

Checklist for Observing Foreign Language Instruction for Secondary School Students*

1. Instructional Management

- The teacher makes clear to students that they are learning to use language in the real world.
- Instructional units have real-world language performance goals.
- Learning experiences address different communicative modes aligned with curricular, unit, and lesson objectives; (Interpersonal, interpretive, and presentational skills; also listening, speaking, reading, and writing.)
- The various parts of the lesson connect in a coherent way, building toward increased ability to understand or express meaning on a given topic or theme.
- Instructional plans incorporate opportunities to use previously acquired language in a variety of contexts.
- Instructional plans provide evidence for students to learn that language and culture are inextricably linked.
- The physical environment of the classroom reflects the language and cultures studied.

2. Language Use

- The teacher uses the target language almost exclusively and encourages the students to do so as well.
- The teacher uses a variety of strategies to make language comprehensible.
- The teacher avoids the use of translation by using verbal and non-verbal strategies such as circumlocution, body language, and visuals.
- The teacher demonstrates advanced proficiency in both the target language and English.

3. Learning Experiences

- The teacher uses visuals, concrete objects, hands-on experiences, and context to present and practice new vocabulary.
- Grammar is taught as a tool for communication. It is not the focus or the goal of the course, unit, or lesson
- The teacher avoids meaningless rote drills, ensuring that all practice is meaning-based.
- The teacher provides frequent, varied classroom opportunities for students to use their language skills to communicate in real world contexts.
- The teacher assures that there is more student talk than teacher talk as student proficiency increases. [There is also more group talk in beginning levels compared to more individual talk as proficiency increases.]
- At every level of instruction, the teacher provides activities that lead toward student autonomy of expression in unrehearsed communication.
- In every class session, the teachers provides pair and/or group activities that engage students in communication for real-world interaction.
- The teacher implements language tasks that frequently incorporate cultural practices, products and/or perspectives.
- The teacher provides opportunities for students to engage in cultural observation and analysis.

4. Assessment

___ Assessments give students valuable feedback on their progress toward the goal of real language use.

___ The teacher measures student language proficiency in a variety of ways that focus on what students can do with the language, not just what they know about it.

___ The teacher gives more weight to performance assessments in grading than to measure of student knowledge about language (i.e. vocabulary and grammar).

___ The teacher conducts formative and summative assessments that measure attainment of unit and lesson objective in terms of language performance and cultural competence.

___ The teacher modifies instructional and assessment strategies as a result of formative and summative assessments.

___ The teacher selects from a repertoire of research-supported feedback strategies that have been shown to improve language performance.

___ The teacher provides opportunities for students to assess their own language performance and cultural competence.

5. Materials

___ The teacher uses a variety of instructional materials to support language-learning objectives.

___ The teacher uses authentic (written by native speakers for native speakers) materials, designing tasks appropriate to the language proficiency of the learners.

___ The teacher incorporates authentic materials that reflect cultural practices, products, and perspectives.

___ The teacher and students use appropriate technology to develop real-world language and cultural competencies.

This list is from *Starting With the End in Mind*, 2008, Pearson School.com/EndInMind, Appendix A.

*It is unlikely that any teacher will meet all of the criteria included in this list. However, each characteristic contributes to highly effective world language teaching and student achievement.