

Chapter 4 Foreign Language Activities

I. OVERALL OBJECTIVE

To form the foundation of pupils' communication abilities through foreign languages while developing the understanding of languages and cultures through various experiences, fostering a positive attitude toward communication, and familiarizing pupils with the sounds and basic expressions of foreign languages.

II. CONTENT

[Grade 5 and Grade 6]

1. Instruction should be given on the following items in order to help pupils actively engage in communication in a foreign language:
 - (1) To experience the joy of communication in the foreign language.
 - (2) To actively listen to and speak in the foreign language.
 - (3) To learn the importance of verbal communication.
2. Instruction should be given on the following items in order to deepen the experiential understanding of the languages and cultures of Japan and foreign countries:
 - (1) To become familiar with the sounds and rhythms of the foreign language, to learn its differences from the Japanese language, and to be aware of the interesting aspects of language and its richness.
 - (2) To learn the differences in ways of living, customs and events between Japan and foreign countries and to be aware of various points of view and ways of thinking.
 - (3) To experience communication with people of different cultures and to deepen the understanding of culture.

III. LESSON PLAN DESIGN AND HANDLING THE CONTENT

1. In designing the syllabus, consideration should be given to the following:
 - (1) In principle English should be selected for foreign language activities.
 - (2) Taking into account the circumstances of pupils and the local community, each individual school should establish objectives of foreign language activities for each grade in an appropriate manner and work to realize them over the period of two school years.
 - (3) With respect to the instruction on the content mainly concerning

language and culture listed in Subsection II-2, teachers should make them link with the content mainly concerning communication listed in Subsection II-1. In doing so, teachers should try to have pupils understand language and culture experientially, avoiding giving too detailed explanations or engaging pupils in rote learning.

- (4) The instruction on the content and activities should be in line with pupils' interest. Effort should be made to increase the effectiveness of teaching by, for example, taking advantage of what pupils have learned in other subjects, such as the Japanese language, music and arts and handicrafts.
 - (5) Homeroom teachers or teachers in charge of foreign language activities should make teaching programs and conduct lessons. Effort should be made to get more people involved in lessons by inviting native speakers of the foreign language or by seeking cooperation from local people who are proficient in the foreign language, depending on the circumstances of the local community.
 - (6) When dealing with sounds, teachers should make active use of audio-visual materials such as CDs and DVDs. The audio-visual materials should be selected according to the actual circumstances of the pupils, school and local community.
 - (7) Based on the objectives of moral education listed in Subsections I and II of Chapter 1 "General Provisions" and in Subsection I of Chapter 3 "Moral Education", instruction concerning the content listed in Subsection II of Chapter 3 "Moral Education" should be given appropriately. The instruction should be in accordance with the characteristics of foreign language activities and should be related to the period for moral education.
2. In the handling of the content listed in Subsection II, consideration should be given to the following:
- (1) Consideration should be given to the following points when giving instruction over the period of two school years:
 - A. When giving pupils opportunities to experience communication in the foreign language, teachers should select appropriate expressions, giving consideration to the developmental stages of the pupils and set communication situations familiar to them.
 - B. When giving pupils opportunities to experience communication in the

foreign language, teachers should focus on the foreign language sounds and use letters of the alphabet and words as supplementary tools for oral communication, in effort not to give too much burden to pupils.

- C. Since non-verbal communication is also an essential means of communication, teachers should adopt gestures etc. and help pupils understand their functions.
- D. Teachers should enable pupils to deepen their understanding not only of the foreign language and culture, but also of the Japanese language and culture through foreign language activities.
- E. When giving pupils opportunities to experience communication in the foreign language, teachers should mainly set the communication situations and functions listed in the following examples:

[Examples of Communication Situations]

(a) Situations where fixed expressions are often used

- Greeting
 - Self-introduction
 - Shopping
 - Having meals
 - Asking and giving directions
- etc.

(b) Situations that are likely to occur in pupils' lives

- Home life
 - Learning and activities at school
 - Local events
 - Childhood play
- etc.

[Examples of Functions of Communication]

(a) Improving the relationship with a communication partner

(b) Expressing emotions

(c) Communicating facts

(d) Expressing opinions and intentions

(e) Stimulating a communication partner into action

- (2) Consideration should be given to the following points when giving instruction to each grade, taking the learning level of pupils into account:

A. Activities in Grade 5

Considering that pupils learn the foreign language for the first time, teachers should introduce basic expressions about familiar things and events and engage pupils in communication activities where they experience interactions with one another. Teachers should engage

pupils mainly in the activities where the pupils may become familiar with the foreign language or in the activities which are related to their daily lives or school lives.

B. Activities in Grade 6

Based on the learning in Grade 5, teachers should engage pupils in communication activities, focused on interactions with one another, including intercultural exchange activities, in addition to activities related to pupils' daily lives or school lives.