

# CHECKLIST FOR OBSERVING A FOREIGN LANGUAGE CLASSROOM

Report what you observe in my class and help me to become a better teacher

## ***TARGET LANGUAGE USE***

### **The TEACHER and STUDENTS speak in the target language (TL)**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Less than 50% of the time | <input type="checkbox"/> 50%-75% of the time |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 75%-90% of the time       | <input type="checkbox"/> 90%+ of the time    |

***Students cannot acquire spoken language if they do not hear it.***

*Over 90% target language use is recommended in the 2011 ACTFL position statement.  
Not using the TL in a language class is like a math teacher chatting about sports most of the time.*

### **The teacher checks for comprehension frequently**

- by asking individual students
- by carefully observing all students in class
- by listening for responses from the whole class
- by asking for translation occasionally

***Students cannot acquire language if they do not understand what the teacher is saying.***

*The teacher must speak in the TL and it must be comprehensible to the students.*

### **The teacher offers opportunities for sophisticated language use**

- by embellishing the basic statements that students make
- by asking a variety of questions in a variety of formats and levels
- by inviting students to create with the language rather than simply
  - a) repeating
  - b) responding mainly with formulas
  - c) memorizing dialogues

***Students should be expected to think and perform at high levels—even in beginning courses***

*Memorization is the LOWEST level of thinking in the New Bloom's Taxonomy.  
We need to encourage students to analyze, evaluate and design at all course levels.*

## ***FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING METHODS***

### **The teacher raises the level of student attention**

- by **INVOLVING STUDENTS** in the narration
- by allowing **STUDENT INPUT** to direct portions of the lesson
- by talking **TO** individual students
- by talking **ABOUT** specific students
- by referring to places/locations/people/topics **OF INTEREST TO STUDENTS**

### **The students are actively engaged in the lesson**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> by gesturing                        | <input type="checkbox"/> by acting                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> by contributing ideas to the lesson | <input type="checkbox"/> by responding to questions |

### **The students are held accountable for the lesson**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> by speaking the target language when asked | <input type="checkbox"/> by helping each other      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> by retelling material in their own words   | <input type="checkbox"/> by translation, when asked |
| <input type="checkbox"/> by unannounced quizzes                     |   |



### **The teacher promotes grammatical accuracy**

- by briefly explaining the meaning of unfamiliar or new items
- by using the unfamiliar or new items multiple times & in different contexts
- by asking students to predict correct grammatical usage
- by requiring increased accuracy as students progress

### **The teacher demonstrates appropriate correction techniques**

- by modeling accuracy: Rewarding the student's attempts while acknowledging the content of the student's statement
- by demonstrating the value of accuracy: Stating the meaning of the inaccurate construction
- by inviting the student to correct him/herself

### **The teacher promotes higher-level thinking skills**

- by asking students to synthesize the language in a story retell
- by asking students to create imaginative situations
- by asking students to supply motivation for actions in the story

### **The teacher tailors the tasks to individual student ability**

- by asking many types and levels of questions
- by expecting multiple levels of answers to questions (one-word, short phrase, complete sentence, extended discourse)
- by requiring longer, more detailed, and more accurate narration from the most able students

## ***CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES***

### **There seems to be a routine to begin the class**

- teacher greets students as they arrive
- students arrive on time
- students are on task
- students are prepared
- students are working by the time the late bell rings

### **The teacher models proactive classroom management**

- by showing genuine interest in the students
- by remaining calm and in control
- by taking the time to listen to student suggestions
- by looking at individual students with a calm demeanor
- by moving closer to potential disruptions
- by using body language to control student behavior non-verbally
- by using facial expressions that are appropriate to the situation (smiling, not angry, blank expression, etc.)
- by offering choices to students who fail to co-operate

### **There seems to be a routine to end the class**

- students are not waiting by the door to leave class
- students are working and/or attentive until the bell rings
- students are not packing up 5 minutes before the end of class
- students wait to be dismissed by the teacher, not the bell

*Adapted by Bryce Hedstrom. Original by Susan Gross. Used by permission*