



Chapter 1

Introduction

Chapter Summary

Purpose of This Guide
Understanding the Learner
Multiple Intelligences and Second Language Learning
Brain Research and Second Language Learning
Bloom's Taxonomy
Benefits of Second Language Learning

Purpose of This Guide

This guide to implementation is intended to support the German Language and Culture 10-3Y, 20-3Y, 30-3Y Program of Studies. It was developed primarily for teachers, yet it includes information that may be useful for administrators and other stakeholders in their efforts to plan for and implement the new German program of studies.

Familiarity with the program of studies is essential as teachers plan and implement language courses in their classrooms. The program of studies provides a brief discussion of the value of learning a second language and lays out learning outcomes for each course level. It defines what students are expected to achieve and, hence, what teachers are expected to teach. To obtain the current version of the program of studies, visit the Alberta Education Web site at <http://education.alberta.ca/teachers/program/interlang/german.aspx>.

This guide to implementation will assist educators as they:

- develop further understanding of the program of studies
- plan for meeting the needs of diverse learners
- plan for the use of technology in the delivery of the new program
- communicate with stakeholders, such as parents and community members

- plan for instruction and assessment that support student achievement of the learning outcomes
- monitor student progress in achieving the learning outcomes
- select learning resources to support their own professional development
- select student learning resources to enhance instruction and assessment.

Research of second language learning and acquisition has identified several general principles of effective language learning. These principles guided the development of the conceptual model used in the program of studies. A clear understanding of these principles will provide a strong foundation for teachers as they develop and select teaching and learning strategies for classroom implementation.

Engaging Students in Meaningful Tasks

Language learning is more effective when classes are structured around meaningful tasks rather than elements of the language itself, such as grammatical structures, vocabulary themes or language functions. Specific language skills are taught when students realize they need specific vocabulary, structures or functions to carry out the task they have chosen to do. When language learning has a purpose, students tend to be more motivated to learn.

Maximizing Student Interaction

Students learn languages more effectively when they have ample opportunities to work in small groups on tasks that they have had a hand in choosing and that require them to negotiate meaning; i.e., make themselves understood and work to understand others. In classrooms structured with a maximum amount of student interaction, students have more practice time, they work on tasks that reflect their interests, and they use the language in situations that more closely resemble those outside of the classroom.

Ensuring Student Awareness and Use of Thinking and Learning Strategies

➔ For more information ...

German Language and Culture
10-3Y, 20-3Y, 30-3Y
Program of Studies

Successful language learners use a number of cognitive, metacognitive and social/affective strategies that help make their learning more effective. Communication and language use strategies are important to the development of communicative competence and are clearly laid out in the “Strategies” section of the program of studies.

Many students benefit from explicit classroom instruction regarding language learning and language use strategies. Once students are aware of the various strategies and have practised them, they can select the most effective ones for a particular task. By using strategies they have selected, students see the link between their own actions and their learning and become more motivated and more effective language learners.

Building on Prior Knowledge

The constructivist theory of learning suggests that people learn by integrating new information or experiences into what they already know and have experienced. Students do this most effectively through active engagement with tasks that are meaningful to them, in authentic contexts, using actual tools. For this reason, the content and tasks around which lessons and units are structured should be chosen from within the students' areas of experience. For example, if students are involved and interested in a particular sport, a task can be chosen that links with this interest. The learning activities will build on the students' knowledge and experience while encouraging them to increase their understanding and broaden their horizons.

Students come to their language learning experiences with unique sets of prior knowledge, even if they have similar cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds. Classroom activities that provide choice and flexibility allow students to make meaningful connections and to be actively involved in constructing their own learning.

Transferring First Language Knowledge

Students come to their language and culture classes with large bodies of useful knowledge about language, even if they have never spoken a word of the language being taught. They can transfer knowledge of their first language and other languages to their learning of a new language. They may also transfer language learning and language use strategies from one language context to another. Initially, the first language may also be a source of interference, as students try to apply generalizations valid for their dominant language to the language they are learning. Students benefit from an awareness of both similarities and differences between their first language and the language being learned in terms of all components of language; e.g., sound system, grammar structures, vocabulary and discourse features.

