

LECTURE 8. PLANNING LESSONS

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8.1 The necessity for planning

You know that teaching and learning a foreign language is ensured: 1) through methods and techniques, i. e. acquisition of new information about a linguistic or language phenomenon to acquire some knowledge; drill and transformation to form habits on the material presented; making use of the habits acquired in various language skills. The choice of techniques for realizing each of the methods is determined by the principles which govern teaching and learning this subject in schools nowadays; 2) with the help of various teaching aids and teaching materials now in use; 3) by means of different arrangements of pupils' language learning: work in unison, mass work, work in small groups, in pairs, individual work with programmed materials and individual cards; 4) taking into consideration the stage of instruction, pupils' age, their progress in language learning, their intellectual development, the linguistic and language material, time the teacher has at his disposal. All these points answer the question how to teach and to learn this subject.

To utilize all these points effectively systematic and careful planning is necessary.

The foreign language teacher plans all the kinds of work he is to do: he plans the essential course, the optional course (if any), and the extra-curricular work.

The first step in planning is to determine where each of his classes is in respect to achievements. It is easy for the teacher to start planning when he receives beginners.

Though the teacher does not know his pupils yet, his success will fully depend on his preparation for the lessons since pupils are usually eager to learn a foreign language in the 4th form (or the 2nd form in a specialized school). Planning is also relatively easy for the teacher who worked in these classes the previous year (or years) because he knows the achievements of his pupils in each class. He is aware of what language skills they have acquired. Planning is more difficult when the teacher receives a class (classes) from another teacher and he does not know the pupils, their proficiency in hearing, speaking, reading, and writing.

The teacher begins his planning before school opens and during the first week. He should establish the achievement level of his classes. There is a variety of ways in which this may be done. The teacher asks the previous teacher to tell him about each of the pupils. He may also look through the pupils' test-books and the register to find out what mark each of his pupils had the previous year. The teacher may administer pre-tests, either formally or informally, to see how pupils do with them. He may also conduct an informal quizzing, asking pupils questions in the foreign language to know if they can understand them and respond properly, or he has a conversation within the topics of the previous year. After the teacher has determined the achievement level of his classes, he sketches out an outline of the year's work. In making up his yearly outline the teacher consults the syllabus, Teacher's Book, Pupil's Book, and other teaching materials and sets seems to him to be realistic limits to the content to be covered during the course of the year. In sketching out an outline of the term's work the teacher makes a careful study of Teacher's Book, Pupil's Book, teaching aids and teaching materials available for this particular form. Taking into consideration the achievements of his class, he compiles a calendar plan in accordance with the time-table of a given form.

8.2 Unit planning

The teacher needs two kinds of plans to work successfully: the plan of a series of class-periods for a lesson or unit of the textbook or a unit plan, and the daily plan or the lesson plan for a particular class-period.

In compiling a unit plan, i. e., in planning the lesson of the textbook, the teacher determines the difficulties of the lesson, namely, phonetic difficulties (sounds, stress, intonation); grammar difficulties (grammar items, their character and amount), and vocabulary difficulties (the amount of new words, their character).

He then distributes these difficulties evenly over the number of class-periods allotted to the lesson in the calendar plan.

1. The teacher starts by stating the objective or objectives of each class-period, that is, what can be achieved in a classroom lesson. Of course the long-term aims of the course help the teacher to ensure that every particular lesson is pulling in the right direction and is another step towards gaining the ultimate goals of the course. "To help the class to speak English better", "To teach pupils to and" or "To develop pupils' proficiency in reading" cannot be the objectives of the lesson because they are too abstract to be clear to the learners. The lesson objectives should be stated as precisely as possible.

Pupils coming to the lesson should know what they are to do during the lesson, what performance level is required of them, and how it can be achieved. There are a few examples:

- Teach pupils to understand the following words ... when hearing and to use them in sentences orally.
- Teach pupils to form new words with the help of the following suffixes ... and to use them in the situations given.
- Teach pupils to consult a dictionary to look up the meaning of the following words
- Teach pupils to recognize the international words ... when hearing (or reading).
- Teach pupils to guess the meaning of unfamiliar words from the context while reading text "...".
- Teach pupils to understand the statements in the Present Perfect and to use them in the following situations
- Teach pupils to ask and answer questions in the Present Perfect and to make up dialogues following the models
- Teach pupils to find the logical predicate in the sentences ... while reading following the structural signals.
- Teach pupils to speak about the following objects ... on utterance level (in a few sentences).
- Teach pupils to use the words and grammar covered in speaking about the places of interest in our town.
- Teach pupils to find topical sentences while reading text "...".
- Teach pupils to get the main information while reading text "...".

