

Standards for School English Teachers in China

4. Standards for cultural knowledge and intercultural communication skills

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Goal: Teachers are familiar with the most common terminologies and concepts of culture embedded in the process of language teaching and learning. They understand the relationship between culture and language, cultural diversity and intercultural communication, culture influence and the development of communicative competence in a second language. Teachers understand and appreciate bilingualism and multilingualism. Teachers understand cultural dimensions in the development of curricula, syllabi, lesson plans, and teaching materials, and in the use of teaching methods, testing, assessment, and evaluation procedures.

Objective 1:

Teachers understand the role of culture in language teaching, and have the basic knowledge and understanding of common terminologies and concepts of culture embedded in the process of language teaching and learning.

Basic Concepts

1. Essentialism and non-essentialism
2. Discourses of culture
3. Speech communities
4. Culture, Subcultures and Small culture
5. Cultural patterns, and Cultural pluralism
6. Ethnocentrism
7. Ethnography and Ethnography of Communication
8. Culture Shock
9. Verbal and Non-verbal Communication Styles
10. Social Distance and Social Identity
11. Sociolinguistic Competence
12. Social Interaction
13. Value Orientations
14. Speech Accommodation Theory
15. Self and Other
16. Transcultural flows
17. Interculturality

Basic Principles

1. Teachers should understand that language and culture are intertwined.
2. Teachers should understand that culture and language should be taught together.
3. Teachers should understand the importance of cultural dimension as immersed in communication.
4. Teachers should understand that culture is an important component in communicative competence.

Basic Abilities/Skills

1. Be able to know how to accommodate students from diverse cultural backgrounds, both local and international.
2. Be able to know how to deal with students' differential attitudes or perceptions towards other cultures.
3. Be able to understand and explain diverse cultural practices in language classrooms
4. Be able to identify and explain occasions of miscommunication in educational settings
5. Be able to identify and explain consequences of stereotypes for students
6. Be able to demonstrate an understanding of the current methods for overcoming cultural barriers.

Objective 2:

Teachers understand the relationship between language and culture.

Basic Concepts

1. Culture and culture
2. Culture, thought and language
3. The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis
4. Linguaculture
5. The linguistic relativity principle
6. Diversity in the relationship between culture and language
 - Cultural diversity in the use of vocabulary
 - Cultural diversity in rules of language use
 - Cultural diversity in verbal communication

Basic Principles

1. Teachers should understand the complex and open relationship between language and cultural reality.
2. Teachers should understand the contribution of diverse language and cultural backgrounds, both internationally and nationally, to the learning and teaching process.
3. Teachers should understand that gender, voice, community and social identity of students, as they relate to language and cultural diversity, are important factors contributing to the learning and teaching process.

Basic Abilities/Skills

1. Be able to understand cultural and language diversity
2. Be able to understand cultural and language universality
3. Be able to understand the influences of cultural concepts, schema, values and perspectives over language
4. Be able to understand the changing attitudes and perceptions of students as the result of the cultural exposure or cultural learning
5. Be able to understand and explain the impact of cultural diversity on modes of learning and teaching
6. Be able to understand and appreciate voices in language classrooms

Objective 3:

Teachers understand the relationship between culture and communication.

Basic Concepts

4. Standards on cultural knowledge and intercultural communication skills

1. Cultural diversity and inter-cultural communication
2. The diversity of cultural practice and related language
3. Discourses of culture
4. Cultural prejudice and global politics
5. Othering and self-Othering
6. Verbal communication and non-verbal communication
7. Miscommunication and communication break-down

Basic Principles

1. Teachers should understand that communication is both verbal and non-verbal in style.
2. Teachers should guard against the possible negative influence of stereotypes, dominant discourses of culture, global politics and cultural prejudice in intercultural communication.
3. Teachers should respect students' choices of communicative styles as reflection of their own cultural identities.

Basic Abilities/Skills

1. Be able to negotiate meanings in communication settings
2. Be able to recognize, understand and tolerate cultural diversity in communication styles
3. Be able to empathize with speakers who come from different cultural backgrounds to you, both within and outside China
4. Be able to flexibly adapt to the dominant communicative style of the cultural environment where you find yourself, both within and outside China
5. Be able to illustrate to students the possible negative influence of stereotypes, dominant discourses of culture, global politics and cultural prejudice in intercultural communication
6. Be able to illustrate to students cultural diversities as reflected in communication
7. Be able to teach students strategies of coping with cross-cultural miscommunication or communication breakdown

Objective 4:

Teachers understand the relationship between culture and the development of communicative competence in a second/foreign language.

Basic Concepts

1. Schumann's Acculturation Model and the development of L2 communicative competence
2. Pragmatics and Interlanguage pragmatics
 - Leech's Politeness Principle and its maxims (tact, generosity, approbation, modesty, agreement, and sympathy)

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- Grice's Cooperative Principle and its maxims (quantity, quality, relation, and manner)
 - The Speech Act Theory (locutionary act, illocutionary act, perlocutionary act)
 - Face (positive face and negative face)
 - Face-Threatening Act
3. Culture and L2 pragmatic development
- Cultural diversity and cultural specific pragmatic norms
 - Cultural similarity and universal pragmatic principles
 - Pragmatic failure
 - Pragmatic transfer
 - Positive pragmatic transfer (positive pragmalinguistic transfer and sociopragmatic transfer)
 - Negative pragmatic transfer (negative pragmalinguistic transfer and sociopragmatic transfer)

