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A Note on Language Acquisition

Learning an additional language beyond early childhood takes **time, practice, curiosity, and persistence**. In most school settings, students need to stay engaged beyond the minutes they spend in class if they want to become truly confident communicators.

This approach is grounded in a **broad and well-established body of research on metacognition**, showing that learners make stronger progress when they understand how learning works, notice patterns, reflect on their strategies, and become more intentional about how they practice. These principles support learning across virtually any new skill or complex endeavor, including language acquisition.

The goal is bigger than learning how to say the same thing in another language. It is about **expanding worldview**, deepening understanding of our own language and culture, **building stronger relationships**, and **discovering new ways of thinking, communicating, and living.**



Our Goal

Boost conceptual learning and transfer.

Conceptual Transfer teaches students to become pattern seekers by looking for concepts and their connections across situations within disciplines, across different disciplines, and in their personal lives.

Note to teachers: These strategies should frame a series of lessons that you likely already teach. These thinking routines help students 'zoom out' to better understand how the discipline works as a whole. Students still need the 'weeds' or the details, which are *not* contained in these resources but still essential.

concepts



**facts,
skills, &
details**



**Zoom in & out to grasp
the **bigger**
picture**



Conceptual Transfer - Sample

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
Zoom out: Concept attainment for 2+ concepts	Zoom out: SEEI with icons for same 2+ concepts	Zoom out: Concept hunt for same 2+ concepts related to student interests	Zoom out: Homework students discuss where they've noticed the concepts in their daily lives.	Zoom out: Concept charades or movement game

Zoom in: specific content exploration or skill building (~80% of instruction time in secondary)

Zoom out: Compelling question initial thinking with evidence from specific context or skills	Zoom out: Conceptual question response with evidence from specific content or skills	Zoom out: Concept mapping with evidence from specific content or skills	Zoom out: Compelling question refined thinking with evidence from specific content or skills	Zoom out: Transfer and refine concept map with evidence from specific content or skills
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[Target language]

How can observing unfamiliar **celebrations** help us notice **cultural** and **relationship cues**, join in **respectfully**, and have more fun together?



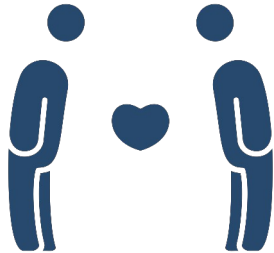
Target Language

Celebrations



Target Language

Cultural Cues



Target Language

Relationship Cues



Target Language

Meaning Cues



Success Criteria for Acquire

- State the meaning of the concept(s)
- Elaborate on what the concepts mean
- Recognize and generate examples
- Illustrate the concept through use of metaphor, symbol, or visual

Concept Attainment

What do you notice about all of the examples? What do they have in common?



Source: Pexels & Unsplash

Celebrations

State:

A social event, gathering, or party held for a special event or occasion.

Elaborate: Students explain the definition in their own words here.

In other words...

Exemplify: Students provide an example and possibly a non-example here.

For example...

Illustrate: Students find or draw a picture, give a metaphor, use clay, etc.

It's like...

A visual to represent this is...



Source: Hundreds Of Tons Of Tomatoes Are Used As Ammo In Spain's Tomatina Festival | Business Insider

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Where do you
see
celebrations



*A social event,
gathering, or
party held for a
special event or
occasion*

Concept Attainment

What do you notice about all of the examples? What do they have in common?



Source: Pexels/Unsplash

Cultural Cues

State:

Non-verbal signals, behaviors, and context norms that exist in different cultures.

Elaborate: Students explain the definition in their own words here.

In other words...

Exemplify: Students provide an example and possibly a non-example here.

For example...

Illustrate: Students find or draw a picture, give a metaphor, use clay, etc.

It's like...

A visual to represent this is...



