

**The Home/School Connection:  
Collaborating to Promote Best Practice in World Language Education,  
Pre-K-8  
Issue 9, June 2008  
Communicating in Languages Other Than English**

Dear Parents,

In Issue 8 you were given an overview of two of the modes within the Communication Standard. Interpersonal communication is what happens between and among people and interpretive communication is the interpretation and understanding of written and spoken language. In this issue, we will be taking a closer look at the third type of communication, the **presentational mode**. We will focus on how this mode is addressed in the early language class and we will discuss how you as a parent can help your child develop the ability to communicate in the language s/he is learning in school.

**Communication: Communicating in Languages Other Than English**

***Standard 1.3: Students present information, concepts, and ideas to an audience of listeners or readers on a variety of topics.***

In the past, many foreign language programs focused solely on reading, writing, and verb conjugation. Students left the programs knowing a lot *about* the language, but not necessarily being able to communicate in it. Today, it is vital that language learners are able to

speak, read, and comprehend a language. As with the interpretive and interpersonal modes, language teachers are creating opportunities in their classrooms that allow students to develop real-world skills in the presentational mode. Most often the presentational mode is one-way speaking and writing.

In the beginning of his/her second language experience, your child will likely produce written and spoken language that contains learned patterns and will appear similar to English. As he/she progresses through the second language program, your child will begin to acquire authentic patterns and use appropriate styles, pronunciation and intonation patterns for the language.

*Speaking performances* can include plays, songs, student-created skits, short speeches, and even Power Point presentations. After learning a story, students can write their own versions and then orally share their stories. These stories can be performed by the students themselves or through the use of puppets. Commercials for products or advertisements for vacation destinations can also be created and performed as students develop more advanced language skills.

Speaking performances can take place both within and outside of the language class. The students can perform for their peers in their own class, other classes, as part of a school assembly, or for their parents. Their presentations can be recorded or taped to be shared later. These performances are often considered to be a culminating activity for a unit.

*Writing* in the presentational mode goes beyond doing an assignment for the teacher and allows students to mimic writing experiences that happen in the real world. As with speaking, the audience for the writing is changed from the teacher to other students, native speakers of the language, and even family members. Students' written performances can be in the form of poems, letters, postcards, stories and emails. In the beginning your child will reproduce writing he/she has copied from the teacher or another text. As he/she progresses through the language program, more creativity and personalization will be seen in your child's writing.

**What can I do at home?**

- When your child is preparing for a speaking performance in his/hr

- second language class, have him/her perform for you.
- Have your child retell you stories he/she is learning in class.
- If possible, write each other notes in the target language.
- If possible, write poetry together in the target language.
- Have your child teach you the songs he/she is learning in class and sing them together.
- As his/her second language skills continue to develop, try to create skits together in the target language and have the entire family perform in the skit.
- Have your child write letters in the target language to family members in other parts of the world/United States.
- Put on puppet plays of stories your child has learned in his/her language class.

\*\* Information about the methods, strategies, and activities were taken from Languages and Children: Making the Match by Helena Curtain and Carol Ann Dahlberg.

\*\* You can read more about the Communication Standard in Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century, available from ACTFL.

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NNELL can assist teachers, parents and administrators with learning and advocacy efforts. Contact your State Representative today. We would love to hear from you!

The "Home-School Connection" flier is full of tips and resources that can be found at [www.nnell.org](http://www.nnell.org). Teachers may reproduce it and send it home in their students' backpacks. Send suggestions/comments to Tammy Dann, Political Action and Advocacy Chair: [trdann@juno.com](mailto:trdann@juno.com)