

Teaching World Languages: A Practical Guide

Chapter 3: Planning Instruction



Fig 3-1-1 ©Arne9001

Instructional planning is developing a plan for how to help students reach specific objectives. Today in the U.S., the *Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century* (2006) and the revisions in *World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages* (2013), developed by the National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project, guide the instructional objectives of language educators. (For more on the Standards, see Chapter 2: [Standards for Foreign Language Learning](#).) Teachers focus on what they want students to know and be able to do at the end of a lesson, unit, or school year. Communicating the plan to students helps them understand the direction of instruction and the goals they are expected to meet.

The planning framework called Understanding by Design (Wiggins & Grant, 2005, 2010) is widely used in the field of education in the U.S. and has been widely adopted by the foreign language field. It helps teachers plan effective instruction for communicative and cultural competence. This framework emphasizes aligning objectives, assessments, and instruction. Particularly important is the idea that assessment drives instruction.

In this module, we address how to plan curricula, thematic units, and lessons using Understanding by Design to meet the objectives of the *World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages* (2013).

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The Curriculum

A curriculum is a plan for instruction.

There is a curriculum for each subject in U.S. public schools. These curricula are organized within subjects across grades. For instance, what students learn in a subject in 10th Grade should build on what they learned in 9th Grade and prepare them for 11th Grade. Some schools, districts, and states have established curricula or curriculum frameworks for foreign language. However, few curricula exist for less commonly taught languages such as Arabic, Chinese, Indonesian, Japanese, and Russian (For more information, see The Center for Applied Linguistics Resource Guide <http://www.cal.org/resources/>)



Fig. 3-3-1 ©Binu Omanakkultan

National standards have been developed for most subjects. The standards provide guidelines for what students should learn in the subject at different grades or levels. The U.S. Government does not require these standards, as individual states decide what will be taught in each subject. However, most states have adopted and adapted national standards for their school curricula. The standards guide the development of the curricula. Private and charter schools are expected to give instruction that addresses their state standards. There are national standards for teaching foreign languages that are published in the *Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century* (2006). (For more on the Standards, see Chapter 2: [Standards for Foreign Language Learning.](#)) For information on obtaining copies go to “[Resources](#)” at the end of this chapter.

Some school curricula are very specific and tell teachers exactly what they must teach in every lesson. Some curricula are more general and give an outline, but leave the specifics up to the teacher. These are often called curriculum frameworks. Sometimes there is no specific curriculum, but very general guidelines, and then the teachers have to develop it themselves. Or there is just a textbook and no plan. Many teachers of less commonly taught languages such as Arabic and Chinese must develop their own curricula.

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Levels of Curriculum Planning

There are several levels of curriculum planning.

The multi-grade articulated curriculum plan – Example: a plan for students who will study a foreign language in Grades 5 – 12 that ensures that the content each year builds on the last year and prepares students for the next year.

The year plan for each class, grade or level – Example: a plan for a 6th Grade second-year foreign language class. Each year plan is made up of six to twelve thematic units. Thematic units are a series of integrated lessons that build on each other and address a common theme.

The thematic unit plan – Example: a plan for a four-week unit on food that will include about 12 discrete lessons.

The lesson plan – Example: a plan for a lesson on table manners in a foreign culture setting and polite expressions at table that will take place over three days.

The daily plan – Example: the first day of the table manners lesson in the foreign culture in which students view several videos of people eating a meal and learn about “good table manners” in the culture.

Essential Elements of Planning

Although the content of a curriculum is different across the different levels, there are some common building blocks in any plan.

Objectives – Your objectives are what you want your students to know and be able to do at the end of a period of instruction, a whole program, a year, a unit, a lesson, or a day. They are *functions*, meaningful, real-life activities that will give the students something they can do with the language. For example, “students will be able to read the directions in a recipe for tortilla española,” is a standards-based objective, while, “Students will understand how to use personal pronouns correctly,” is not. The objectives are usually written using the form, “Students will be able to....”



Fig. 3-4-1 ©G. Alain Chamot

Backward Design

Backward design is a general approach to curriculum planning that is currently best known in the design framework and publication, *Understanding by Design*, developed by Wiggins and McTighe (2005, 2010). *Understanding by Design* is used for instructional planning by teachers in many disciplines. It has been adapted to foreign language curricula and assessment design with alignment to the Standards (Eddy, 2007a).

Enduring Understandings

An important aspect of Understanding by Design is that it puts conceptual learning at the center of instruction. Thus, language instruction is driven by the exploration of ideas.

Teachers who plan their instruction using backward design decide on concepts, “big ideas” that they want students to explore and remember long after the course is over. These ideas are called enduring understandings.

In planning, you first consider the Standards. They consist of general goal areas such as “Comparisons,” and a general statement such as:

“Standard 4.2. Learners use the language to investigate, explain, and reflect on the concept of culture through comparisons of the cultures studied and their own.”

An enduring understanding is developed around a standard with the purpose of deepening the learners’ understanding of the concept expressed in the standard. These enduring understandings are part of the Year Plan and the Thematic Unit planning. Enduring understandings at the Unit level relate to the theme. For example:

Sample enduring understanding for an academic year:

There are similarities and differences in the daily lives of people in the target language cultures and in the U.S.

Sample thematic unit enduring understanding for unit on food:

There are similarities and differences between the target language cultures and the U.S in what people eat and how food is prepared and served.