Understanding the Culture

Intercultural competence is an essential element of any language-learning endeavour. Knowledge of the target culture must take into account that cultures evolve over time and minority cultures exist within the dominant culture in any society. If students develop the skills to analyze, understand for themselves and relate to any culture they come in contact with, they will be prepared for encounters with cultural practices that have not been dealt with in class.

Understanding the Learner

The Nature of Grade 10 to Grade 12 Learners

The German Language and Culture 10-3Y, 20-3Y, 30-3Y Program of Studies is a student-centred curriculum designed to support the language learning of senior high school students in Alberta. The unique characteristics and needs of these students formed the basis for curriculum development.

Language learning is an active process that begins at birth and continues throughout life. Language is acquired at various rates and in different ways throughout a learner's stages of growth, developing progressively according to individual characteristics and criteria. Students enhance their language abilities by applying their knowledge of language in new and more complex contexts with ever-increasing sophistication. They reflect on and use prior knowledge to extend and enhance their language knowledge and understanding.

Language and literacy development begins with a student's earliest experiences with language. The development of listening, speaking, reading, writing, viewing and representing skills is an interrelated process. Senior high school learners actively engage in acquiring language and constructing their own understandings of how oral and written language works. Language learning is fostered through experience in meaningful contexts. Social interaction is also a vital part of the students' social, emotional, intellectual and linguistic development.

Senior high school learners need to feel accepted and confident that they will feel supported by others in their risk taking, learning and growing. Self-concept plays an important role in students' learning and in students' willingness to try challenging tasks.

Students at the senior high school level bring a wide range of abilities and life experiences to the classroom. Knowing students and their interests can help teachers plan meaningful and engaging instruction.

As well, these learners are experiencing a period of change and developmental growth. Positive reinforcement, recognition and acceptance by adults and peers all play significant roles in promoting the students' learning.

Students at the senior high school level prefer active learning and interaction with their peers during learning experiences. They also respond positively to real-life contexts and situations and to opportunities for choice.

The Second Language Learner

The program of studies meets the needs of a wide range of learners. Currently, most students enter this program at the 10-3Y introductory level with little or no previous exposure to the German language. Most of these students speak English as a first language within an English language majority environment; however, students also enter this program with a variety of language skills and experiences. For example, some students enter this program with some German language experience, while others enter with strong proficiency in German or other related languages. Occasionally, students will enter this program with little or no English language proficiency. Therefore, a diverse range of student language abilities exists in German language and culture classrooms.

The German Language and Culture Three-year Program was developed with the assumption that the majority of students entering the program at the 10-3Y introductory level would have little or no previous exposure to the German language. Therefore, the majority of students must be considered second language learners. This requires that when planning and delivering instruction, teachers need to consider the unique needs, characteristics and influences that affect their students as second language learners.

Second language learning is influenced by many factors that can be broadly categorized into three main areas:

Outside Influences

These include social, economic and political influences. For example, the importance placed by the family and the community on the language being learned, as well as the availability of opportunities to use the language meaningfully outside the classroom, are both factors that can impact the acquisition of a second language.

Classroom Factors

Important classroom-based factors that impact second language learning include instructional organization, such as the amount of time spent conversing in the second language, the quality of the language input and class size. Teaching styles, methodologies and approaches are also key classroom factors.

Personal Characteristics

Personal characteristics include individual differences that can impact the rate and quality of an individual's second language acquisition. Elements such as previous knowledge and experiences with the first language, German or other languages can have significant impacts on a student's future learning of a new language. Personal characteristics such as the age at which the student began learning the second language, the student's aptitude for learning languages, as well as the student's motivation, attitude toward learning the language and learning preferences are also contributing factors. Other personality variables, such as anxiety levels, self-esteem, self-concept and social skills, have also been thought to influence second language acquisition.

Factors That Influence Multilingual Development

There are a number of individual factors that impact students and their capacity to learn an additional language. These factors are beyond the control of the teacher or school, but they are important to consider as they help explain why students acquire language at different rates. Tracey Tokuhama-Espinosa (2001) identifies key factors that impact individual learners.

