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**FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING AND LEARNING IN THE 21ST CENTURY: BASIC ASPECTS**

Language and communication are at the heart of the human experience. Regardless of the reason for study the language, and we should admit that the reasons are as diverse as the students who study them; foreign languages have something to offer everyone.

Linguists have marked five goal areas that encompass all of the reasons: Communication, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons, and Communities. These standards describe the content of world languages learning and form the core of standards-based instruction in the world languages classroom. They do not describe the current status of foreign language education; rather, provide a gauge against which to measure improvement in the years to come. They, in a way, define what is to be learned at certain points of time, and from a broad perspective, what performances will be accepted as evidence that the learning has occurred.

The first standard is Communication. The communication standard stresses the use of language for communication in “real life” situations. It emphasizes “what students can do with language” rather than “what they know about language”. Students are asked to communicate in oral and written form, interpret oral and written messages, and show cultural understanding when they communicate and present oral and written information to various audiences for a variety of goals.

The teacher or the language supervisor in this case mind three paths for successful managing the learning process. The first is the Interpersonal Communication where the students are engaged in conversation, provided with the information, they individually express feelings and emotions, and exchange their opinions. The second one is the Interpretive Communication which implies that students understand and interpret written and spoken language on a variety of topics. And the last one is the Presentational Communication meaning that students present information, concepts and ideas to an audience of listeners or readers on a variety of topics.

The second standard is Culture.Cultural understanding is an important part of world languages education. Experiencing other cultures develops a better understanding and appreciation of the relationship between languages and other cultures, as well as the student's native culture. Students become better able to understand other people's points of view, ways of life, and contributions to the world.

There are two perspectives to this approach the foreign language teachers and educators should bear in mind. The first is known as Practices and Perspective. It implies students to demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between the practices and perspectives of the culture studied. It focuses on the practicesthat are derived from the traditional ideas and perspectives of a culture. Cultural practices refer to patterns of behavior accepted by a society and deal with aspects of culture such as rites of passage, the use of forms of discourse, the social “pecking order,” and the use of space.

The second alternative – Products and Perspectives – foresees that the students demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between the products and perspectives of the culture studied. It focuses on the productsof the culture studied and on how they reflect the attitudes of the culture. Products may be tangible or intangible. Whatever the form of the product, its presence within the culture is required or justified by the underlying beliefs and values of that culture, and the cultural practices involve the use of that product.

The third standard is Connections.World languages instruction must be connected with other subject areas. Content from other subject areas is integrated with world language instruction through lessons that are developed around common themes. The mentioned standard is presented in two measurements. They are 1) Knowledge of Other Disciplines – equips students with the opportunity to reinforce and further their knowledge of other disciplines through the foreign language; 2) Distinctive Viewpoints – in the run of which students acquire information and recognize the distinctive viewpoints that are only available through the foreign language and its cultures.

The fourth standard is Comparisons.Students are encouraged to compare and contrast languages and cultures. They are involved in, so to say, scientific research dealing with foreign languages. They discover patterns, make predictions, and analyze similarities and differences across languages and cultures. Students often come to understand their native language and culture better through such comparisons.

The teacher and the students are focused on two respects: 1) Nature of Language – meaning that students demonstrate understanding of the nature of language through comparisons of the language studied and their own; and 2) Culture: students demonstrate understanding of the concept of culture through comparisons of the cultures studied and their own.

And the last standard is Communities.Extending learning experiences from the world language classroom to the home and multilingual and multicultural community emphasizes living in a global society.

This standard is also divided into two subfields.The first **–** Beyond the School Setting – focuses on language as a tool for communication with speakers of the language throughout one’s life. The second – Life-long Learners – substitutes that students show evidence of becoming life-long learners by using the language for personal enjoyment and enrichment.

The discussed above Standards help students and all those willing to acquire a proficiency in foreign language learning better understand the core of foreign languages in a nutshell regardless of the reason to study them but to be psychologically and linguistically equipped for living in a contemporary pluralistic society, thus, to feel ease and comfort being the part of the world community.