, writing, has proven the most challenging in Italian. That said, I'm motivated to improve so that I can express myself more clearly in future temi. With continued effort, I'm confident I can keep building on the solid foundation I've gained this semester. I'm especially grateful to have had such a passionate and supportive professor, whose love for the Italian language and culture made every class a joy to attend!