The teacher can state no more than three concrete objectives for a particular class-period depending on the stage of instruction, the material of the lesson, and some other factors.

2. The teacher distributes the linguistic material (sounds, words, grammar, etc.) throughout the class-periods according to the objectives of each period, trying to teach new vocabulary on the grammatical material familiar to pupils, and to teach a new grammar item within the vocabulary assimilated by pupils; or he first teaches pupils hearing and speaking on the new material presented, and then pupils use this in reading and writing.
3. The teacher selects and distributes exercises for class and homework using various teaching aids and teaching materials depending on the objectives of each class-period. For example, for developing his pupils' skill in dialogic speech within the material covered the teacher needs a record with a pattern dialogue, word cards for changing the semantic meaning of the pattern dialogue to make the structure of the dialogue fit new situations.

In distributing exercises throughout the class-periods the teacher should involve his pupils in oral practice and speech, in oral and silent reading, and in writing. Exercises which are difficult for pupils should be done under the teacher's supervision, i. e., in class. Those exercises which pupils can easily perform independently are left for homework. In other words, new techniques, exercises, and skills should be practiced in class before the pupil attempts them at home. The homework done, the pupils return to class for perfecting, polishing, expanding, and varying what they have practiced at home, they learn to use the new words, the new structures in varied situations.

When the teacher determines the pupil's homework he should take into account that the subject he is teaching though important and difficult is not the only one the pupil learns at school. The realities of schools militate against more than 20-30 minutes of every day homework in a foreign language. This requires the teacher to teach in class rather than test. Practice proves that pupils do their homework provided they know exactly what to do, how it should be done, and that their work will be evaluated. Besides, pupils should know that six twenty-minutes' work at their English on consecutive days is more effective than two hours at a stretch.

The unit plan, therefore, involves everything the teacher needs for the detailed planning of a lesson (class-period), namely: the objective (objectives) of each lesson, the material to work at, and the exercises which should be done both during the class-period and at home to develop pupils' habits and skills in the target language.

The unit plan includes nine columns:

1. The number of class-periods.
2. The objectives of each period.
3. Language material.
- 4 – 7. Language skills.
8. Accessories.
9. Homework.

The importance of unit plans cannot be overestimated since unit planning permits the teacher to direct the development of all language skills on the basis of the new linguistic material the lesson involves. He can lead his pupils from reception through pattern practice to creative exercises, and in this way perfect their proficiency in hearing, speaking, reading, and writing. He can vary teaching aids and teaching materials within the class-periods allotted to the lesson. Unit planning allows the teacher to concentrate pupils' attention on one or two language skills during the lesson; in this case the class hour is divided into two main parts: a period of 20—25 minutes, during which he takes his pupils through a series of structural drills or other exercises supplied by the textbook, and a period of 20—25 minutes during which the teacher engages the class in creative exercises when they use the target language as a means of communication.

The teacher should bear in mind that pupils lose all interest in a language that is presented to them by means of endless repetitions, pattern practices, substitutions, and so on, and which they cannot use in its main function of exchange of information through hearing or reading. That is why, whenever possible, the teacher should make his pupils values of his pupils aware of the immediate values of his lesson if he hopes to keep and stimulate their interest in language learning which is very important in itself. When a pupil is convinced that learning is vital, he is usually willing to work hard to acquire a good knowledge of the target language. It is well known that some pupils see little value in much of their school work in a foreign language and feel no enthusiasm for their work at the language. Careful unit planning helps the teacher to keep pupils' progress in language learning under constant control and use teaching aids and teaching materials more effectively and, in this way, make his classes worthwhile to all of his pupils.

All this should be done by the teacher if there are no teacher's books to the textbooks. If there are such books the teacher's planning should deal with

- (1) the study of the author's recommendations;

(2) the development of these recommendations according to his pupils' abilities.

The teacher tries to adapt the plan to his pupils. He may either take it as it is and strictly follow the authors' recommendations, or he may change it a bit. For instance, if he has a group of bright pupils who can easily assimilate the material, the teacher utilizes all the exercises involved in Pupil's Book and include some additional material or stimuli pictures, objects for the pupils' speaking within the same class-periods. If the teacher has a group of slow pupils, he needs at least one more period to cover the material, he also omits some exercises in Pupil's Book with asterisk designed for those pupils who want to have more practice in the target language. The teacher may also increase the number of oral exercises and give pupils special cards to work on individually and in pairs.

