

A Conceptual Breakdown of Foreign Language Teaching

Goal of the Foreign Language Student

Communicate using the **target language (L2)** in **standard / correct** ways to understand and express ideas.

- **Communication** = The exchange of ideas between two or more people
- **Target language (L2)** = The foreign language, as opposed to the student's native language (L1)
- **Standard / correct** = The generally accepted way native speakers of a language express meaning

10 Language Concepts (Elements)

| Aural | Visual |
|---|---|
| Pronunciation = Forming sounds with the mouth | Penmanship / spelling = Forming letters and words with a pen in the right combinations |
| Intonation / rhythm = How high or low, loud or soft the voice is, and the length of utterances | Punctuation = Written symbols that provide extra information about a written phrase |
| Grammar = The structure of the language | |
| Vocabulary = Words and their meanings | |
| Context / setting = The situation in which, or for which, language is produced | |
| Organization = The order or arrangement of information | |
| Culture = The assumptions, subtle nuances, and connotations that influence meaning | |
| Topic = The common theme around which communication orbits | |

4 Language Skills

| | Aural | Visual |
|----------------------------------|-----------|----------------------|
| Reception (Understanding) | Listening | Reading |
| Production (Expressing) | Speaking | Writing ¹ |

Other Skills that are Useful for Foreign Language Students

1. **Deducing** = Going from general → specific when analyzing or giving examples
2. **Fluency** = Recalling and using the L2 reasonably quickly and with little effort (thinking in the L2)
3. **Gesturing** = Using body language or facial expressions to augment face-to-face communication
4. **Giving Feedback** = Letting the speaker or writer know your reaction to what they said (whether you understood, agreed, etc.)
5. **Guessing** = Trying to guess the meaning of something unknown (often mistaken for Listening)
6. **Inducing** = Going from specific → general when analyzing or giving examples
7. **Mimicking** = Hearing or seeing language modeled and then reproducing it similar to the model
8. **Monitoring** = Noticing the correctness of produced language (usually self-monitoring)
9. **Note Taking** = Writing down information in a way that will be a useful reference later
10. **Paraphrasing** = Restating the same basic meaning in a new way

Materials

4 Main Materials for Foreign Language Students

1. **Statement** = A fact generally devoid of opinion
2. **Opinion** = An owned belief
3. **Story** = A real or imagined experience (past or future)
4. **Question** = Eliciting a response

3 Types of Media

1. **Realia** = Props, pictures, the bandage on a student's leg, etc.
2. **Written** = Textbook, flyer for upcoming activity, handout, newspaper, etc.
3. **Audio / Visual** = Song, movie, video, etc.

¹ For the Chinese language, typing and handwriting are significantly different skills. For English, the difference is negligible.