Motivation

Students' readiness to learn another language is partially dependent on their motivation and how students feel about the language being learned and the attitude of other significant persons in students' lives; e.g., parents and peers. Positive experiences with, and positive perceptions of, the second language increase motivation.

Opportunity

Families that have a well-developed plan to provide good language learning opportunities tend to be more successful in developing bilingual language skills in their children. A student may have great motivation, but without the opportunity to practise a second language in meaningful situations, he or she never becomes truly proficient. Students and parents can supplement and enhance classroom language learning by seeking out or building opportunities for language learning in the home and in the community, as well as by participating in relevant extracurricular activities.

Linguistic Relationship among Languages

The target language and those that the students are already fluent in may share a common historical root. If the student's first language shares roots with the second language, the second language is easier to learn because of similarities in grammar, vocabulary and sound systems and the ease of transfer of first language skills.

Multiple Intelligences and Second Language Learning

Harvard psychologist Howard Gardner (1983, 1998) has spent many years analyzing the human brain and its impact on education, including language learning. According to his research, an individual possesses multiple intelligences, but these intelligences are developed to different degrees.

Gardner's Types of Intelligence

Linguistic Intelligence: How we read, write and communicate with words.

Logical-mathematical Intelligence: How we reason and calculate.

Visual-spatial Intelligence: How we understand our physical position in space. This intelligence is used by architects, painters and pilots.

Kinesthetic Intelligence: How we interact physically with the environment.

Musical Intelligence: How we explore musical and rhythmic ability.

Interpersonal Intelligence: How we interact with others.

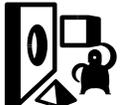
Intrapersonal Intelligence: How we identify and manage our own feelings, wants and needs.

Naturalist Intelligence: How we explore and interact with nature.

The Implications of Multiple Intelligence Theory on Second Language Teaching

- **Learning is experiential:** Students learn by engaging in real hands-on activities and tasks.
- **Learning uses all senses:** Teachers can reinforce learning with pictures and sounds, and students can learn by touching, tasting and smelling (Dryden and Rose 1995).
- **Learning should be fun:** The more fun it is to learn a language, the more one will want to continue. Learning while playing is an effective way to learn as it creates emotional attachments, and emotion is a door to learning (Jensen 1994, Dryden and Vos 1997, Dryden and Rose 1995).
- **Learning is best in a relaxed but challenging environment.**
- **Learning is enhanced through music and rhythm:** Often one can remember the songs learned in early childhood because words combined with music are easier to learn than words without music (Lozanov 1978, Campbell 1997, Brewer and Campbell 1998).
- **Learning is enhanced through action:** While traditionally students were encouraged to sit all day long, we now know that students learn more when they move as they learn. Teachers can use learning strategies that include physical interaction and can encourage students to dance and move to the rhythm when learning a language (Gardner 1983, Doman 1984, Dryden and Vos 1997).
- **Learning is enhanced by engaging with others:** Having students practise a language by talking to each other socially (e.g., over a meal) is a great way to learn (Gardner 1983, Dryden and Vos 1997).

Gardner's Multiple Intelligences

Intelligence	Students learn best by:	Teacher's Planning Questions	Learning Activities
Linguistic 	verbalizing, hearing and seeing words	How can I use the spoken or written word?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • creative writing • formal speech • humour or telling jokes • impromptu speaking • journal or diary keeping • oral debate • poetry • storytelling
Logical-mathematical 	conceptualizing, quantifying and thinking critically	How can I bring in numbers, calculations, logic, classifications or critical-thinking skills?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • puzzles • logic games • abstract symbols and formulas • calculation • counting • deciphering codes • finding patterns • graphic organizers • number sequences • outlining • problem solving
Visual-spatial 	drawing, sketching and visualizing	How can I use visual aids, visualization, colour, art or metaphor?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • drawing • creating videos • active imagination • colour schemes • designs and patterns • drawing guided imagery • mind mapping • painting pictures • sculpture/model
Kinesthetic 	dancing, building models and engaging in hands-on activities	How can I involve the whole body or use hands-on experience?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • physical games • body language • dancing—folk or creative • drama/acting • inventing • martial arts • mime • physical gestures • physical exercises • playing sports and games • role-playing

Gardner's Multiple Intelligences Chart: Adapted with permission from the Nebraska Department of Education, *Nebraska K-12 Foreign Language Frameworks* (Lincoln, NE: Nebraska Department of Education, 1996), pp. 266-267.