Given below are the examples of plans the teacher can find in Teacher's Book.

In *Fourth Form English Teacher's Book* by A. P. Starkov, R. R. Dixon, M. D. Rybakov the material is distributed throughout the terms, and within the term – the weeks and class-periods. The plan includes nine columns:

Week	Class-period	Oral language				Reading	Writing	
		Phonetics	Auding		Speaking			
			Gram.	Vocab.	Gram.			Vocab.

Looking through the plan the teacher can see that auding is the most important skill that should be developed in pupils in this form. They can aud more than they can speak. In the first term pupils learn to aud and to speak. As far as reading and writing are concerned, pupils learn the English alphabet and English penmanship.

The plan in *Ninth Form English Teacher's Book* is:

Week	Class-periods	Class work				Home work				Grammar at teacher's discretion
		Auding	Speaking		Reading			Writing		
			Revision of topic	New topic	Exercises	Newspaper	Exercises	Text	Writing	

The plan manifests the importance of planning pupils' work in the classroom and at home. The teacher can see that in the classroom he should develop pupils speaking, and auding skills. As to reading, pupils develop this skill at home reading various texts and performing oral and written exercises connected with the texts. The teacher can also see what topics should be reviewed and what topics are new for his pupils. He can also find a new column in the plan "Newspaper reading". It means pupils should be taught to work with this type of texts. There is a column in the plan dealing with grammar. Pupils should review grammar in a certain system.

The teacher therefore thoroughly studies the plans in Teacher's Books and adapts them to his pupils.

8.4 Planning a class period

The unit plan completed the teacher may move into planning a class-period or a daily plan which, in addition to what has been determined by the unit plan, indicates the ways the teacher will follow to organize his class to work during the lesson. Therefore the daily plan includes

- (1) what should be achieved during this particular lesson;
- (2) what material is used for achieving the objectives;
- (3) how the objectives should be achieved.

Since almost every teacher has several classes of one level he usually makes preparations for each level although, ideally, a separate plan is needed for each class because classes proceed at different speeds, thus he must make adaptations in his plans to compensate for varying speeds of progress in the classes of the same level.

The teacher should write his daily plans if he strives for effective and reasonable use of time allotted to his pupils' learning a foreign language. However some teachers, including novice teachers, do not prepare written plans. They claim that they can teach "off the top of their heads", and they really can, but their teaching usually results in poor pupils' language skills because in this case we have, "teacher-dominated" classes when the teacher works hard during the lesson while his pupils remain mere "observers" of the procedure. Indeed, when the teacher is standing in front of pupils he does not have much time to think how to organize his pupils' activity. This should be done before the lesson for the teacher to be able to stimulate and direct pupils' learning the language.

We may state that the effectiveness of pupils' desired learning is fully dependent on the teacher's preparation for the lessons. If the teacher is talking, reading, and writing a great deal himself during the lesson, he is not ready for it. And vice versa, if the teacher gets his pupils to talk or read with communicative assignments while he listens, or to write while he moves about the class, giving a helping hand to everyone who needs it, he has thoroughly thought over the plan of the lesson beforehand. Therefore we may conclude: to provide necessary conditions for pupils' learning a foreign language, the teacher should thoroughly plan their work during the lesson which is possible if he writes his daily plan in advance.

There are teachers who strictly follow the textbook and accept plans that others have made for them without any changing. In doing this they overlook the unique capacities of their particular classes. They race through the textbook covering the ground regardless of whether pupils master each section.

Some experienced teachers assume that the content of foreign language teaching is constant and as they have worked for many years they do not need daily plans; they have them in their minds. In reality, however, the content changes continuously as well as the methods and techniques of teaching. Moreover, the old plans which are in their minds may not suit the needs of a particular class, since each group of pupils is unique, or they may no longer be applicable because better and more effective teaching aids and teaching materials have appeared. Consequently, proceeding from these considerations the teacher needs a daily plan to provide a high level of language learning of his pupils.