The enduring understandings are part of your general instructional objectives. The specific things that students should be able to do to demonstrate these understandings are part of the assessment.

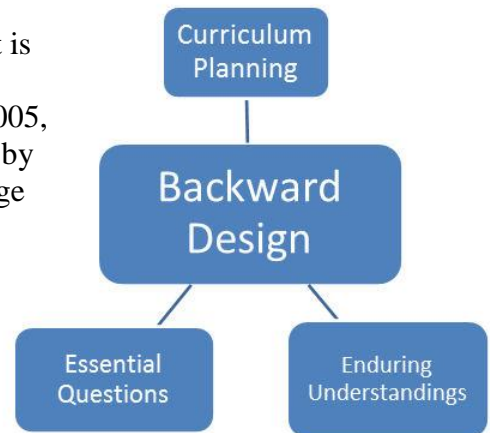


Fig. 3-6-1 ©SWCockey

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Essential Questions

Essential questions are derived from enduring understandings and they help students address the enduring understandings. An essential question is posed as part of the year or unit curricula. At the lesson level, develop a focus question to help students zoom in on the important material. For example:

Sample essential question for an academic year plan

What are the similarities and differences in daily life between people in the target language cultures and in the U.S.?

Sample thematic unit on food essential question

What are the similarities and differences between the target language cultures and the U.S. in what people eat and how food is prepared and served?

Stages of Planning with Understanding by Design

Backward design assumes that assessment drives instruction. It is backward in that you *start* with the evidence of learning, the assessment, in mind. Your instruction prepares the students to be able to succeed on the final assessment, that is, what you want your students to be able to do by the end of the unit.

Understanding by Design suggests that curriculum should be designed to follow a three-stage process. The three stages are organized so that the objectives drive the assessment and these together drive the planned activities and learning experiences.

Stage 1: Identify desired results. The desired results for a thematic unit include the enduring understandings and Standards-based objectives for the unit.

Stage 2: Determine evidence or assessments. These will demonstrate that students have been able to meet the objectives.

Stage 3: Plan instructional strategies, authentic materials and resources, activities and learning experiences. These will move students toward being able to perform the assessments and meet the objectives.

Backward design is applied to all the levels of instructional planning from school-wide multi-level curriculum frameworks to lesson plans. Below are examples of how to apply backward design to standards-based instruction in the foreign language classroom.

The Year Plan

Whether you are given a developed curriculum or expected to develop your own, you will need to follow most of the following steps to plan the year. The year plan needs to build on what the students already know in the foreign language and prepare them for the next level.



Fig. 3-8-1 ©Kydrashka

Stage 1 – Identify desired results:

1. Review the curriculum and or curriculum framework for foreign languages, if provided by the school or district, and any textbook or other materials that are provided and/or required.
2. Review your state and district foreign language standards (if they exist), as well as your target language standards in the *Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century* (2006). These will give you the basis for your objectives.
3. Compare what is required by the Standards and what is provided by the curriculum and texts. If there are standards-based objectives that are not addressed in the provided resources, you need to make note of that and figure out how to work them into your instruction.
4. Find out what your students already know in the target language. If this is not their first year, talk to the other teachers and try to find out what the students have learned, what they can do and cannot do, and what their interests are. It is helpful to know if there are heritage learners or native speakers in the class, and what their experiences with the language may be.
5. Create a general focus for the year. It could be in the form of an enduring understanding and/or an essential question.
6. Write down your objectives, including the enduring understanding(s) and/or essential question(s). Your standards-based objectives will probably be general at this level.

Stage 2 – Determine evidence or assessments

1. Decide on a summative assessment that will give you an opportunity to determine if the students are able to meet the objectives by the end of the year. This will probably be a performance assessment, a complex activity where they demonstrate their skills in interpersonal, interpretive and presentational communication as well as their cultural understandings, ability to make connections to other subject areas, ability to compare cultures, and participation in target language communities.

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2. Develop or adapt a way to evaluate student performance on the final assessment. It should be a written description that you can communicate to the students at the beginning of the year so they know your expectations from the start of the course. If you are using a performance assessment, you will probably develop a rubric to evaluate it and then share it with and explain it to the students.
3. If your students are preparing for an external standardized test, such as the Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI), become familiar with the expectations so you can prepare them.

Stage 3 - Plan instructional strategies, authentic materials and resources, activities and learning experiences

1. Decide on a general approach to instructional strategies. You will probably use a learner-centered, proficiency-oriented approach to instruction. You will decide on specific activities and learning experiences at the unit and lesson level.
2. Determine what resources are available in the school, the community, on the Internet, and in your environment.
3. Using your objectives and assessment, identify six to twelve themes or topics that allow you to address the standards and your enduring understanding. You may want to recycle themes that have been addressed in previous years to build students' knowledge in specific areas, you may consider themes you know students find interesting and motivating, and you may include themes that are related to content in other subjects the students will be studying. Using your school schedule, divide the lessons of the year into the thematic units. The units should each build on the previous unit and prepare students for the next unit.

The objectives, assessment, and instruction should all be aligned in the end. However, most teachers do not plan instruction moving strictly from Stage 1 to Stage 2 to Stage 3. Rather, they move back and forth between the different parts of the year plan developing what inspires them (based on student needs) and then making adjustments so that all the elements of instruction are aligned in the end. Instructional planning is a creative and highly personal activity, and each teacher has his or her own approach.

