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SECOND EDITION

# Languages and Children

Making the Match

FOREIGN  
LANGUAGE  
INSTRUCTION FOR  
AN EARLY START  
GRADES K-8

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# Key Concepts for Success: Elementary and Middle School Foreign Languages

Foreign language programs for young learners must take into account the distinctive characteristics and needs found at each level of cognitive, social, psychomotor, and educational development, as well as the insights of second-language acquisition research. Specific applications of these insights are identified below.

## *Children Learn New Languages Best When . . .*

1. Target language instruction is consistently conducted in the target language with minimal use of the native language. The target language and the native language are kept distinctly separate.
2. Teachers recognize learners as active constructors of meaning rather than passive receivers of vocabulary and information.
3. Learning occurs in meaningful, communicative contexts that carry significance for the student. For the young learner these contexts include social and cultural situations, subject content instruction, games, songs, rhymes, stories, and experiences with arts, crafts, and sports.
4. Learning is organized in terms of concrete experiences; visuals, props, realia, and hands-on activities are integral components of instruction.
5. Comprehension is emphasized rather than speaking at beginning stages of the program, shadowing the process of first-language acquisition.

6. Reading and writing are used as communicative tools, as appropriate to the age and interests of the learners, even in early stages of language development.
7. Assessment of learning is frequent, regular, and ongoing in a manner that is consistent with program goals and teaching strategies.
8. Culture is primarily learned through experiences with cultural materials and practices rather than through discussion and reading.
9. Planning is organized around a thematic center and establishes a balance among the basic goals of culture, subject content, and language in use.
10. Curriculum and instruction are organized according to a communicative syllabus rather than a grammatical syllabus. Grammar is presented through and for usage rather than analysis; grammar for its own sake is not the object of instruction.
11. Activities are geared to the young learner's interests, developmental levels, and experiential background. They are designed to appeal to a variety of learning styles and to incorporate frequent opportunities for movement and physical activity.
12. The foreign language program draws from and reinforces the goals of the general elementary school curriculum, including across-the-curriculum goals such as cognitive skills development and global education.

## CHAPTER 1

# Making Foreign

For foreign language programs in the elementary school, it is a high priority. So much evidence before the program, and existing. Almost every "public media to party" recurring question elementary school

A rationale, based on the needs and purposes it serves. It will be a basis for choice of methods selected. A rationale can draw is the purpose of and to give guidance.

During the development of programs in the past, before setting rationales for public support for taking advantage of like that of a neighbor because they were. Many administrators