To involve all pupils in the work done in the classroom the teacher should compile a kind of scenario in which every pupil has his role, while the teacher only stimulates and directs his pupils' role-playing. In any case, a workable form for a daily plan should state the objectives, specify the activities, include evaluation techniques, indicate the assignment, and determine teaching aids and teaching materials. The plan itself should

- (1) be brief, but with sufficient detail to be precise;
- (2) assign a definite number of minutes to each activity;
- (3) indicate exactly what words, phrases, facts, items are to be learnt and how;
- (4) make use of a variety of classroom activity for every pupil.

In the organization and conduct of a foreign language lesson there is always a wide range of possibilities. No two teachers will treat the same topic in the same way. There are, however, certain basic principles of teaching and learning which should be observed:

1. Every lesson should begin with a greeting in the foreign language and a brief talk between the teacher and the pupils. Through this conversation the lesson may be motivated. The conversation may take place between:

Teacher — Class

Teacher — Pupil on duty

Pupil on duty — Class

Two Pupils on duty

The foreign language should be used for all common classroom activities; the teacher manages the class activities by giving directions in the foreign language. He stimulates pupils' participation by asking questions, praises and encourages pupils from time to time, and he may also criticize the behavior of a pupil or a class if necessary.

2. There should be a variety of activities at every lesson, including pronunciation drill, oral activities, reading, and writing. The success of activity is measured by attention, enthusiasm, and involvement on the part of the pupils.
3. The lesson should be conducted at a high speed when oral drill exercises are performed. Pupils should not stand up to say a word, a phrase, or a sentence.
4. The lesson should provide a certain sequence in pupils' assimilating language material and developing habits and skills from perception, comprehension, and memorizing, through the usage in a similar situation following a model, to the usage of the material received in new situations that require thinking on the part of the learner.
5. The lesson should provide time, for the activity of every pupil in the class. They must be active participants of the procedure and not the teacher as is often the case when the teacher talks more than all the pupils.
6. The lesson should provide conditions for pupils to learn. "Language is a skill so it must be learnt, it cannot be taught" (M. West). A certain amount of time should be devoted to seatwork as opposed to activities involving the class as a whole. During seatwork and other forms of solitary study pupils learn to learn for themselves. The use of language laboratories, teaching machines, and programmed instruction creates conditions for each pupil to learn for himself.
7. The work done during the lesson should prepare pupils for their independent work at home. It is generally accepted as good practice not to assign exercises that have not been covered in class; this especially refers to early stages of language learning.
8. The lesson should be well equipped with teaching aids and teaching materials which allow the teacher to create natural situations for developing pupils' hearing and speaking skills in a foreign language.

In *Teacher's Book* the teacher can find daily plans which differ greatly in form from conventional plans. For example, the author A. P. Starkov and his coauthors do not determine the objectives of each class-period and the points of the lesson (session) in a traditional way when the object of planning was rather teacher's work than pupils' activity. They plan pupils' work for each particular class-period. Pupils should pass through a number of "steps", each designed for forming a particular habit or involving them in a certain language activity. Since there are a lot of habits and skills to be formed and developed in pupils, a daily plan comprises a great number of "steps".

A school develops the school education programme (SEP) on the basis of the Framework Education Programme for Secondary General Education, or possibly framework Education Programme for Sports Training Secondary General Schools, and legislation in force. During this preparation, the pupils' needs and condition of the school have to be respected, the legal requirements of parents, possibly of the founder and of the region, have to be taken into consideration. The school head is responsible for the development of the SEP and its implementation, and teachers participate in the preparation of individual parts and take part in decision-making. The School Council gives its

opinion on the proposed SEP and its implementation, and approves the way through which pupils are assessed. The content of the SEP and its conformity with the framework education programme (FEP) are evaluated by the Czech School Inspectorate. The SEP must be available to the public.

In addition to the identification data, every SEP has to contain:

- characteristics of the school (capacity and equipment, educational staff, long-term projects, international cooperation, cooperation with parents and other subjects...)
- characteristics of the SEP (the school's specialisation, a profile of the school leaver, organisation of enrolment proceedings and the school-leaving examination), the educational strategy, description how the teaching of pupils with special educational needs or exceptionally gifted pupils will be ensured, integration of cross-curricular themes)
- the curriculum and the teaching programmes (educational content of subjects)
- the rules for pupils' assessment and self-evaluation of the school

In the SEP, the school divides the content of education stated in the FEP into subjects and grades (teaching programmes) and works out the curriculum in detail. It is possible to integrate topics of individual study fields and cross-curricular themes, to divide them into more subjects or to link them. Apart from the standard approach, the curriculum can be taught in the form of seminars, courses, forums or projects. The obligatory numbers of teaching hours must be respected, although the school head has a relatively high number of teaching hours at his/her disposal (20% of the total number of teaching hours), which enable the specialisation of the school or individual pupils.