Intelligence	Students learn best by:	Teacher's Planning Questions	Learning Activities
<p>Musical</p> 	<p>singing, chanting and playing background music while learning</p>	<p>How can I bring in music or environmental sounds or set key points in a rhythmic or melodic framework?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • chanting • humming • rapping • listening to music • music performance • music creation • rhythmic patterns • singing • tonal patterns • vocal sounds and tones
<p>Interpersonal</p> 	<p>working with another person or a group of people</p>	<p>How can I engage students in peer sharing, cooperative learning or large-group simulation?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • peer assessment • collaboration skills • cooperative learning • empathy practices • group projects • intuiting others' feelings • listening • person-to-person communication • teamwork/division of labour
<p>Intrapersonal</p> 	<p>relating to a personal feeling or an inner experience</p>	<p>How can I evoke personal feelings or memories or give students choices?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • self-assessment • reflective writing • guided imagery • focusing/concentration skills • higher-order reasoning • metacognition techniques • silent reflection methods • telling about feelings • telling about thinking • thinking strategies
<p>Naturalist</p> 	<p>observing, classifying and appreciating</p>	<p>How can I relate the students' learning to the physical world?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • discovering, uncovering • observing, watching • forecasting, predicting • planting • comparing • displaying • sorting and classifying • photographing • building environments

Brain Research and Second Language Learning

Diane Larsen-Freeman (2000) observes that “the issue for teachers who wish to honour the diversity of intelligences among their students is how to represent the other intelligences and enable each student to reach their full potential, while not losing sight that their purpose is to teach language” (p. 172).

The following are implications of brain research for second language learning:

1. **Build in reflection:** It is important to let students take time to “simmer.” There is a silent stage to language learning. First children absorb the language. Later they begin to speak (Krashen 1992).
2. **Link learning:** “The more you link, the more you learn” (Dryden and Vos 1999, p. 315). Anything can be linked when learning a second language, including numbers and new vocabulary words (Dryden and Vos 1997). For example, link numbers and words in a playful way (Dryden and Rose 1995). Reciting the numbers from one to ten in the target language in rhythm is a fun way to begin language learning.
3. **Use the whole world as the classroom:** Real-life experiences and situations engage learners and bring meaning and context to the learning process (Dryden and Vos 1997).

Brain-based Learning Theory

Brain-based learning theory asserts that all humans are born with the ability to learn. “Although all learning is brain based in some sense ... brain-based learning involves acknowledging the brain’s rules for meaningful learning and organizing teaching with those rules in mind” (Caine and Caine 1994, p. 4).

Caine and Caine (1991, 1994, 2005) outline 12 principles to provide a theoretical foundation for brain-based learning:

1. **Learning involves the entire physiology:** Everything that happens to us, whether it is physical, emotional or cognitive, has an effect on learning.
2. **The brain is social:** We always search for ways to belong to a community and seek interaction with others.
3. **The search for meaning is innate:** We strive to make sense of our experiences.
4. **The search for meaning occurs through patterning:** We categorize our experiences so we can establish patterns and bring order to our world.
5. **The brain is a parallel processor:** It can perform several different activities at the same time.
6. **Emotions are critical to patterning:** Emotion and cognition are strongly tied. It is emotionally difficult to change patterns such as assumptions and beliefs.
7. **The brain processes parts and wholes simultaneously:** The brain is designed to perceive experiences as both separate and interconnected.

