

Best Practices of Teaching Foreign Language

Teachers of Foreign Language **provide the skills** necessary for proper understanding and use of a language different than their own.

Critical Elements – Evidence of all elements must be present within the instruction and learning of foreign language in order to be considered standards based.

- Listening – understanding the complexities of sound in a foreign language
- Reading – comprehending the written form of a foreign language
- Writing – compose works in another language
- Speaking – communicate using a foreign language
- Culture – understanding others

Listening

Students listen to students, teachers and others to improve comprehension of a target language.

- Emphasize use target language within class between teacher and student.
- Use a wide variety of listening comprehension activities.
- Use of pre-recorded language tools to introduce a variety of voices of the target language.
- Student-generated communicative activities.
- Introduction of target language within the community.
- Use of proficiency-based assessments with accompanying rubrics.
- Increased use of frequent proficiency-based listening assessments.
- Use of computer technology to improve listening comprehension.
- Study of the cultural context in which the language is being spoken and the idiomatic use of language.
- Listening as a means to obtain information or to comprehend feelings and opinions.
- Listening activities as a means of practicing grammar and vocabulary.

Reading Ability

Students learn to read and comprehend a target language.

- Frequent introduction of reading in the target language into the classroom activities.
- Introduction of a variety of reading materials.
- Variety of pre-reading activities to stimulate interest and comprehension.
- Variety of reading techniques.
- Variety of culminating activities and/or assessments.
- Importance of vocabulary study and learning in context: study and recognition of cognates.
- Selection of reading topics to generate student interest.

Writing

Students learn to write effectively and correctly in a target language.

- Frequency of writing practices in the target language.
- Variety of writing samples.
- Grammar used in context as a means to communicate effectively.
- Use and study of transition words.
- Good writing and organizational skills.
- Use of variety of directed writing activities.
- Writing for communication and comprehension.
- Use of standardized rubric to improve writing.
- Use of first drafts in the writing process to improve overall vocabulary, grammar and style.
- Frequency of writing assessments.
- Study of spelling patterns in the target language to facilitate correct writing practices.
- Writing as a communicative skill.
- Original writing as a means to practice new vocabulary and grammatical structures.
- Use of technology to enhance writing – both as a developmental process and as a means to provide a variety of formats.

Speaking Skills

Students learn to communicate effectively through the use of a target language.

- Use of target language in the classroom by both teacher and students.
- Variety of speaking activities.
- Frequency of opportunities for the students to speak the target language.
- Strategies to encourage students to communicate in the target language.
- Correct pronunciation and intonation of target language.
- Providing a cultural perspective to the spoken language and the community/communities in which it is spoken.
- Comparisons of target language and English.
- Comparison of formal vs. idiomatic/conversational language.
- Use of a standardized rubric to improve speaking.
- Speaking as a communicative skill.
- Providing opportunities for different levels of speaking activities.

Culture

Students learn about other cultures through listening, reading and writing.

- The importance of the connection between language and culture.
- The study of the many locations where the target language is spoken throughout the world.
- Opportunities to appreciate and experience the contexts in which the language occurs.
- Role of “Little C” culture.
- Comparisons of cultures to provide connections, contrasts, and understanding.
- Use of current events and history to provide connections to other disciplines.

- The study of the practices and perspectives of the foreign culture.
- The study of the products of the foreign culture.

"Big C" culture is the study of "formal" culture which includes the knowledge of the formal institutions (social, political, and economic), the great figures of history, and those products of literature, fine arts, and the sciences that are traditionally assigned to the category of elite culture.

"Little C" culture is study of "daily life" culture which includes those aspects of daily living studied by the sociologist and the anthropologist: housing, clothing, food, tools, transportation, and all the patterns of behavior that members of the culture regard as necessary and appropriate.