The Manual for the Development of School Educational Programme of Secondary General Schools was published in 2007. To support the development of the SEPs, the [web page](#) was created. Among others, it is possible to find the experience from pilot schools there. A [methodical internet portal](#) is intended primarily for the support of teaching. It offers inspiration to the teachers and enables them to share their experience and results with other colleagues.

Language Education

Verification of the pilot version of the school educational programme which was created on the basis of the Framework Educational Programme for Bilingual General Secondary Schools from 2007 has been taking place at the bilingual six-year secondary general schools (CLIL type). On the basis of the Government regulation on the system of fields a new educational field “Bilingual General Secondary School” has been introduced, which has replaced previous one. Pupils will enter the first year of education from 1 September 2016. Teaching will be carried out according to the new Framework Educational Programme. For details see the section on [Bilingual General Secondary Schools – New Field, New Framework Educational Programme](#) in the Chapter 14 on Ongoing Reforms and Policy Developments. The Framework Educational Programme is valid for all six years of the study, it also includes the basic education provided in the first two years of study. During the initial two years, the foreign language teaching is intensive – 10 hours per week, at minimum; in the next four years, at least a half of the total number of subjects is taught in a chosen language (English, German, French, Spanish and Italian). Education in a foreign language leads to the competence level C1 of the [Common European Framework of Reference for Languages](#). Pupils learn also another language; the attainment of the competence level B1 is required. See also the [website of the National Institute for Education](#) (in Czech).

The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports can authorize any school (based on the application) to teach selected subjects in a foreign language in all grades if personnel and other conditions are fulfilled. In the school year 2016/17 60 upper secondary schools were awarded this authorization (including schools which provide professional courses), but many of them did not use it. Specific measures were approved and concrete initiatives have been realized – grant programmes, to support the language education of pupils. Their list can be found in the part on Teaching and Learning in Single Structure Education, in the section on [Language Education](#).

Pieces of information about the position of the language education in the Framework Educational Programme for Secondary General Education (and also in the Framework Educational Programme for Sports Training Secondary General Schools) are stated in the section Framework Educational Programme for Secondary General Education. The required level of competences attained in the first foreign language is B2, for additional foreign languages the level B1 according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages is required.

Vocational education

In the period between 2007 and 2010, the framework education programmes (FEPs) for particular vocational fields of education were gradually introduced. In 2012, another 4 FEPs were introduced. Based on these documents, the schools created the school education programmes (SEPs) and began to teach according to them starting with the first grades, two years after the publication of the given FEP at the latest. In the school year 2012/2013 the teaching according to the SEP took place in the majority of fields (at least in the first grades).

The development of the FEP is closely connected to the reform of the system of fields. The number of fields was significantly reduced (for example: The original 90 educational fields focused on individual aspects of business and management or different economic sectors were replaced by one field – Economy and business). During this reduction, the links between the fields and the labour market as well as the National Qualifications Framework (see chapter [National Qualifications Framework](#)) were taken into account. The new fields have wider specialization and there is one FEP prepared for each of them. The schools can profile themselves and can create more specializations within the given field in the SEP.

The study fields are subdivided into several categories:

Courses of the secondary education with the school-leaving examination (ISCED 354) include:

- M category – traditional vocational courses completed by the school-leaving examination
- the M category includes also courses of the lyceum branch, which provide vocational education with higher proportion of general education and prepare primarily to tertiary education in given specialisation (Technical Lyceum, Economics Lyceum, Pedagogical Lyceum, Health Care Lyceum, Science Lyceum and Combined Lyceum)
- L category – courses, where practical training is part of the education

Courses of the secondary education with the apprenticeship certificate (ISCED 353) include:

- H category – three-year vocational courses
- E category – less demanding two- or three-year vocational courses intended primarily for pupils with a health disability or disadvantage (for example with mild mental disability)

Courses of the secondary education include:

- J category (ISCED 353) – less demanding two-year vocational courses
- C category (ISCED 253) – one-year and two-year practical school courses intended for pupils with various levels of mental disability (for more information see part [Separate Special Needs Education Provision in Early-Childhood and School Education, section Curriculum, Subjects](#))

8.5 Teaching culture in the 21st century language classroom

The advent of the Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century (National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project, 1999) drew attention to the vital role of culture in language classrooms and defined culture as a fundamental part of the second language (L2) learning.

