**Implement Core Practices:**

**Facilitating Target Language Comprehensibility**

**and Supporting Classroom Conversations**

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**Our Learning Targets:**

I can **apply** **core/high-leverage teaching practices** in language instruction

I can **tailor use of target language** to be comprehensible to learners

I can **implement strategies for** developing, practicing, and assessing **student-to-student communication** (in pairs and small groups)

I can **guide learners to have discussions** onauthentic texts

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| **Best Practices** | **Core/High-Leverage Practices** |
| * + Defined as “what works” based on experience   + Reduced to general statements of practice or slogans such as “use authentic materials,” “model activities” (often long lists)   + Tells you WHAT to do but not HOW to do it   + Sometimes associated with personality issues, intuition, common sense, rather than being “learned” | * + Are complex and are not reduced to a slogan   + Are not as extensive in number   + Can be deconstructed into instructional moves   + Cannot be learned through observation (modeling) alone   + Can be explained, taught, and coached   + Are subject-specific and cannot be applied to all of teaching   + The deconstruction of these practices makes their complexity visible and accessible to novice and veteran teachers seeking to improve their practice and refocus their craft. |

Glisan and Donato (2017)

# Use of the Target Language in the Classroom

**ACTFL Position Statement**

Research indicates that effective language instruction must provide significant levels of meaningful communication\* and interactive feedback in the target language in order for students to develop language and cultural proficiency. The pivotal role of target-language interaction in language learning is emphasized in the K-16 Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century. ACTFL therefore recommends that language educators and their students use the target language as exclusively as possible (90% plus) at all levels of instruction during instructional time and, when feasible, beyond the classroom. In classrooms that feature maximum target-language use, instructors use a variety of strategies to facilitate comprehension and support meaning making. For example, they:

1. provide comprehensible input that is directed toward communicative goals;
2. make meaning clear through body language, gestures, and visual support;
3. conduct comprehension checks to ensure understanding;
4. negotiate meaning with students and encourage negotiation among students;
5. elicit talk that increases in fluency, accuracy, and complexity over time;
6. encourage self-expression and spontaneous use of language;
7. teach students strategies for requesting clarification and assistance when faced with comprehension difficulties; and
8. offer feedback to assist and improve students’ ability to interact orally in the target language.

\*Communication for a classical language refers to an emphasis on reading ability and for American Sign Language (ASL) to signed communicative ability.

<https://www.actfl.org/news/position-statements/use-the-target-language-the-classroom>

**HLTP#1: Facilitating Target Language Comprehensibility**

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| **How does Jai Scott *create* understanding?** | **How does Jai Scott *check for* understanding?** |
|  |  |

**Interaction and Target Language Comprehensibility Tool**

**Name of teacher: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Date of observation: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

This observation tool will help you *monitor the comprehensibility* of your target language use or of other teachers whom you observe. By completing the checklist, the teacher will understand areas of strength and in which improvement is needed.

Category I: Creating Comprehensible **LANGUAGE**

🞏 The teacher paraphrases new words and expressions.

🞏 The teacher defines new words with examples rather than translation.

🞏 The teacher slows down the rate of speech according to the level of the learners.

🞏 The teacher uses vocabulary and structures that learners know and builds on them over time.

🞏 The teacher uses new words and expressions more than once or twice and enters and re-enters these language elements frequently in the input.

🞏 The teacher signals new words and structures with tone of voice.

🞏 The teacher uses connected discourse rather than presenting isolated words for drill and repetition.

Category II: Creating **CONTEXTS** for comprehension

🞏 The teacher uses gestures to make new language clear.

🞏 The teacher uses visuals and concrete objects to support comprehension.

🞏 The teacher focuses learner attention on the topic and objective of the lesson in advance of presentations and discussions.

🞏 The teacher creates a lesson with a purpose relevant to learners’ lives.

Category III: Creating comprehensible **INTERACTIONS** with learners

🞏 The teacher interacts with learners using active comprehension checking strategies (e.g., signaling).

🞏 The teacher interacts with students and checks how well they are following what is said by cuing for recurrent words and phrases in the discourse.

🞏 The teacher uses question sequences that begin with yes/no questions, move to forced-choice questions, and end with open-ended, WH-questions.

🞏 The teacher provides useful expressions and phrases to help learners negotiate meaning, such as asking for repetition, asking for clarification (Can you say more?), checking their comprehension (Do you mean…?), and confirming their understanding (I think you are saying… Am I right?).

**Figure 1.2 Interaction and Target Language Comprehensibility Tool**

Source: Donato, original material, 2011, modified 2016 (in Glisan & Donato, 2017)

**How can input be made comprehensible?**

Source: Tara Fortune, ACTFL Webinar, Spring 2012 (Adapted from Michael Long, Interaction Hypothesis, 1983, 1996)

**Modified Interaction, Negotiation of Meaning**

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| **Strategy** | **Examples** |
| ***Input modifications*** |  |
| * Stress on key words |  |
| * Self-repetition |  |
| ***Meaning-focused responses*** |  |
| * Recasts (provide right form – implicit corrective feedback |  |
| * Repetition (partial or exact – to focus the meaning) |  |
| * Expansions (adding to a repetition with additional meaning) |  |

**Conversational Adjustments**

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| --- | --- |
| **Strategy** | **Examples** |
| ***Confirmation checks*** |  |
| * **Made by listener**; to establish what speaker said * Repetition with rising intonation |  |
| ***Comprehension checks*** |  |
| * **Made by speaker**; to check that the listener understood * Repetition with rising intonation, tag question |  |
| ***Clarification requests*** |  |
| * **Made by** **listener**; clarifies what speaker said * “I don’t understand”, wh- questions |  |

