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STANDARDS FOR FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING AND LEARNING IN THE 21ST CENTURY

Summary. This article highlights the issue of learning, teaching and studying foreign languages from the perspective of present-day trends in the field of language education. It provides the general overview of the key goal areas of acquiring the foreign language proficiency regardless of the reasons to study. The content of the five C's of foreign language education i.e. of Communication, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons, and Communities is analyzed helping students to be more conscious of the processes taking place at present in the area of foreign language acquisition.

Key words: foreign language teaching and learning, standards for foreign language education, Communication, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons, Communities, pluralistic society.

Stating a problem. Language and communication are at the heart of the human experience. Today the world community aims in educating students to be linguistically and culturally equipped to communicate successfully in a pluralistic world society. This imperative envisions a future in which all students are to develop and maintain proficiency in foreign languages.

Currently the purposes and uses of foreign languages are as diverse as the students who study them. Some students study another language in hopes of finding a rewarding career in the international marketplace or government service. Others are interested in the intellectual challenge and cognitive benefits that accrue to those who master multiple languages. Still others seek greater understanding of other people and other cultures. Many approach foreign language study, as they do other courses, simply to fulfill a graduation requirement.

The rationale of the article. Regardless of the reason for study, foreign languages have something to offer everyone. It is with this philosophy in mind that the standards task force identified five goal areas that encompass all of these reasons: *Communication, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons, and Communities* are the five C's of foreign language education; they are also known as the Standards for Foreign Language Teaching and Learning [1; 2]. This is, actually, the rationale of the matter in this article to be familiar closer to the content of the five C's of foreign language education.

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 [4; 6].

Overviewing the material. The first standard we are going to speak of 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 [5; 6].

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.

In the light of the mentioned above points we see the need to have a closer look at all of them. Thus, the Interpersonal Communication or Mode is characterized by active negotiation of meaning among individuals. Participants observe and monitor one another to see how their meaning and intentions are being communicated. Adjustments and clarifications can be made accordingly. As a result, there is a higher probability of ultimately achieving the goal of successful communication in this mode than in the other two modes. The Interpersonal Mode is most obvious in conversation, but both the interpersonal and negotiated dimensions can be realized through reading and writing, such as the exchange of personal letters or electronic mail messages.

In its turn the Interpretive Mode is focused on the appropriate cultural interpretation of meanings that occur in written and spoken form where there is no recourse to the active negotiation of meaning with the writer or the speaker. Such instances of "one-way" reading or listening include the cultural interpretation of texts, oral or written, must be distinguished from the notion of reading and listening "comprehension," where the term could refer to understanding a text with a native "English" mindset. Put another way, interpretation differs from comprehension in that the former implies the ability to "read (or listen) between the lines".

Since the Interpretive Mode does not allow for active negotiation between the reader and the writer or the listener and the speaker, it requires a much more profound knowledge of culture from the outset. The more one knows about the other language and culture, the greater the chances of creating the appropriate cultural interpretations of a written or spoken text. It must be noted, however, that cultural literacy and the ability to read or listen between the lines are developed over time and through exposure to the language and culture.

And the latter of the three is the Presentational Mode which refers to the creation of messages in a manner that facilitates interpretation by members of the other culture where no direct opportunity for active negotiation of meaning between members of the two cultures exists. Examples of the “one-way” writing and speaking require a substantial knowledge of language and culture from the outset, since the goal is to make sure that members of the other culture, the audience, will be successful in reading and listening between the lines.

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 [1; 2; 3; 4].

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 practices that 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. In short, they represent the knowledge of “what to do when and where”.

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 products of 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 [3; 5; 6].

The former one – Knowledge of Other Disciplines Learning – considers learning no longer being restricted to a specific discipline; rather, the learning has become interdisciplinary. Students can relate the information studied in other subjects to their learning of the foreign language and culture. Foreign language instruction thus becomes a means to expand and deepen students’ understanding of, and exposure to, other areas of knowledge. The new information and concepts presented in one class become the basis of continued learning in the foreign language classroom.