Professional conferences and journals focused on cultural learning “as an instructional objective equally as important as communication” (Moore, 2006, p. 4). While language teachers have recognized the need to incorporate more cultural activities in order to promote students’ cultural and intercultural understanding to “help combat the ethnocentrism that often dominates the thinking of our young people” (National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project, 1999, p. 47), the question lingers as to how such cultural teaching should and could most effectively occur at the classroom level.

Here we will attempt to advance an approach to the teaching of culture and language through the theoretical construct of the 3Ps (Products, Practices, Perspectives) (National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project, 1999), or content, combined with an inquiry teaching approach (pedagogy) utilizing digital media (instructional technology) and provide guidelines for successful classroom application. The benefits reaped by students through authentic, collaborative, and contextualized learning tasks that result in digital products for an audience are well documented in the research (Maor & Roberts, 2011).

When teachers integrate powerful technological tools into their instruction, students are allowed to personally interact with real data and solve open-ended problems. Integrating technology in this manner places the majority of responsibility for negotiating meaning in the hands of the learners. This learner-centered approach allows students to start with what they know and build their own understanding of culture. The integration of content, pedagogy, and instructional technology when constructing knowledge promotes a rich and engaging learning environment for foreign language learners. In addition, the authors will review the research that illustrates how teachers can utilize more traditional methods of teaching culture (e.g., folklore, fairytales, authentic pictures, art, etc.) and improve them with technology to make them more effective.

Culture in a Foreign Language Classroom Research on teaching culture has shown that language and culture are closely related (e.g., Brown, 2007; Kramsch, 1998; Kuang, 2007;).

Brown (2007) describes the interrelatedness of language and culture stating “that one cannot separate the two without losing the significance of either language or culture. The acquisition of a second language, except for specialized, instrumental acquisition [...], is also the acquisition of a second culture” (p. 189-190). Based on these findings, it is clear that language and culture learning are inextricably linked, but what role does culture play in language teaching and how is it being taught? Lafayette (1988) noted that teachers spent the greatest amount of time and effort on teaching grammatical and lexical components of the language, leaving the culture as the weakest component in the curriculum.

Strasheim (1981) concluded Teaching Culture in the 21st Century Language Classroom 77 earlier that teachers spent approximately 10% of teaching time on culture, whereas a study conducted 25 years later by Moore (2006) found that at least 80% of the teachers surveyed indicated they were teaching culture more than half of their instructional time. Although teachers have begun to incorporate more culture in the lesson, the major concern that remains is finding effective ways for integrating culture and language that prepare the learners to communicate and collaborate effectively in the 21st century.

A number of definitions of culture have emerged over the past 50 years. In the 1960s, social scientists viewed culture as closely related to human learning. Since that time, there has been an ongoing discussion on the definition of culture. Despite multiple attempts and continuous efforts to

define the term “culture,” researchers have not yet come up with a single agreed-upon definition (Tang, 2006) or a common denominator, because culture is a “very broad concept embracing all aspects of human life” (Seelye, 1993, p. 15).

The lack of an overarching definition presents foreign language teachers with the challenge of determining which components or segments of the target culture should be taught. As a result, culture is viewed as composed of many different parts, some of which are emphasized in the classroom, while others are not. Moreover, this lack of a common definition results in a separation of culture in terms of the fine arts, history, and geography that does not represent the full range of features involved in a culture. Tang (2006) cautions teachers to remember that “in categorizing culture for practical purposes, [they] should be cautious not to lose sight of the inherently holistic nature of this concept” (p. 86).

Although foreign languages may be no longer taught as a compendium of rules through drills and contrived dialogues, culture is still often taught separately and not integrated in the process of foreign language learning. According to the Standards for Foreign Language Learning (National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project, 1999), “the true content of the foreign language course is not the grammar and the vocabulary of the language, but the cultures expressed through that language” (p. 43).

According to research, classroom activities that are not contextualized and attached to real life issues, activities, and concerns, do not help the students learn to use L2 (e.g., Firth & Wagner, 2002). Second language learning has been reconceptualized over the last decade as a participatory process, in which a learner is not only a learner of new ways of expressing ideas but rather the learner becomes a learner of new ways of thinking, behaving, and living in an L2 community. Below, the authors will review the research pertaining to the three components – 3Ps, inquiry-based instruction, and technology, that supports the importance of incorporating them in the teaching of culture.

