

Middle School Principals' Brief

Second (Foreign) Languages

The Revised Second Language Standard Course of Study and Classroom Applications

The Revised *Second Language Standard Course of Study* was approved by the State Board of Education in November 1999 and went into effect July 1, 2000.

ORGANIZATION OF THE SCOS

The *Second Language Standard Course of Study* lists the goals and objectives for students enrolled in a beginning sequence, continuing sequence and exploratory program. While the goals are the same for students at all levels, the objectives are tailored to meet the needs of students at each stage of language development. For this reason, as students progress from one level to another, they should be working with language which increases in complexity and in length. At all levels, the role of grammar is to facilitate communication.

Beginning Programs: Beginning programs are semester or year-long programs designed for students starting the study of the language for the first time and/or for those who have had minimal language exposure at previous grade levels. The focus of this program is the development of the four skills with special attention given to the listening and speaking skills first. The language of beginners consists mainly of one-word answers, phrases, and language which has been memorized through practice. Students can satisfy their immediate needs and can communicate about things in their immediate environment.

Continuing Programs: Continuing programs are semester or year-long programs which build on the previous study of the target language and its culture as initiated in the elementary or middle school grades. At this level, the focus of instruction is still on the on-going development of the four skills with an emphasis on listening and speaking skills. Based on the amount of time they have spent in the language, students in continuing programs may have the language of the "basic tourist." They may attempt to create and to experiment with the language in familiar contexts.

Exploratory Programs: *Exploratory programs are non-sequential and do not lead to the development of proficiency.* Traditionally these programs last 7 to 9 weeks. The emphasis of exploratory programs is on (a) communication on familiar topics through learned words; (b) pre-reading/writing activities through oral language; (c) connections to the grade level curriculum; (d) awareness of other cultures; (e) comparison of culture and language to the students' own culture and language; and (f) awareness of the importance of learning another language and culture. Classroom instruction may be conducted in the target language or in English.

Second Language Goals

INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION -

The learner will engage in conversation and exchange information and opinions orally and in writing in the target language.

► In beginning and continuing classes, you should see teacher and students using the target language in a variety of interactive and real-life situations involving group and pair work, conversations, questions and answer activities, letters, or e-mail exchanges. Frequent opportunities for interaction in the language, especially with their peers, help students develop oral language proficiency.

* In the exploratory class, you should see students involved in very basic interaction with the teacher and with one another using familiar words and short memorized phrases.

INTERPRETIVE COMMUNICATION -

The learner will understand and interpret written and spoken language on a variety of topics in the target language.

► In the beginning and continuing classes, you should see students listening to or reading a variety of print and non-print materials including some authentic materials such as newspapers, magazines, advertisements, posters, tv, radio, video or live presentations, and adolescent literature.

* In the exploratory class, you should see students listening to selected oral and written directions and commands and demonstrating understanding of familiar words, phrases and sentences related to their personal needs. Less emphasis is placed on the variety of

vocabulary and materials and on the amount of time devoted to the development of listening and reading skills.

PRESENTATIONAL COMMUNICATION -

The learner will present information, concepts, and ideas to an audience of listeners or readers on a variety of topics in the target language.

► In the beginning and continuing classes, you should see students performing songs and skits, presenting poems and speeches, making oral presentations, and reports, composing messages, or retelling stories orally or in writing for a variety of audiences using language which increases in complexity and length.

* In the exploratory class, you should see students presenting short memorized materials such as songs, poetry, and skits. You will also observe them naming and describing briefly people, places, and things using familiar words. Students will probably spend less time in the target language since the goal of the program is not the development of proficiency.

CULTURES - The learner will gain knowledge and demonstrate understanding of the relationship among practices, products, and perspectives of cultures other than his/her own.

► In the beginning and continuing classes, you should see students using appropriate verbal and non-verbal behavior from the target cultures and participating in age-appropriate cultural practices. You should see students examining how the different products, patterns of social interaction, and beliefs and values of the culture influence one another.

* In the exploratory class, you should see students involved in

similar activities more limited in scope.

COMPARISONS - The learner will develop insight into the nature of language and culture by comparing his/her own language(s) and culture(s) to others.

► *In the beginning and continuing classes, you should see students relating vocabulary (e.g., cognates, loan words, idiomatic expressions), sound system, and syntax to their own language. You should also see students contrasting cultural elements (e.g., traditions, behaviors, accomplishments) to those of their own culture.*

* *In the exploratory class, you should see students engaged in similar but more limited activities.*

CONNECTIONS - The learner will acquire, reinforce, and further his/her knowledge of other disciplines through the foreign language.

► *In the beginning and continuing classes, you should see students working with age-appropriate information, skills, and concepts from other disciplines. You should see students applying learning strategies and developing their own for use in other disciplines.*

* *In the exploratory class, you should see students working with selected information and skills common to the foreign language class and other disciplines.*

COMMUNITIES - The learner will use language and/or demonstrate cultural knowledge and understanding within and beyond the school setting for personal, educational, and professional growth and enrichment.

► *In the beginning and continuing classes, you should see students use the language outside of the classroom (a) by sharing their knowledge with others in their community; (b) by participating in PTA presentations, festivals, or community celebrations; (c) by joining language clubs; (d) by creating materials (books, cassettes, brochures) for use by others; (e) by interacting with their peers in other schools, states, or countries through letter exchanges, e-mails; and (f) by accessing authentic materials through technology.*

* *In the exploratory class, you should see students involved in similar activities reflecting their language and knowledge of the culture.*

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