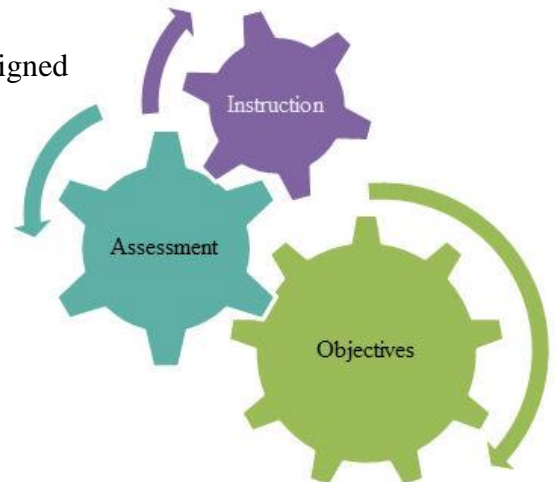


Fig. 3-9-1 ©SWCockey

The next section addresses how to plan thematic units.

Thematic Units

There are various approaches to writing thematic unit plans. In this guide, the principles of backward design are applied to the development of standards-based thematic units.

Themes: Thematic units are a series of lessons that are grouped together, build on each other, and focus on the same subject matter.

Examples of topics for thematic units are:

Celebrations	Leisure Time
Environment	Rights and Responsibilities
Life in Urban and Rural Environments	Geography of the Arab, Francophone, Spanish-speaking, Chinese-Speaking, etc. worlds
Heritage Language Americans	School
Food	Travel
Health	Weather

A thematic unit may take place over the course of a few days or a few weeks, depending on the topic and the depth to which it is explored. Once you have established the theme and time frame of your unit, the thematic unit plan follows the three stages of backward design.

Stages for Identifying Themes

Stage 1: Identify desired results – Standards-based objectives (usually for each standard), enduring understanding(s) and essential question (s).

1. **Standards-based objectives** - The theme and topic have already been identified in the year plan. Identify how the students can explore the theme using the target language. There should be at least one objective related to each of the five goal areas of the standards. For example, in a unit on food, Standard 1.1, Interpersonal Communication, could be addressed with an objective such as:

Sample thematic unit standards-based objective:

Students will be able to engage in conversations, provide and obtain information, express feelings and emotions, and exchange opinions about food.

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2. **Enduring understandings** - As described above, the enduring understanding for the unit can be derived from that developed for the year.

There are similarities and differences in what people eat and how food is prepared and served between the target language cultures and the U.S.

3. **Essential questions** – The essential question can also be derived from the essential questions for the year, as described above.

What are the similarities and differences in what people eat and how food is prepared and served between the target language cultures and the U.S.?

Stage 2: Determine evidence or assessments to demonstrate that students are able to meet the objectives.

1. **Performance assessment.** The evidence of learning for a unit is usually an end-of-unit “performance assessment,” which will allow your students to demonstrate what they have learned in the unit. The performance assessment engages students in “real-life” or simulated real-life communicative activities. It includes activities that should allow students to demonstrate what they can do in most of the goal areas of the Standards. See the example below:

Sample summative, end of unit, performance assessment for progress for Grade 9, Year 1 target language class studying a food unit. We use the same summative assessment in the discussion of each of the Standards.

Students will work in groups to prepare presentations on the traditional foods of different target language-speaking countries and how they are eaten.

1. Each group will research the traditional foods of one country or region. Their research will be guided by a teacher handout with a series of key questions (in the target language). Resources may include (all in the target language) recipes, menus, short descriptions of foods, videos, pictures, advertisements, interviews, going to a restaurant with food from the region, going to a target language grocery store, cooking some dishes.
2. In the target language, students in each group will share their information and design a presentation for the class on the traditional foods of their region and how they are prepared and served. The teacher can encourage the students to be creative in developing presentations that will be of interest to the class. These could include skits, PowerPoint presentations, demonstrations of cooking and/or eating, videos, recipe books, etc.
3. Students give their presentations in the language. Each student in each group participates. Presenters should be prepared to answer questions from other students after the presentation. Each student will listen to and view the presentations of the others, take notes, and complete another handout that summarizes the content of all the presentations.

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2. **Rubrics.** Develop, adapt, or adopt a rubric to evaluate performance on the tasks. Rubrics, which often take the form of tables, describe aspects of practical, observable behaviors included in student performances (e.g., *comprehensibility – how well the student can be understood, accuracy, use of vocabulary, etc.*). There are descriptions of what performance looks like – or sounds like – at various levels. Students should receive the rubrics at the beginning of the unit so they know what will be expected of them. You can use them throughout the unit to evaluate performance on other, similar activities.

For a sample rubric entitled “Sample Rubric – Interpersonal Communication” see [Appendix A](#) or go to the “Objectives and Assessments” sections of any of the “Practice” chapters. For more about rubrics, go to “Integrated Performance Assessment” in Chapter 4: [Assessment](#).

3. **Essential Knowledge and Skills -** Identify the essential knowledge and skills that students will need to learn in the unit in order to successfully complete the summative assessment. This will include vocabulary, grammar, cultural information, content information, and learning strategies. Identify what is new and what will be recycled (what students have already learned and will now practice in a new context).