**Checking Comprehension: Scaffolding Verbal Responses**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| ***Yes-no questions***   * + - * Is today Monday? | ***Choose between two options provided***   * + - * Is the character happy or sad?       * Is more water saved by collecting water for gardens or by washing towels less often? | ***Wh- type questions***   * + - * What do we call a baby frog?       * When (in what season) does this story take place?       * Where do tadpoles live? |

**HLTP#2: Developing a Classroom Discourse Community**

**What are the Characteristics of Effective Interpersonal Communication?**

One-way communication Two-way communication

Spontaneous Memorized Helping partner

Following up Indicating interest Taking turns

Focused on message Focused on accuracy

Using various means to get meaning across Asking for clarification

**Other characteristics you noticed:**

**Negotiation of Meaning:**

**Identify 3 phrases in the target language learners can use to negotiate meaning:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Novice Learners** | **Intermediate or Advanced Learners** |
|  |  |

**Performance Assessment Task Design: Maximizing Student Engagement**

**What’s the “engagement” and “motivation” to be in the conversation?**

**What’s the “accountability” to stay in the conversation?**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Activate Interest**  (a *direction* for the conversation) | **Create a Context**  (a *reason* for the conversation) | **Design a Deliverable**  (an *urgency* about the conversation) |
| 1. Come to agreement 2. Find out how much you have in common 3. Identify the biggest difference between you | 1. Decide if you can be partners 2. Make a decision about who, what, where, when, how … 3. Explore two sides of a debate question | 1. Complete a graphic organizer 2. Tell what you learned from your partner (report what you discovered) 3. Be ready to share your findings (agreement, decision) |

**Adapt an existing classroom task to make it more interpersonal**

How will you support the use of target language in the task?

**Reflective Questions for Evaluating Oral Interpersonal Tasks**

1. Did you need to listen to your partner in order to complete the task?

2. Was the task engaging; that is, were you motivated to listen to your partner to complete the task?

3. Did the task promote the negotiation of meaning or conversational adjustments? If so, when/how?

5. Did the task require cultural knowledge?

6. Do you have any suggestions that might increase the interactivity of the task?

**Adapted from Figure 2.3** **Reflective Questions for Evaluating Oral Interpersonal Tasks.**

Source: Glisan & Donato, 2017 (Adapted from Glisan & Adair-Hauck, 2015)

**Feedback Tools**

**TALK Scores:** Shrum, J. L. & Glisan, E. W. (2005). Teacher’s Handbook:  ContextualizedLanguage Instruction (3rd ed.). Boston:  Heinle

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Target Language** | **Accurate** | **Listens** | **Kind** |
| Student A | + | + | + | + |
| Student B | √ | – | + | + |

**Interpersonal Scoring Guide**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | No evidence | Some evidence | Frequent evidence |
| Proposes an idea, opinion based on research |  |  |  |
| Adds new information |  |  |  |
| Reacts to other ideas, opinions |  |  |  |
| Asks questions (for clarification, elaboration) |  |  |  |
| Listens attentively |  |  |  |

**HLTP#3: Guiding Learners to Interpret and Discuss Authentic Texts**

**1**. **Strategy:** Read – Cover – Remember – Retell

What is one thing you can say about \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ ?

What is one question you have about \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ ?

**2. Examine two websites** and identify information that is available (copy some key details)

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| **Identify evidence for each category of what to do in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** | **Website A** | **Website B** |
| Museums |  |  |
| Sports and Recreation |  |  |
| Walking Tours |  |  |
| Art and Architecture |  |  |
| Food and Cuisine |  |  |

**How will you guide your students to discuss an authentic text?**

* What is essential (and authentic) to demonstrate understanding of the text?
* How will you focus the task to accomplish?
* What language (expressions, starters) will learners need to engage in discussion?
* What will help learners cite textual evidence?
* How will learners provide a summary or a conclusion (any graphic organizer to support learners)?

**RESOURCES**

**World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages (2015)**

<http://www.actfl.org/publications/all/world-readiness-standards-learning-languages>

**Guiding Principles for Language Learning**

<https://www.actfl.org/guiding-principles>

**Oral Proficiency Levels in the Workplace**

<https://www.actfl.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/TLE_pdf/OralProficiencyWorkplacePoster.pdf>

**Performance Descriptors for Language Learners (2012)**

<http://www.actfl.org/publications/guidelines-and-manuals/actfl-performance-guidelines-k-12-learners>

**NCSSFL-ACTFL Can-Do Statements (2013)**

<http://www.actfl.org/publications/guidelines-and-manuals/ncssfl-actfl-can-do-statements>

**ACTFL Assessment of Performance toward Proficiency in Languages (AAPPL)**

<http://aappl.actfl.org/>

**ACTFL Conversation Builder** [http: //aappl.actfl.org/tools](http://aappl.actfl.org/tools); Access at: [http: //aapplcb.actfl.org/](http://aapplcb.actfl.org/)

**Annenberg/CPB Library**

Teaching Foreign Languages K-12: A Library of Classroom Practices: <http://learner.org/libraries/tfl/>

**ACTFL Publications** (<http://www.actfl.org/publications/all>)

*The Keys to Assessing Language Performance* (Paul Sandrock)

*The Keys to Planning for Learning: Effective Curriculum, Unit, and Lesson Design* (Donna Clementi and Laura Terrill)

*Implementing Integrated Performance Assessment* (Bonnie Adair Hauck, Eileen W. Glisan, Francis J. Troyan)

*Enacting the Work of Language Instruction: High-Leverage Teaching Practices* (Eileen W. Glisan and Richard Donato)

**Virtual Learning Modules**

<https://www.pathlms.com/actfl/courses>