Products, Practices, Perspectives (3Ps)

Germane to this discussion is an examination of the currently available most effective practices in teaching culture to achieve the cultural goals stated in the Standards for Foreign Language Learning.

Students should demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between the practices and perspectives of the culture studied. 2.2 Students should demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between the products and perspectives of the culture studied. Although there has been an extensive discussion on how to teach culture in a foreign language classroom, educators are still looking for effective techniques and approaches that allow language teachers in the 21st century to teach culture in ways that promote authentic communication. Since language emerges from societal interactions, L2 learners cannot truly learn the language without acquiring knowledge about its culture and native speakers. As mentioned earlier, learning about another culture is now one of the core objectives in the foreign language classroom.

The ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines for K-12 Learners include sections on both cultural competence and linguistic performance and delineate how well students should perform in L2 linguistic and cultural domains as a result of foreign language instruction. These guidelines come from the Standards for Foreign Language Learning (National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project, 1999), a document which describes a set of goals for foreign language learning. These Standards, organized around five main goals (Communication, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons, and Communities) articulate the essential skills and knowledge an L2 student needs in order to achieve language proficiency. The definition of culture that the authors will be using and consistently referring to in this article emanates from the Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century (National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project, 1999) and its Cultures goal, in which the term “culture” [...] includes the philosophical perspectives, the behavioral practices, and the products – both tangible and intangible – of a society” (p. 47).

Such a categorical approach and the relationship among the three components are represented in a triangle diagram that reflects “how the products and practices are derived from the philosophical perspectives that form the world view of a cultural group” (National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project, 1999, p. 47). In this context, cultural practices are “patterns of behavior accepted by a society” or, in other words, “what to do where and when” (Lafayette), as well as other forms of procedural aspects of culture (e.g., rites of passage, use of the forms of discourse, etc.).

Cultural products might be tangible (e.g., a sculpture, a painting, a piece of literature, etc.) or intangible (e.g., political system, a system of education, a dance, etc.).

Cultural perspectives can be described as popular beliefs, values, attitudes, and assumptions held by the members of L2 culture. It depicts the relationship of the three components of culture (3Ps) according to the Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century (1999). This triangle model of the cultural framework represents how products, practices, and perspectives are interrelated, and allows teachers to see the relationships among the three elements of culture to consider when planning instructional lessons. Teaching Culture in the 21st Century Language Classroom.

The Culture Triangle - **Products, Practices, Perspectives (3Ps)**

The most significant improvement of the 3P framework in comparison to its preceding concept of the “big C” and “little c” cultures (Alatis, Straehle, Gallenberger, & Ronkin, 1996; Phillips & Terry, 1999) is the expansion of the definition of culture to include how a specific culture behaves and interacts. According to Lange (1999), defining culture in terms of the 3Ps avoids “the common, overworked conflict between C and c by interweaving the formal and informal aspects of daily life, as one normally lives it in any culture” (p. 60). Regarding materials and resources for teaching culture, the 3P approach “permits the use of any document — be it an advertisement, newspaper article, or literature text — for cultural learning where appropriate” (Lange, 1999, p. 60). This re-conceptualized approach to culture shifted the focus of teaching culture to a study of underlying values, attitudes, and beliefs, rather than simply learning about cultural products and practices. As pointed out by Morain (1997), L2 learners experience little difficulty with understanding L2 cultural products and practices, however, they have trouble identifying and understanding cultural perspectives. According to Morain (1997), the challenge with cultural perspectives lies in the fact that values, beliefs, and attitudes are intangible, and therefore cannot be easily introduced by a teacher. Textbooks also rarely contain any information on values, attitudes, and beliefs in L2 culture, making the teacher’s task even more challenging. One of the challenges teachers face when introducing cultural products or practices is that delivered information, such as bits of trivia, can appear to be disconnected, and possibly lead to stereotypes.

By using the 3P cultural framework in their planning, teachers can ensure that culture is explored in a systematic and contextual way, as well as allow for some flexibility (Lange, 1999). In addition, this framework helps teachers tie together the disparate knowledge about products and practices, while helping students begin to relate products and practices to perspectives and acquire a deeper understanding of culture overall.