For example:

Vocabulary

- Foods, ingredients, measurements, types of preparation
- Likes and dislikes
- Expressions about food
- Vocabulary for social negotiation within the classroom to do tasks

Grammar

- Essential grammar points.
- Identify what is new and what will be recycled

Cultural information

- Kinds of foods eaten for breakfast, lunch, dinner, special celebrations
- Attitudes about what tastes good and is healthy
- Cooking and eating practices, especially good table manners
- Differences between different countries and regions within the target language world
- Information about target culture perspectives on American foods

Content Information

- target language countries – geography and major food products
- Similarities and differences in traditional foods between different regions and countries in the target language world
- Information about metric measurement

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Learning Strategies – How, when and why to use the strategies

- Using Background knowledge
- Making inferences
- Predicting
- Personalizing
- Managing learning
- Cooperating

Instruction within a thematic unit is organized by content and not by grammatical sequences. Grammar and vocabulary are taught in whatever order they are needed to meet the communicative objectives of the unit.

Stage 3: Plan instructional strategies, authentic materials and resources, activities, and learning experiences

1. Instructional strategies, activities, and learning experiences

In the unit plan you identify specific instructional strategies and activities. The overall unit plan allows you to organize the lessons so that they build on each other. The beginning lessons structure the unit for the students. You introduce the theme, the objectives, the enduring understanding, and the assessment. You activate the students' background knowledge about the theme and relate it to their own lives, knowledge and experiences. The beginning of a unit is a good time to think about how to present the material to maximize students' interest and motivation.

During the beginning lessons of a unit you are introducing students to new material about the theme. Your activities will include opportunities for the students to read, listen, and watch materials in the target language about the theme. You will probably spend more time using direct instruction and direct presentations of new material during this time. You will also be

helping students use learning strategies to figure out the meanings of new vocabulary and structures they find in the written, audio and video materials you have selected.

For the following lessons, you plan structured activities that gradually allow students to spend more time practicing and developing what they are learning. These activities might include role-plays, interviews with target language speakers, and searches on the Internet. You may use more cooperative learning and/or group work, at this stage, and you might use less direct instruction and more inductive and coaching teaching techniques.



Fig. 3-13-1 ©Createsima



Fig. 3-13-2
©Haywiremedia

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The last lessons of the unit are devoted to preparing and presenting the final performances for assessment. The students, usually working in groups, are more responsible for their learning at this stage. However, you can provide more or less structure depending on the age, maturity and proficiency level of the students. The students probably need to research a specific topic,



Fig. 3-14-1 ©Ra2Studio

work together as a group to prepare their presentation, give the presentation, and respond to the presentations of the other students.

Often teachers plan a culminating activity for a unit, which may be the final assessment, or may occur after the final assessment, such as creating a target culture bazaar for the school, cooking treats for other classes, making posters for school bulletin boards, or preparing cookbooks for parents.

For more information about teaching strategies and activities, and specific examples, go to the Activities sections of the Practice chapters: [Interpersonal](#), [Interpretive](#), [Presentational](#), [Cultures](#), [Connections](#), [Comparisons](#), and [Communities](#).

Materials and Resources

It is recommended that teachers use authentic materials whenever possible. These are materials prepared for and by the target language speakers. Sometimes it is necessary to use semi-authentic materials, materials that have been adapted for learners of the target language. Although finding authentic materials, especially for older students at beginning levels, is time-consuming and difficult, it is essential for good instruction.

In using authentic materials, remember that the difficulty level of an authentic text for a student is determined by the task you ask a student to do with it, more than that of the text itself. You and your students need to keep in mind that knowing the meaning of every word of a text is rarely necessary in everyday life. A novice learner, for example, might be able to successfully figure out the topic of a magazine article from the picture and one or two familiar words, while a more advanced learner could be asked to read it for the main idea. (For more about authentic resources go to the Authentic Materials section of Chapter 1: [Essential Concepts](#).)



Fig. 3-14-2 ©Atholpady

A textbook, if you have one that is appropriate for your students, is a resource, but it is only one of many resources. Textbooks are not “authentic” and do not contain the rich cultural information of authentic materials. However, the textbook can provide good summary information about grammar, vocabulary and an unfamiliar alphabet (for beginners) that may serve as shortcuts and memory devices for students learning the language. Up-to-date textbooks in all languages recommend extensive use of authentic materials. Many foreign language teachers keep several textbooks in their own collection for reference and to help them develop ideas for lessons.

Use a variety of resources in planning materials and resources for a thematic unit.

Consider all the different kinds of resources available to you and your students including

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the Internet, people in the school and in the community, and in your own home. As you find resources, keep a record of what works and how and where to find it. Share your resources with other teachers; it is a difficult task that can be made simpler when you are collaborating with others.

For more information about materials and resources, and specific examples, go to the Materials and the Resources sections of the Practice chapters: : [Interpersonal](#), [Interpretive](#), [Presentational](#), [Cultures](#), [Connections](#), [Comparisons](#), and [Communities](#). For more information, go to the: [References and Resources](#) appendix.

2. Some Model Thematic Units

There are several sources of model thematic foreign language units on the Internet. Thematic units designed for specific languages can be adapted to any other language. Also, you can choose the template, and the organizational structure that you prefer to plan your own units and lessons.