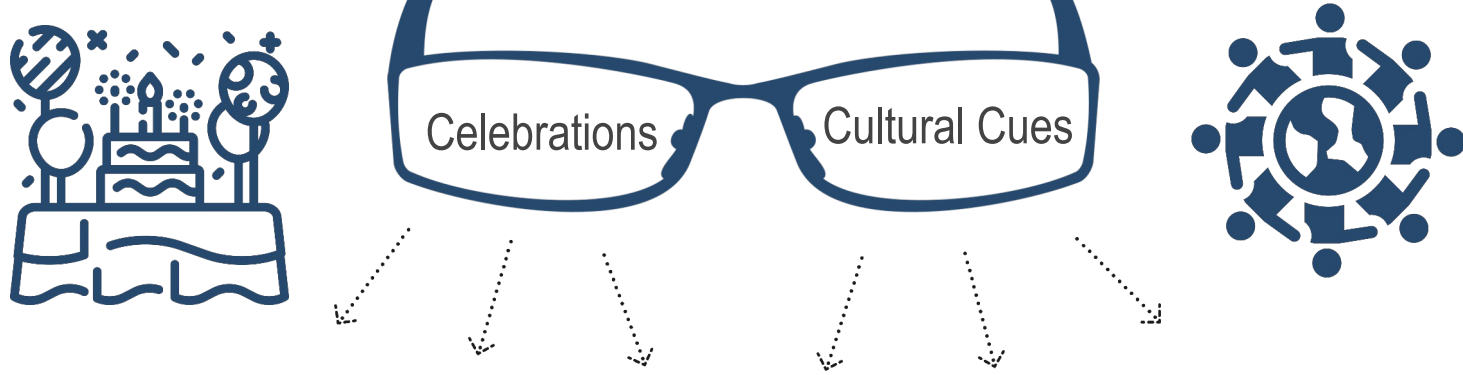
Source: Understanding One's Culture | English SingSing

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Where do you
see **cultural**
cues?



*Non-verbal signals,
behaviors, and
context norms that
exist in different
cultures.*



Homework
Find these concepts
somewhere in your daily life.
Be ready to explain.

[Target language]

How do celebrations and cultural cues interact?

Concept Attainment

What do you notice about all of the examples? What do they have in common?



Source: Pexels

Relationship Cues

State:

Subtle verbal, vocal, and physical signs that individuals can use to express feelings and emotions.

Elaborate: Students explain the definition in their own words here.

In other words...

Exemplify: Students provide an example and possibly a non-example here.

For example...

Illustrate: Students find or draw a picture, give a metaphor, use clay, etc.

It's like...



Source:
Communication Skills: Empathetic Listening - Inside Out, 2015

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Where do you
see
relationship
clues

*Subtle verbal,
vocal, and
physical signs
that individuals
can use to
express*

Concept Attainment

What do you notice about all of the examples? What do they have in common?



Source: Gemini AI created Image, Verywell Mind

Meaning Cues

State:

Contextual clues that help us understand the meaning of unfamiliar words or gestures.

Elaborate: Students explain the definition in their own words here.

In other words...

Exemplify: Students provide an example and possibly a non-example here.

For example...

Illustrate: Students find or draw a picture, give a metaphor, use clay, etc.

It's like...



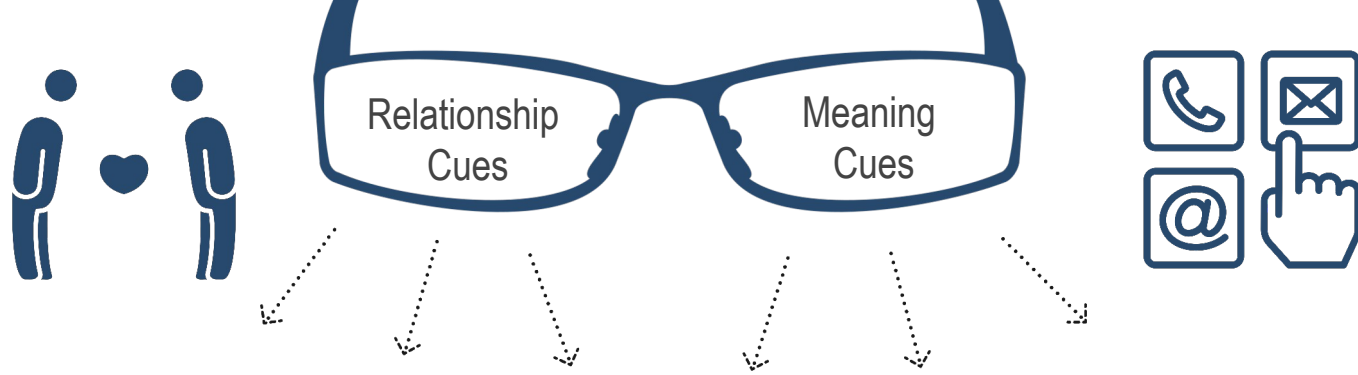
Where do you
see **meaning**
cues?



*Contextual clues that
help us understand
the meaning of
unfamiliar words or
gestures.*

Source: We Bare Bear - Bears speak Korean

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Homework
Find these concepts
somewhere in your daily life.
Be ready to explain.

