

Windows and Mirrors

Exploring and celebrating best practices in language teaching

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<http://www.MisCositas.com/workshops.html>



1. Instructional Management

- The teacher teaches from a lesson plan. The lesson plan is based on daily objectives that are specific measurable, observable, realistic, and clear.
- Lesson and unit objectives focus on what students will be able to do as a result of instruction.
- The teacher explains the objectives for the lesson.
- The teacher links the lesson (instruction) to assessment by ensuring that students understand how each part of the lesson is related to the objectives.
- The teacher uses multiple ways to collect information on student progress toward lesson objectives.
- The teacher uses a variety of assessment strategies to modify and improve instruction.
- The teacher moves efficiently between activities.
- There are periodic checks for understanding that shape how the lesson proceeds
- Activities address different language skills aligned with daily objectives.
- The length of activities reflects the age of students and their level of engagement.
- The teacher keeps all students on task.
- Teacher circulates among students during the instructional time.

2. Differentiation

- The teacher activates students' background knowledge.
- The teacher uses diverse activities to satisfy/accommodate diverse learning types.
- Materials are adapted to meet a range of student needs.

3. Language use

- The teacher demonstrates proficiency in both the target language and English.
- The teacher makes her/himself understood to students when speaking in target language.
- The teacher conducts the class in the target language *at least 90% of the class period* without using English.
- There is little or no translation from the target language to English or from English to the target language

4. Meaningful activities

- Activities/exercises are meaningful and purposeful.
- There are extensive opportunities for students to engage in language use. There are many and frequent opportunities for students to use their language skills in meaningful ways.
- The teacher ensures that all students contribute to classroom interactions.
- Students carry out real-world tasks.
- Student/teacher and student/student interactions are meaningful and purposeful.
- The teacher begins class or activities with an explanation of their purpose and concludes by asking students to summarize or demonstrate their learning.
- There is a variety of activities that assist students in accomplishing learning objectives.
- Content and activities are appropriate and relevant to the age of students.
- Activities are cognitively engaging and demanding.
- The teacher monitors for evidence of comprehension (e.g., Responses, eye contact).

- Student activity includes MULTIPLE student to student interactions as well as teacher to student interactions.
- The various parts of the lesson are connected to one another in a coherent way. These lesson parts build toward increased ability to understand or express meaning on a given topic or theme.

5. Culture Integration

- Lesson and unit plans provide evidence that culture is a natural component of language use.
- The teacher incorporates authentic materials that reflect cultural practices, products, and perspectives.
- The teacher incorporates tasks that reflect cultural practices, products, and perspectives.
- Learning activities help students develop skills in cultural observation and analysis.

6. Assessment

- Assessments are ongoing. Students are assessed formally and informally on how well they are able to meet the objectives of the lesson. Assessments aligned with standards and objectives.
- The teacher provides options for students to fulfill class expectations.
- The teacher develops assessments that reflect ALL teaching goals, materials, and what occurs in class, encompassing all skills including intercultural competence/awareness.
- The teacher collects evidence of student learning beyond using pencil and paper, designing tasks that simulate real-life use of language.
- Students are encouraged to assess their own progress.

7. Classroom Climate

- The teacher uses appropriate error correction techniques that do not discourage or embarrass students.
- The teacher corrects errors in ways that are appropriate to the task.
- The physical environment is instructional, motivational, and informative.
- The physical environment includes displays of student work.

8. Materials

- Materials are current, appropriate, and relevant to the age and interests of the students.
- Materials are aligned with lesson objectives.
- Students and teachers are not text-bound during instructional time so that the text is a tool, not the curriculum.
- Teacher-made materials are professional in appearance, are at the appropriate proficiency level, and lead to improved performance as defined by standards.
- The teacher uses authentic materials, making them accessible to learners.
- The teacher uses authentic video, audio, realia, language and culture bearers, target culture communities (including electronic) to provide for real-world language use .
- Technology, as appropriate and available, is used by students and teachers to facilitate learning and teaching.

Adapted from: NFLC StarTalk Program Observation Protocol and NADSFL Effective Teacher Characteristics

RESOURCES

- **Teaching Foreign Languages K-12: A Library of Classroom Practices** – a series of excellent videos depicting best practices in 30 different classrooms; includes printable video viewing guides and PD materials for teachers: <http://www.learner.org/resources/series185.html>
- **MisCositas.com** - a free web resource with materials for teaching languages, including videos, thematic curriculum units, materials, virtual picturebooks, realia and more. <http://www.MisCositas.com/>
- **NNELL: The National Network for Early Language Learning** – <http://www.nnell.org>
- **ACTFL: The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages** – <http://www.actfl.org>
- **TESOL International Association** - <http://www.tesol.org/>
- **AERO: American Education Reaches Out** - <http://www.projectaero.org/>

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