The Center for Advanced Research in Language Acquisition (CARLA) has an excellent website on creating thematic units:

http://www.carla.umn.edu/assessment/vac/CreateUnit/p_1.html . They introduce the concept of backward design, demonstrate how to develop thematic units, which they call “assessment units,” and then give examples. The examples are of integrated performance activities that can be used to frame a unit or lesson. There are example activities for a variety of languages

http://www.carla.umn.edu/assessment/vac/CreateUnit/e_1.html :

- What Makes Basketball Important?
- What Does My Name Really Mean?
- Why Do We Value Places?
- Could You Live On Another Planet?
- Clothes Tell a Story
- What Makes a Good Travel Destination
- Cinema and Society
- What Makes a Hero?
- My Family



Fig. 3-15-1 ©Milolika

The Center for Advanced Research in Language Acquisition (CARLA) has also developed on-line units and lessons for French, Spanish, Japanese and German that can be adapted to other languages

<http://www.carla.umn.edu/cobalt/lessonplans/search.php> . When you click on the link, it will take you to a dialog box. You can select the 8 best model units by putting a check in the box for “the 8 stellar units.” The templates for the unit and lesson plans are also useful.

The **New Jersey World Languages Framework Project** developed Standards-based thematic units using the backward design approach to curriculum development: <http://www.state.nj.us/education/aps/cccs/wl/frameworks/wlo/> . The units are targeted for K-12 students at the Novice-mid to Pre-advanced

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proficiency range and can be adapted to any language. Four units include excellent, detailed unit and lesson plans.

The Glastonbury Public Schools have published several model thematic units for Chinese, Russian, French, and Spanish at different levels and grades on their website: Glastonbury Public Schools: Foreign Languages. <https://www.glastonburyus.org/CURRICULUM/FOREIGNLANGUAGE/FOREIGNLANGUAGECURRICULUM/LESSONPLANS/Pages/default.aspx> . These are adaptable to other languages and provide good food for thought.

MOSAIC: Content-based Thematic Units were developed by the Center for Applied Second Language Studies (CASLS) at the University of Oregon. Available in French, Spanish, and Japanese, these Standards-based thematic units are targeted for high school and lower-level college students, and can be adapted to other languages: <http://casls.uoregon.edu/pages/tools/mosaic.php> .

The **STARTALK** website has on-line guidelines for curriculum development for summer institutes that can be useful for many languages, especially LCTLs: <http://startalk.umd.edu/curriculum-guide/> . They have useful templates for thematic units and lessons, and a good online curriculum development guide.

The next section addresses Lessons.

LESSONS

Backward Design and Lesson Planning

Lesson planning can also follow the three stages of backward design:

To plan a lesson for a 9th Grade first year foreign language class studying a unit on food the enduring understanding for the unit is:

There are similarities and differences in what people eat and how food is prepared and served between the target languages cultures and the U.S.

The essential question is:

What are the similarities and differences in what people eat and how food is prepared and served between the target language cultures and the U.S.?

- This lesson will focus on table manners during target culture meals.
- The students will watch a video and a teacher presentation that demonstrate polite table manners and verbal expressions; they will answer questions on a handout about the table manners, behavioral and verbal, that they observe.
- Then, in groups or whole class discussion, the students will have a discussion comparing U.S. and target culture table manners and expressions, which will be guided by another handout.
- After the discussion, the students will practice target culture table manners in groups in simulated situations. The simulations may be more or less structured by the teacher.
- Finally, the students will act out role-plays to demonstrate their understanding of target culture table manners including polite verbal expressions.
- A longer description of this activity is provided in Chapter 6: [Interpersonal Communication](#), in the Activities section, under “Role Plays.”



Fig. 3-17-1 ©Atulvermabhai

Stages for Planning Lessons

Stage 1: Identify desired results – Standards-based objectives, enduring understanding(s) and essential question (s).

Standard 1.1. Learners interact and negotiate meaning in spoken, signed, or written conversations to share information, reactions, feelings, and opinions.

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Standard 1.2. Learners understand, interpret, and analyze what is heard, read, or viewed on a variety of topics.

Standard 2.2. Learners use the language to investigate, explain, and reflect on the relationship between the products and perspectives of the cultures studied.

Standard 4.2. Learners use the language to investigate, explain, and reflect on the concept of culture through comparisons of the cultures studied and their own.

Stage 2: Determine evidence or assessments

The final assessment will be a performance assessment where the students will work in groups to role-play eating a target-culture meal, demonstrating polite table manners.

The evaluation will be done using a rubric based on this general description. The teacher will probably want to select some specific behaviors, perhaps related to the video or teacher presentation, that s/he feels should be stressed in this lesson.

	Exceeds Expectations	Meets Expectations	Does Not Meet Expectations
Cultural Awareness	-Behavior and language choices reflect a good awareness of cultural perspectives around food and meals -Student can demonstrate polite behavior during a target culture meal	-Behavior and language choices reflect some awareness of cultural attitudes and perspectives around food and meals - Student can demonstrate polite behavior during a target culture meal	-Behavior and language choices reflect a lack of awareness of cultural attitudes and perspectives around food -Student does not demonstrate polite behavior during a target culture meal
Use of polite expressions	Student used correct polite expressions at appropriate times and initiated situations to use expressions	Student used correct polite expressions at appropriate times in response to others	Student rarely used the polite expressions at the appropriate times

Stage 3: Plan instructional strategies, authentic materials and resources, activities and learning experiences

Materials and resources –

For this lesson the teacher will need to

- find a video, or two, that demonstrate clearly polite table manners
- develop his/her own presentation, which might require props such as eating utensils, and food

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- develop handouts that guide the students' viewing by asking questions about what they see, and a handout that helps them compare U.S. and target culture polite table manners.

For the role-play, if s/he decides to structure it to give the students specific situations and characters, s/he will

- need to prepare situation and/or role cards
- want to make certain materials available for the students for their role-plays

Instructional strategies and activities – This lesson will

- probably take two 90 minute, block scheduled lessons, or three to four 40 minute classes
- include a variety of instructional strategies and activities.