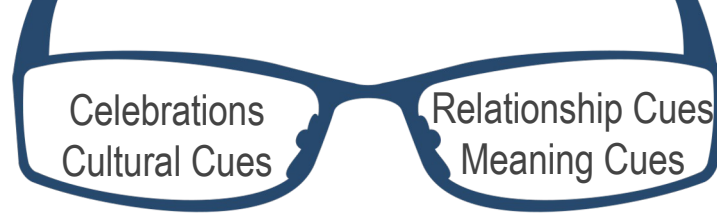
[Target language]

How do relationship cues and
meaning cues interact?

Let's Move!

How can we show these ideas with our bodies?

- Celebrations
- Cultural Cues
- Relationship Cues
- Meaning Cues

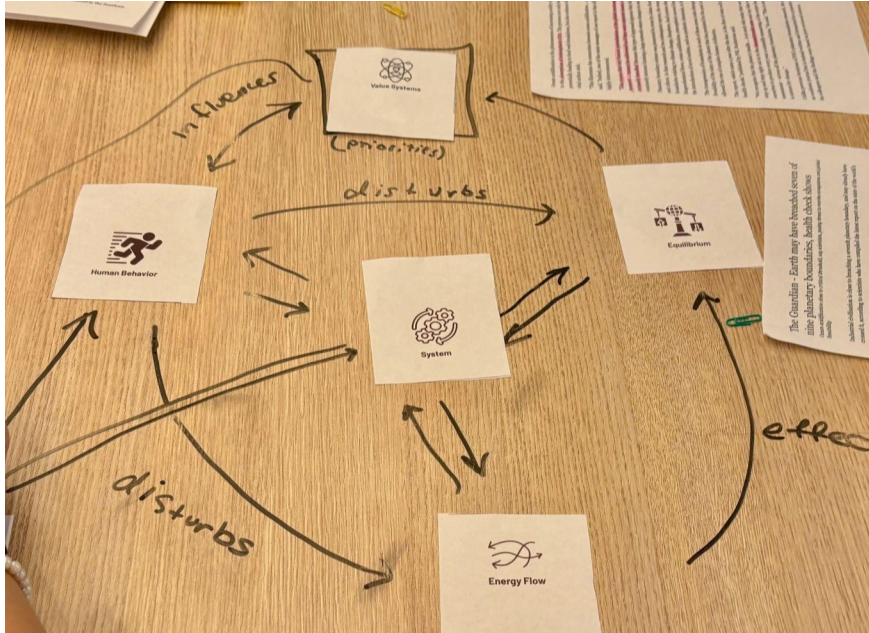




Success Criteria for Connect

- Explain the complex relationships among several concepts.
- Distinguish between simplistic and complex relationships.
- Provide specific examples from a range of contexts.

Concept Mapping



“Deep learners organize learning to help them see how pieces of knowledge connect. Rather than isolated facts, they see patterns and underlying structures.” - Mehta and Fine, *In Search of*

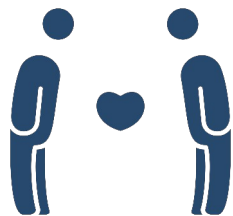
How are all of these connected?



Target Language
Celebration



Target Language
Cultural Cues



Target Language
Relationship Cues



Target Language
Meaning Cues

You must ground your connections in evidence:

03:00

Success Criteria for Transfer

- Recognize which concepts apply in a given situation
- Use conceptual relationships to identify the deeper structure of a situation
- Use conceptual understanding to explain, predict, argue, and solve novel problems
- Apply prior learning cautiously by recognizing meaningful differences between situations
- Use insights gained from new situations to alter and refine their mental model of the concepts and their relationships



AMAZING TRADITIONS & CULTURES

Transfer

1. Return to your concept map. How well does your current thinking apply according to this new situation?
2. Use a different color marker to provide more evidence and show how can you change or deepen your understanding based on this new situation?

Source: Around the World: Amazing Traditions & Cultures
Explained for Kids!

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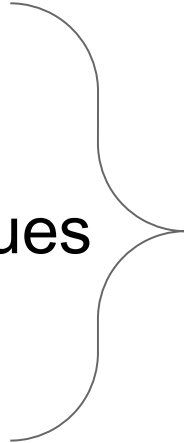
[Target language]

How can observing unfamiliar **celebrations** help us notice **cultural** and **relationship cues**, join in **respectfully**, and have more fun together?

Reflecting on Learning

An important idea to remember from today is...

Celebrations
Cultural Cues
Relationship Cues
Meaning Cues



Use at least two of these words in a sentence or two. Use evidence to support your response.