

The Global Language Program Curriculum

The Theories behind Our Curriculum

We have developed our curriculum in response to the *Illinois Learning Goals for Foreign Languages*, which reflects the national standards, and years of involved foreign language teaching. We are centering our teaching on a combination of theoretical approaches proven to be effective in teaching children foreign languages in the effort to engage the students, and as those approaches evolve due to academic research, so does our curriculum.

Total Physical Response

TPR is developed as a language teaching method around the coordination of speech and action, teaching language through physical activity. Developed by James Asher, a professor of psychology at San Jose State University, who saw second language learning similar to the way children learn their first language. He combined his knowledge of humanistic psychology, creating a positive emotional environment for the child that involves songs, games and movements, reducing the stress and inhibitions there might be involved in learning a second language. The general objectives of TPR are to teach oral proficiency at a beginning level.

Communicative Language Teaching

CLT is a more recently developed approach to language learning, whose principles include an approach that students learn a language through using it to communicate as a goal of class room activities. Furthermore, CLT believes learning to be a process of creative construction and involves trial and error.

The Natural Approach

TNA was developed by Tracy Terrell, a Spanish teacher in California, emphasizing the principles of naturalistic learning in young children. The Natural Approach belongs to a tradition of language methods based on observation and interpretation of how learners acquire both first and second languages in nonformal settings, by comprehensible and meaningful practice activities rather than asking students to produce grammatically perfect utterances and sentences.

The Task Approach

Formed part of a communicative language teaching movement in the 1980's where basic elements are purposeful activities and tasks that emphasize communication and meaning to facilitate learning, such as deciding quantities to be bought at the market with the money available.

Key Components of the Global Language Curriculum

- Teaching the students sentences like "I want ..." "Where is..." rather than single words from vocabulary lists.
- Spiral learning: Repeating sentences to facilitate comprehension.
- Constant exposure to language in order to maximize input.
- Rhythm: Setting key phrases to rhythm as a tool for retention (numbers in a song are easier to learn than "plain" numbers).
- Make the students the focus of the lesson, not the teacher.
- Provide maximum opportunities for student participation.
- Create for the students a system of positive reinforcement (e.g. star stickers) to enforce their engagement.

In Our Class Rooms

- Recognize basic language patterns.
- Respond to basic commands (smile, laugh, sing etc.).
- Use prompts to ask and answer simple questions (what is this, what color is...).
- Imitate pronunciation sounds unique to the target language.
- Begin to understand written form of language.
- Predict key words in songs, poems or simple stories.
- Write simple words and phrases.
- Describe people, activities and objects.
- Use and understand common forms of courtesy and greetings.
- Identify one or more art forms (e.g., Spanish flamenco) representative of the target language.
- Dramatize children's poetry from the target language (performing a song or dance).
- Identify characters from children's literature.
- Identify different types of literature (e.g. poetry, plays, legends, etc.).
- Use different media in the target language (e.g. dvd, cd, etc.).
- Recognize important people and events in the history of countries where the target language is spoken.
- Understand geographical vocabulary which is significant to the target language (e.g. river, mountain, border etc.).
- Recognize the currency of the country where the target language is spoken and compare it with United States currency.
- Use the language to solve simple math exercises.
- Identify simple science terms referring to weather and nature (wind, clouds, trees, sun, stars, animals etc.).
- Use the target language when playing games and dances.
- Identify professions and occupations.