These activities follow a general pattern within a lesson, and within each day.

The next sections will address the order of instruction.

Organizing the lesson

A language lesson should include a variety of learning experiences. Learners at all proficiency levels benefit from such variety. Most lessons focus on a meaningful task that students are asked to do. Assessment is on the accomplishment of the task or some part or parts of the task.

A lesson has five parts (Chamot, 2009):

- Preparation
- Presentation
- Practice
- Evaluation
- Expansion



Fig. 3-19-1 ©SWCockey

There is a logical order to the parts – preparation comes before presenting new material, practice comes after presentation and before evaluation. However, sometimes teachers change the order slightly, for instance they may move back and forth between presentation and practice several times in one lesson to chop the material into smaller chunks. The structure described below is meant as a general guideline.

1. Preparation

At the beginning of a lesson give students an outline of the lesson's goals and objectives so they know what to expect. Explain how the lesson objectives will be met through the task they will be asked to do, what the performance assessment will be, and how the assessment will be evaluated. If you use a rubric to evaluate student work, give students a copy of the rubric. In a lesson that takes place across several class periods, if the class is not the first part

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of the lesson, maintain your class routine and use preparation to bring students back to the topic, then move to whatever phase you are up to in the lesson.

Preparation may include:

- At the beginning of a lesson, a “hook” to get students interested in the topic, put it in a context, and/or elicit background knowledge. Often a big or important question works as a way to engage students in the topic. This question might be an *essential question*, or a *focus question* that is based on the essential questions. An example might be to ask your students, “Are good manners the same everywhere?”
- An advance organizer or graphic organizer, usually a visual that summarizes the information in the lesson.
- Discussion questions that elicit what students already know and think about the topic. These can be a way to review the essential vocabulary needed in the lesson.
- If it is not the beginning of the lesson, a discussion of what occurred in the last class meeting can lead into the content of the current class.

In the example lesson described above, the teacher would give the students the objectives, the assessment assignment (the role play) and the rubric. S/he might start the lesson with a hook such as having the class demonstrate polite table manners in the U.S. This can lead to a lively discussion since different students may have different ideas on what are “good table manners.” It is a good discussion for lower level students since they can act out a lot of their points. Students could then brainstorm about what they think might be good manner in the target culture, especially for foods they are familiar with. This would segue well into the presentation where they will be able to confirm their predictions, or change them.



Fig. 3-20-1 ©Erico

2. Presentation

During the presentation phase the teacher presents the content that students will need to meet the objectives and address the essential questions.

S/he might use direct instruction, presenting the students with what they need to know and explaining it. Or s/he might use an inductive approach where s/he presents the students with incomplete information, and then helps them try to fill in the gaps using strategies.

For example, s/he could tell students what it is polite to say your host after a meal. If a video is available, direct their attention to the moment when the guest says the appropriate phrase (*sufra dayma*: Arabic for may your table always be thus; *J'ai bien mangé*: French for I have eaten well; *Takk for maten*: Norwegian for thanks for the meal) or when the guest demonstrates the appropriate behavior (in Russia leave a small amount of food on the plate to say the hosts have provided ample hospitality). Play that segment several times, asking the students to guess what the phrase or action means and helping them to write it down the phrase.

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Many teachers use a mix of direct instruction and inductive questioning when presenting new material. Modeling the language is an important part of the teacher's role in the presentational phase, which is a reason to try and use the target language as much as possible.

In the example above, both viewing a video and the teacher explanation are the presentation phase of the lesson. The teacher would probably use both direct instruction and some inductive questioning to draw out the key vocabulary and behaviors s/he wants the students to focus on. In addition, the handouts with questions about the videos and presentation focus student attention on the target expressions and behaviors.

Structured Practice

Part of the Presentation Phase may include closely structured, short practice sessions. These are designed to help learners become comfortable producing specific language that has been recently introduced. Structured output is not spontaneous communication and should be used judiciously. In structured output, accuracy of performance is important. For more about structured output activities, go to Chapter 6: [Interpersonal Communication](#), section on Activities.

3. Practice

In this part of the lesson, the focus shifts from the instructor as presenter and guide to the students as completers of a designated task. Students work in pairs or small groups on a meaningful, topic-based task. They transfer the knowledge they have gained from the presentation and the skills gained in structured practice to a slightly different task. This transfer across tasks is an important step in the development of skill and knowledge. In real life situations, language users need to have the flexibility to use language in different situations with different partners and on different tasks.

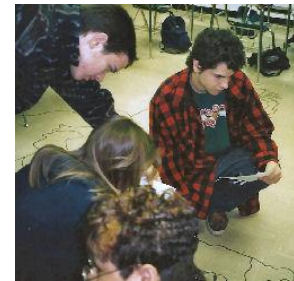


Fig. 3-21-1 ©SWCockey

In their work together, students' main purpose is to complete the communication task. Language becomes a tool, rather than an end in itself. Learners have to use any or all of the language that they know along with varied communication strategies. The criterion of success is whether the learner gets the message across. Accuracy is not a consideration unless the lack of it interferes with the message. The instructor observes the groups and acts as a resource when students have questions that they cannot resolve themselves.

