

LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY IS A

December 2022

# SUPERPOWER

**NOW QUALIFIED TO TEACH OVERSEAS**

- **JACQUELINE DICANIO IS ALL SET TO TEACH AT THE DoDEA**
- **TESTING TWICE FOR LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY IN THREE YEARS**
- **FINDING CHILDCARE AND PEACE OF MIND THROUGH LANGUAGE**
- ***AND SO MUCH MORE!***

Jacqueline DiCanio, a secondary language teacher currently teaching a 6th grade World Language exploratory Italian class, has persevered and succeeded in improving her language proficiency. She now has her eyes set on working internationally with the Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA), the government agency responsible for providing prekindergarten through 12th grade educational programs for the Department of Defense (DoD) in the service of military families.



Having worked in public high schools, Jacqueline has experienced first-hand the importance of multilingual skills since she commands English, Italian, and Spanish. "While teaching in a school with a diverse student body, I can connect with more kids," she has realized. Three years ago, she took the ACTFL OPI® language proficiency assessment in Italian with Language Testing International (LTI) to formally validate and certify her skills, ranking at an Intermediate-High level of proficiency.

With a new career goal in mind, Jacqueline felt confident that her language skills had improved from when she obtained her first language proficiency certification and decided to take the assessment with LTI a second time. "I knew I had grown as a language learner since then, and it ended up being that. In order to be qualified to teach a Language Immersion class with the DoDEA, an ACTFL rating of Advanced High or Superior was required," she explained. So, she scheduled her OPI language proficiency assessment in Italian once again to be validated and considered for overseas teaching opportunities. "I also think it is important to demonstrate to potential international employers that you've taken steps to prove your capabilities. Certain opportunities are exclusive solely to those who are multilingual," she added.

Jacqueline succeeded! She received a Superior Italian Speaking Proficiency digital badge via Credly. Now, she is able to further her career as an educator and apply for teaching positions available in the DoDEA's 160 schools located in eight districts covering eleven countries, seven states within the U.S., and two U.S. territories across ten time zones, becoming part of a team of more than 8,000 educators. DoDEA students are dependents of active-duty military members, including military reservists and National Guard members who are activated for more than a year or reside in permanent living quarters on a military installation.

What Jacqueline appreciated the most about the ACTFL language proficiency tests are the handbooks that are provided for the examinee to know the process in detail and what is expected of them at each level. This resource allowed her to conduct a self-evaluation of where she stood linguistically, while also providing a sense of what the interview with the language proficiency tester would be like. "During the interview, the first few questions are good 'warm up' questions to help get your brain into the right linguistic setting. The interviewer helps get your gears turning before bringing up the questions and scenarios that require a higher-order response," she shared.



In her personal life, Jacqueline was able to hire a young woman who had immigrated from Guatemala as a babysitter three months before she started watching her children. Her language proficiency in Spanish afforded them the ability to conduct the interview in Spanish and it paid off. "She was the most reliable and trustworthy babysitter I had for my kids. Each day, when I came home from work, we would talk to each other until she got picked up. Myself, as well as my kids, learned a lot of Spanish and gained a family friend," Jacqueline expressed gratefully.