Basic Principles

1. Exposure to unfamiliar forms in English can enhance the acquiring of communicative and pragmatic competence in both Chinese and English.
2. Teachers should pay attention to the possible impact of culture on the development of communicative competence in a second language, e.g. misinterpretation, non-idiomatic production, culturally diverse communicative styles, etc.
3. Teachers should encourage their students to be critically aware of the politics of stated L2 norms of communication. It is necessary to expose students to unfamiliar norms, but whether to follow or not is the students' own choice.
4. Teachers should teach pragmatic competence and raise pragmatic awareness whenever possible.
5. Teaching pragmatics is part of the teaching for overall communicative competence.
6. Teachers should build pragmatic competence in the teaching plan.
7. Teachers should consider pragmatic competence building as part of their own professional development.
8. Teachers should use models and examples in teaching pragmatic competence.
9. Teachers should focus on language use in language teaching.
10. Teachers should develop student's communicative competence, especially the ability to perform speech acts through a wide array of tasks and activities.
11. Teachers should teach pragmatic competence through diagnostic assessment.
12. Teachers should teach pragmatic competence through the evaluation of a situation.
13. Teachers should teach pragmatic competence through feedback and discussion.

Basic Abilities/Skills

1. Be able to demonstrate an understanding of the component view of pragmatics, and the perspective view of pragmatics
2. Be able to demonstrate an understanding of the context, implicature, and reference of micro-pragmatics
3. Be able to demonstrate an understanding of pragmatic principles

4. Be able to demonstrate the understanding of Face-threatening act, and negative face
5. Be able to know what is most appropriate in communication
6. Be able to know what is socially acceptable mannerism and communication protocols
7. Be able to teach students pragmatic competence in language classrooms through a wide array of tasks and activities
8. Be able to identify and assess the appropriateness of students' communication patterns, strategies and styles
9. Be able to identify and define the major speech acts (e.g. apologies, requests, refusals, compliments, complaints) in communication
10. Be able to demonstrate the understanding of the differences between direct and indirect strategies in speech acts (conventional indirectness & hints)
11. Be able to understand how speech acts are acquired or learned
12. Be able to understand how speech acts are collected and studied
13. Be able to prepare their students to meet the challenges of producing more contextually appropriate utterances in unfamiliar settings

Objective 5:

Teachers are able to understand and appreciate bilingualism and multilingualism.

Basic Concepts

1. Bilingualism
2. Additive Bilingualism
3. Subtractive Bilingualism
4. Multilingualism
5. Societal multilingualism
6. Speech Communities
7. Verbal repertoire
8. Language Choice
9. Patterns of Use
10. Giglossia
11. Code switching
12. Code mixing
13. Patterns in structure
14. Convergence
15. Language transfer and language interference

Basic Principles

1. Teachers should understand the role of Chinese as L1 in teaching English as a Foreign Language in the Chinese context.
2. Teachers should utilize Chinese whenever appropriate in teaching English.
3. Teachers should raise the awareness of multiculturalism in language classrooms.

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4. Teachers should allow and tolerate code-switching and code-mixing in language classrooms.
5. Teachers should encourage language transfer and help students overcome L1 interference in language learning.
6. Teachers should predict the difficulties students will experience in using Chinese and English interchangeably in the learning process and come up with strategies to guide students in their language learning.

Basic Abilities/Skills

1. Be able to understand and appreciate bilingualism and multilingualism
2. Be able to show understanding and respect for those who are able to speak more than one languages
3. Be able to set realistic goals for learners in their process of learning a second language.
4. Be able to demonstrate the tolerance in treating students' errors in both oral and written communication

Objective 6:

Teachers demonstrate understanding of cultural dimensions in the development of curricula, syllabi, lesson plans, and teaching materials, and in the use of teaching methods, testing, assessment, and evaluation procedures

Basic Concepts

1. Needs Analysis
2. Cultural Backgrounds
3. Cultural Explanations
4. Cultural Awareness
5. Cultural Sensitivity
6. Cultural Context
7. Cultural Dimensions
8. Cultural Adjustment
9. Authentic Materials
10. Cultural Diversity

Basic Principles

1. Teachers should consider cultural factors in curriculum development and syllabus design.
2. Teachers should plan their lessons with culture in mind.
3. Teachers should develop their teaching materials with cultural consideration.
4. Teachers should consider cultural tasks and activities in classroom instruction.
5. Teachers should assess cultural appropriateness in selecting authentic materials.
6. Teachers should be neutral in introducing cultural concepts.

Basic Abilities/Skills

1. Be able to make curricula decisions based on the needs and socio-cultural and socio-economic backgrounds of the learners
2. Be able to demonstrate cultural awareness in teaching culturally sensitive materials and topics that requires cultural explanations.
3. Be able to demonstrate an understanding of culture and the context of language learning
4. Be able to demonstrate an understanding of cultural dimensions in oral communication: listening and speaking
5. Be able to demonstrate an understanding of cultural dimensions in written communication: reading and writing
6. Be able to identify and avoid or modify any cultural sensitive topics in writing the syllabi and lesson plans
7. Be able to determine what is culturally appropriate for students being taught
8. Be able to adjust teaching materials to meet the diverse needs of students
9. Be culturally sensitive to the needs of individual students
10. Be able to differentiate between materials which are authentic to the lives of the students and those which are not authentic
11. Be able to demonstrate an understanding of the nature of sensitivity in authentic materials.
12. Be able to identify, classify and determine the level of appropriateness of the teaching materials for particular groups of students