In our example lesson on target culture table manners, the students move from observing videos and the teacher modeling polite table manners to reflecting on these behaviors and verbal expressions and comparing them to similar situations in the U.S. The students then practice using the target culture table manners and expressions in simulated situations in groups. The teacher can make these simulations more or less structured depending on the age and proficiency levels of the students. For more structured practice s/he can provide very specific situations and roles for the students and give them cards with expressions and suggestions for behavior. (A favorite simulation for table manners is to have one student be a

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child or teenager with “bad” manners and other students be his/her parents or friends who try to correct the bad manners and explain and model how one should behave at the table.)

4. Evaluation

Evaluation at the lesson level assesses student performance and is usually formative. This means it is an assessment that helps the teacher and the student be aware of what the student has learned so far, but it is not a “final” assessment. It also helps the teacher determine which elements of instruction are effective and which elements need to be modified, adjusted, or repeated. These reflections on instruction guide further lesson planning.

When all students have completed the performance task, reconvene the class as a group to recap the lesson. You can ask the students to evaluate their own work, either by giving them the same instrument you used yourself, such as the rubric in this example, or asking them to do a different self-evaluation. You can give group feedback and you may want to ask the students for feedback: what they believe they learned, or did not learn; if they have any questions; if they have any comments or suggestions; if something was particularly interesting or enjoyable.

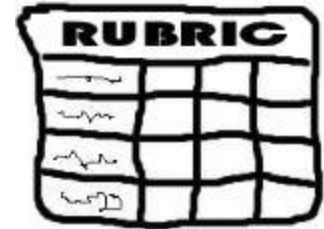


Fig. 3-22-1 ©SWCockey

Evaluation is useful for six reasons:

- It reinforces the material that was presented earlier in the lesson.
 - It provides an opportunity for students to raise questions.
 - It enables the instructor to monitor individual student comprehension and learning.
 - It enables students to focus on assessing their own learning.
 - It provides closure to the lesson.
 - It provides the teacher with feedback about what were successful teaching strategies and what should be changed.
-
- In our sample lesson, the role-play is the performance assessment, and the rubric is used to evaluate it.
 - The simulated practice prepares the students for the role-plays, which are the performances for assessment.
 - The role-plays can be structured or not, but it is important that each student in the role-play have an opportunity to demonstrate what he/she knows and can do.
 - The teacher observes the role-plays of each group and fills out the rubric for each student, sometimes with comments.
 - S/he also keeps notes of any general problems or strengths that s/he will address in later classes.



Fig. 3-22-2 ©MichaelJung

After the presentations, the teacher can give general feedback to the whole group, get feedback from the students and then provide individuals with personal or written feedback on their performance.

See Chapter 4: [Assessment](#) for more information on evaluation and assessment.

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For detailed presentation, practice and assessment activities, see the Practice chapters: : [Interpersonal](#), [Interpretive](#), [Presentational](#), [Cultures](#), [Connections](#), [Comparisons](#), and [Communities](#).

5. Expansion

Expansion activities allow students to apply the knowledge they have gained in the classroom to new material or situations. They provide more opportunities for transfer of learning to new situations. Expansion activities can be homework or experiences related to the lesson.

For the example lesson on target culture table manners, expansion activities could be demonstrating polite table manners and verbal expressions for parents, other students, other classes. Or they could be going to a target culture restaurant or eating a food in the target language classroom, using polite table manners and correct verbal expressions.

For more information on lesson planning and to find model lessons, see “[Resources](#),” the next section in this module.

References, Resources, Images, and Credits

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Resources

Adair-Hauck, B. Glissan, E.W., and Troyan, F. *Implementing Integrated Performance Assessment*. Alexandria VA: ACTFL. Available at:

<http://www.actfl.org/publications/guidelines-and-manuals/implementing-integrated-performance-assessment>

This manual explains how to carefully create summative performance assessments that connect each of the three modes. The publication includes examples from Novice through Advanced levels.

American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (2013). *NCSSFL-ACTFL Can-Do Statements Progress Indicators for Language Learners*.

http://www.actfl.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/Can-Do_Statements.pdf

American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (2013). *NCSSFL-ACTFL Global Can-Do Benchmarks*. http://www.actfl.org/global_statements

Clementi, Donna and Terrill, L. (2013). *The Keys to Planning for Learning: Effective Curriculum, Unit, and Lesson Design*. Alexandria VA: ACTFL.

The publication provides a template and several examples of units built around summative performance assessments in each of the three modes of communication (Interpretive, Interpersonal, and Presentational). At the ACTFL publication website, several unit samples and the blank template may be downloaded:

<http://www.actfl.org/publications/books-and-brochures/the-keys-planning-learning>

Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition (CARLA). *Creating Thematic Units*. Available at: http://www.carla.umn.edu/assessment/vac/CreateUnit/p_1.html .

They introduce the concept of backward design, demonstrate how to develop thematic units, which they call “assessment units,” and then give examples. The examples are of integrated performance activities that can be used to frame a unit or lesson. There example activities for a variety of languages Available at:

http://www.carla.umn.edu/assessment/vac/CreateUnit/e_1.html

What Makes Basketball Important?

What Makes a Good Travel Destination?

What Does My Name Really Mean?

Cinema and Society

Why Do We Value Places?

What Makes a Hero?

Could You Live On Another Planet?

My Family

Clothes Tell A Story?

Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition (CARLA). *Lesson Plans*.