8. **Learning involves both focused attention and peripheral perception:** Even when we are paying attention to one task, we are also absorbing information reaching us from the environment outside our immediate focus.
9. **Learning always involves conscious and unconscious processes:** Unconscious processing is ongoing and contributes significantly to understanding.
10. **There are at least two different types of memory:** Systems for rote learning and spatial memory coexist in the brain. Memory is not only what we “store and retrieve”; it is based on what we encounter in our natural, daily experiences.
11. **Learning is enhanced by challenge and inhibited by threat:** Feelings of self-worth and accomplishment allow us to learn. Feelings of fear brought on by fatigue, helplessness or overstimulation cause our brains to “downshift.”
12. **Each brain is unique:** Although our brains share physical characteristics, we each perceive and react to the world differently.

Sample Strategies to Support Brain-based Learning:

- Develop an understanding of the impact of nutrition, exercise and stress on learning.
- Facilitate cooperative learning and provide students with opportunities to interact.
- Use various methods and approaches that have been proven effective.
- Acknowledge that students mature at different rates. Because of these natural differences, “equality” in student performance is not expected.
- Provide a learning environment that employs routines and behavioural guidelines, while offering activities that challenge and excite students.
- Model enthusiasm for communicating in the second language.
- Provide a classroom environment that features changing displays of vocabulary and culturally rich materials.
- Facilitate language and culture immersion activities, such as field trips, projects, stories, performances and drama.
- Provide opportunities for students to use reflection and metacognition to actively process what and how they have learned.
- Foster a classroom atmosphere where students take learning risks yet feel safe and relaxed.
- Account for individual learning preferences.

Bloom’s Taxonomy

Bloom’s Taxonomy is a model that focuses on six levels of complexity in the thinking processes. Knowledge and Comprehension are the lower or more concrete levels of thinking. Analysis, Synthesis and Evaluation represent higher or more complex levels of thinking. The Application level, which falls between the lower and higher levels, can be less or more complex depending on the task.

Sample Activities Organized in the Bloom's Taxonomy Model

Level	Sample Activities in the Second Language Classroom
<p>Knowledge/Comprehension</p> <p>Students recall information and restate the information in their own words.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrange lines of dialogue • Fill out authentic forms in German • Listen for sequence • Explain the "What? Who? Where? When? How? Why?" • Describe scenes from a video presentation • Describe pictures from Germany • Define words • Listen to and paraphrase in English a conversation in German • Draw pictures from verbal descriptions of a German cultural scene or object • Understand text written in German
<p>Application</p> <p>Students apply the information in one or more contexts.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dub cartoons or television shows • Instruct others to prepare a German cultural dish step by step • Produce questions with correct pronunciation • Apply a cultural custom to a real-life situation in Germany • Interview classmates on their daily activities • Plan a menu for occasions typical of German culture • Make shopping lists for various German cultural or social events • Apply rules of cultural protocol for dining in Germany • Apply gestures learned to an authentic situation • Apply reading strategies to understand authentic texts
<p>Analysis</p> <p>Students understand component parts and recognize patterns so they can compare and contrast or categorize information.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify elements of a particular literary form • Analyze the lyrics of popular songs to compare two cultures' perspectives • Compare points of view found in two editorials • Analyze a story, poem and other authentic material • Analyze a scene from the German culture • Find evidence to support opinion • Compare own customs with German customs • Conduct a survey and analyze the results • Analyze the typical foods of Germany for nutritional value • Identify the best route to a historic site important to German culture • Play the role of a tourist who bargains in German for merchandise
<p>Synthesis</p> <p>Students make predictions and create new ideas based on their knowledge of component parts.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write an alternative ending to a story • Predict consequences if historical events were altered • Write titles for a play, story or article • Write headlines in newspaper style on current issues in Germany • Predict future events • Write a diary for an imaginary trip • Extend a story • Hypothesize reactions to different situations based on German cultural beliefs • Compose a poem, skit, role-play or advertisement • Create hypothetical real-world situations in German culture • Create an infomercial
<p>Evaluation</p> <p>Students judge what they have analyzed and support their opinions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate solutions to cultural dilemmas • Express and justify opinions on creative products of German culture • Give and support opinions about issues • Evaluate television shows, movies or cartoons • Write an editorial, giving and supporting own opinion • Express the pros and cons of policies • Give and support a decision in a mock trial • Write an ambassador with suggestions for the resolution of a real-world problem • Justify, in German, decisions of what sites to visit • Read an editorial in a newspaper, respond, and send the response • Evaluate Web pages as sources of information in German

Sample Activities Organized in the Bloom's Taxonomy Model: Adapted with permission from the Nebraska Department of Education, *Nebraska K–12 Foreign Language Frameworks* (Lincoln, NE: Nebraska Department of Education, 1996), p. 307.