The latter one – Distinctive Viewpoints – sees the whole process as a unique means of communication i.e. students are able to broaden the sources of information available to them. They have a “new window on the world”. At the early levels of language learning, students can begin to examine a variety of sources

intended for native speakers, and extract specific information. As they become more proficient users of the foreign language, they can seek out materials of interest to them, analyze the content, compare it to information available in their own language, and assess the linguistic and cultural differences.

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 [1; 4; 5; 6].

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.

The first respect is centered on the impact that learning the linguistic elements in the new language has on students’ ability to examine a foreign language and to develop hypotheses about the structure and the use of languages. From the earliest language learning experiences, students can compare and contrast the two languages as different elements are presented. Activities can be systematically integrated into instruction that will assist students in gaining understanding and in developing their abilities to think critically about how languages work.

The second view – Culture – provides students with the opportunity to expand their knowledge of cultures through language learning, they continually discover perspectives, practices, and products that are similar and different from their own culture, and they develop the ability to hypothesize about cultural systems in general. Some students may make these comparisons naturally, others may not. This standard helps focus this reflective process for all students by encouraging integration of this process into instruction from the earliest levels of learning.

And the last standard we are to speak in this article is *Communities*. Extending learning experiences from the world language classroom to the home and multilingual and multicultural community emphasizes living in a global society. Activities may include: field trips, use of e-mail and the World Wide Web, clubs, exchange programs and cultural activities, school-to-work opportunities, and opportunities to hear speakers of other languages in the school and classroom [2; 5; 6].

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: in schools, in the community, and abroad. In schools, students share their knowledge of language and culture with classmates and with younger students who may be learning the language. Applying what has been learned in the language program as defined by the other standards, students come to realize the advantages inherent in being able to communicate in more than one language and develop an understanding of the power of language.

The second – Life-long Learners – substitutes that students show evidence of becoming life-long learners by using the language for personal enjoyment and enrichment. Each day almost everyone spends leisure time reading, listening to music, viewing films and television programs, and interacting with each other. By developing a certain level of comfort with their new language, students can use these skills to access information as

they continue to learn throughout their lives. Students studying a language can use their skills to further enrich their personal lives by accessing various entertainment and information sources available to speakers of the language. Some students may have the opportunity to travel to communities and countries where the language is used extensively and, through this experience, further develop their language skills and understanding of the culture.

Conclusions. To sum up, 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.

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Гринюк С. П. Стандарти викладання й вивчення іноземних мов у XXI столітті

Анотація. У статті висвітлюються питання, пов’язані з навчанням, викладанням і вивченням іноземних мов, враховуючи сучасні тенденції, які мають місце в галузі іншомовної освіти. Стаття пропонує загальний огляд ключових складових, необхідних для оволодіння іноземною мовою, незалежно від цілі її вивчення. У статті аналізується зміст п’яти «С’s» іншомовної освіти, а саме: Communication (спілкування), Cultures (культура), Connections (взаємодія), Comparisons (порівняння) та Communities (спільноти), які сприятимуть більш свідомому розумінню процесів, які нині відбуваються в галузі іншомовної освіти.

Ключові слова: викладання й навчання іноземної мови, стандарти іншомовної освіти, спілкування, культура, взаємодія, порівняння, спільнота, плюралістичне суспільство.

Гринюк С. П. Стандарти преподавания и изучения иностранных языков в XXI веке

Аннотация. Статья освещает вопросы касательно обучения, преподавания и изучения иностранных языков с точки зрения современных тенденций в области иностранной филологии. Статья предлагает общий обзор ключевых компонентов, необходимых для освоения иностранного языка, независимо от цели его изучения. В статье анализируется содержание пяти «С’s» иностранного языка, а именно: Communication (коммуникация), Cultures (культура), Connections (взаимодействие), Comparisons (сравнение) и Communities (сообщество), которые будут способствовать более осознанному пониманию процессов, которые происходят сегодня в области иностранного образования.

Ключевые слова: преподавание и изучение иностранного языка, стандарты иностранного образования, коммуникация, культура, взаимодействие, сопоставление, сообщество, плюралистическое общество.