Available at: <http://www.carla.umn.edu/cobaltt/lessonplans/search.php>

They have developed on-line units and lessons for French, Spanish, Japanese and German that can be adapted to other languages . When you click on the link, it will take you to a dialog box. You can select the 8 best model units by putting a check in the box for “the 8 stellar units.” The templates for the unit and lesson plans are also useful.

Center for Applied Linguistics. *Center for Applied Linguistics Resource Guide*. Available at: <http://www.cal.org/resources/>

A resource for curriculum frameworks, especially for some LCTLs.

Glastonbury Public Schools. *Foreign Language Curriculum Lesson Plans*. Available at: <https://www.glastonburyus.org/CURRICULUM/FOREIGNLANGUAGE/FOREIGNLANGUAGECURRICULUM/LESSONPLANS/Pages/default.aspx>

This web page contains several model thematic units for Chinese, Russian, French, and Spanish at different levels and grades on their website: Glastonbury Public Schools: Foreign Languages.. These are adaptable to other languages and provide good food for thought

Center for Applied Second Language Studies (CASLS). *MOSAIC: Content-based Thematic Units*. Available at: <http://casls.uoregon.edu/pages/tools/mosaic.php>

Available in French, Spanish, and Japanese, these Standards-based thematic units are targeted for high school and lower-level college students, and can be adapted to other languages.

National Capital Language Resource Center (NCLRC). *Developing Autonomy in Language Learners*. Available at: <http://nclrc.org/guides/HED/index.html>

This is a learning strategies guide for the higher education level.

National Capital Language Resource Center (NCLRC). *Elementary Immersion Learning Strategies Guide*. Available at: <http://nclrc.org/eils/index.html>.

This takes a look at the various strategies children use to learn a foreign language in an immersion setting.

National Capital Language Resource Center (NCLRC). (2007). *The Essentials of Language Teaching*. Available at: <http://nclrc.org/essentials/index.htm>

This site gives an introduction to the language teaching methods in use. Contains sections on the principles, practice, and examples of language teaching.

National Capital Language Resource Center (NCLRC). (2007) *Sailing the 5 C's with Learning Strategies*. Available at: <http://www.nclrc.org/sailing/index.html>.

Includes resources on integrating strategy instruction into a language lesson. Learning strategies charts are available in multiple languages in the Appendices. Twenty learning strategies are highlighted.

National Foreign Language Center. *STARTALK Online Curriculum Development Guides & Templates*. Available at: <http://startalk.umd.edu/curriculum-guide/>

The *STARTALK* website has on-line guidelines for curriculum development for summer institutes that can be useful for many languages, especially LCTLs. They have useful templates for thematic units and lessons, and a good online curriculum development guide.

New Jersey Department of Education, World Languages. *World Languages Framework*

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Project. Available at: <http://www.nj.gov/education/aps/cccs/wl/frameworks/wlo/>
To reflect the 2004 revised state standards, the New Jersey Department of Education, World Languages developed Standards-based thematic units using the backward design approach to curriculum development. The units are targeted for K-12 students at the Novice-mid to Pre-advanced proficiency range and can be adapted to any language. Four units include excellent, detailed unit and lesson plans.

Images:

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Sample Rubric: Interpersonal Communication

Example Rubric for Interpersonal for 9th Grade, Year-1 Learners for Food Unit adapting criteria from ACTFL Integrated Performance Assessment rubrics (adding Cultural Awareness from *Performance Guidelines for K-12*).

Criterion	Exceeds Expectations 3 points	Meets Expectations 2 points	Does Not Meet Expectations 1 points
Language Function - kinds of exchanges	<p>Can use and understand expressions commonly spoken at meals.</p> <p>Can ask and answer simple questions about foods using sentences.</p> <p>Can describe target culture foods using sentences and combining learned language to make own meaning.</p>	<p>Can use and understand expressions commonly spoken at meals.</p> <p>Can ask and answer simple questions about food with phrase or sentence.</p> <p>Can give short, basic description of target culture foods using memorized language, and sometimes combining language to make new sentences.</p>	<p>Can use and understand only a few of the expressions spoken at meals.</p> <p>Can ask and answer questions usually only with one word.</p> <p>Descriptions of food limited to single words or short memorized phrases.</p>
Text Type - Length of Utterance/Text student can say/write	Can say/write simple sentences and short paragraphs about foods.	Can say/write simple sentences about food.	Only uses single words and phrases about food.
Communication Strategies = Participation in Conversation	Can carry out a simple conversation about foods, mainly based on questions and answers.	Responds to questions and asks some questions.	Only responds to questions.
Comprehensibility	Usually understood by classmates and teacher.	Can be understood with occasional difficulty by classmates and teacher.	Hard for classmates and teacher to understand.
Language Control Grammar Vocabulary Pronunciation	Uses correct forms, vocabulary pronunciation, and spelling with simple sentences and strings of sentences in present tense about foods and meals.	Uses correct forms, vocabulary, and pronunciation with memorized language with single words and single sentences.	<p>Accurate with single words.</p> <p>Accuracy breaks down with phrases.</p>
Cultural Awareness	<p>Behavior and language choices reflect a good awareness of cultural perspectives around food and meals.</p> <p>Student can demonstrate polite behavior at a target culture meal.</p>	<p>Behavior and language choices reflect some awareness of cultural attitudes and perspectives around food and meals.</p> <p>Student can demonstrate polite behavior at a target culture meal.</p>	<p>Behavior and language choices reflect a lack of awareness of cultural attitudes and perspectives around food.</p> <p>Student does not demonstrate polite behavior at a target culture meal.</p>