Benefits of Second Language Learning

In North America, the 1990s was a decade of renewed interest in language learning. There is a growing appreciation of the role that multilingual individuals can play in an increasingly diverse society, and there is a greater understanding of the academic and cognitive benefits of learning other languages. The last decade has seen an emerging global interest in international languages and second language education. This has led researchers, policymakers, educators, employers, parents and the media to re-examine the advantages of learning additional languages.

Increased research on brain development has focused attention on learning processes and developmental issues. Some of this research has analyzed the effects of language acquisition on the brain. The results of these studies have generated interest in how early learning experiences, including first and second language acquisition, promote cognitive development. Most experts agree that making it possible for children to learn a second language early in life and beyond is entirely beneficial. A summary of the many benefits of learning a second language follows.

Personal Benefits

An obvious advantage of knowing more than one language is having expanded access to people and resources. Individuals who speak and read more than one language have the ability to communicate with more people and read more literature, and benefit more fully from travel to other countries. Introducing students to alternative ways of expressing themselves and to different cultures gives greater depth to their understanding of the human experience by fostering an appreciation for the customs and achievements of people beyond their own frames of reference. In many cases, the learning of a second language can strengthen the personal connection to the language and culture of one's own heritage. Knowledge of a second language can also give people a competitive advantage in the work force by opening up additional job opportunities (Villano 1996).

For many people, there is something inherently enjoyable about successfully communicating in another language. Learning a new language can be an intensely challenging and rewarding experience.

Cognitive Benefits

Some researchers suggest that students who receive second language instruction are more creative and better at solving complex problems than those who do not (Bamford and Mizokawa 1991). Other studies suggest that bilingual individuals outperform similar monolinguals on both verbal and nonverbal tests of intelligence, which raises the question of whether ability in more than one language enables individuals to achieve greater intellectual flexibility (Bruck, Lambert and Tucker 1974; Hakuta 1986; Weatherford 1986).

Benefits of Second Language Learning: Adapted from Kathleen M. Marcos, "Second Language Learning: Everyone Can Benefit," *The ERIC Review* 6, 1 (Fall 1998), pp. 2, 3.

Academic Benefits

Parents and educators sometimes express concern that learning a second language will have a detrimental effect on students' reading and verbal abilities in English; however, several studies suggest the opposite. Knowing a second language, according to the latest research on reading, can help children comprehend written languages faster and possibly learn to read more easily, provided that they are exposed to stories and literacy in both languages (Bialystok 1997). By age four, bilingual children have progressed more than monolingual children in understanding the symbolic function of written language. By five, they are more advanced than those who have learned only one writing system.

The positive effects of bilingualism were also documented in an American study analyzing achievement test data of students who had participated five years or more in immersion-type international language programs in Fairfax County, Virginia. The study concluded that these students scored as well as or better than all comparison groups and continued to be high academic achievers throughout their school years (Thomas, Collier and Abbott 1993). Numerous other studies have also shown a positive relationship between foreign language study and achievement in English language arts (Barik and Swain 1975, Genesee 1987, Swain 1981).

Societal Benefits

Bilingualism and multilingualism have many benefits for society. Albertans who are fluent in more than one language can enhance Alberta's and Canada's economic competitiveness abroad, maintain Alberta's and Canada's political interests and work to promote an understanding of cultural diversity within the nation. For example, international trade specialists, overseas media correspondents, diplomats, airline employees and national security personnel need to be familiar with other languages and cultures to do their jobs well. Teachers, health care providers, customer service representatives and law enforcement personnel also serve their communities more effectively when they can communicate with people of diverse languages and cultures. Developing the language abilities of students will improve the effectiveness of the work force and strengthen communities for years to come.