

# CHECKLIST FOR OBSERVING A WORLD LANGUAGE CLASSROOM

## INFORMAL OBSERVATION FORM

### **TARGET LANGUAGE USE**

• **The teacher speaks in the target language (TL)**

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

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

*Over 90% target language use is recommended by ACTFL (since 2011).*

*Not using the TL in a language class is like a band teacher letting students play ping pong every day and never playing music.*

• **Teacher checks for comprehension often and in different ways**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Observing student facial expressions and body language                                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Observing the response time and confidence of students   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Asking questions to the whole class (choral answers)   | <input type="checkbox"/> Listening for spontaneous responses from the whole class |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Asking differentiated questions to students, depending on their ability (individual answers) | <input type="checkbox"/> Occasionally asking for translations                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Inviting creative responses  | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Unannounced quizzes  |   |

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

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

*It is not comprehensible input if students do not understand.*

• **Teacher offers opportunities for sophisticated language use by...**

- Embellishing the basic statements that students make
- Asking a variety of questions in a variety of formats and levels
- Inviting students to create with the language rather than only:
  - a) Repeating      b) Responding with formulas      c) Memorizing dialogues      d) Conjugating verbs

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

*Memorization is one of the LOWEST levels of thinking in the New Bloom's Taxonomy and other measures.*

*We need to encourage students to analyze, evaluate and design at all course levels.*

## **BEST PRACTICE WORLD LANGUAGE TEACHING METHODS**

• **Teacher raises the level of student attention by...**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Involving students in the narration   | <input type="checkbox"/> Allowing student input to direct portions of the lesson |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Talking <b>to</b> individual students   | <input type="checkbox"/> Talking <b>about</b> specific students                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Referring to places/locations/people/cultural practices/topics that are of interest to the students |  |

• **Students are actively engaged in the lesson by...**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gesturing                              | <input type="checkbox"/> Reacting                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Contributing their ideas to the lesson | <input type="checkbox"/> Responding to questions |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Interacting with one another           | <input type="checkbox"/> Drawing responses       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Acting                                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Writing                 |

• **Students are held accountable for the lesson by...**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Speaking the target language          | <input type="checkbox"/> Helping each other                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Retelling material in their own words | <input type="checkbox"/> Translation, when asked                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Formative assessments                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Writing in the target language or in L1 |

• **Teacher promotes grammatical accuracy by...**

- Briefly explaining the meaning of unfamiliar or new items (“Pop-up grammar”)
- Using the unfamiliar or new items multiple times & in different contexts
- Asking students to predict correct grammatical usage
- Requiring increased accuracy as students progress in fluency

• **Teacher demonstrates appropriate correction techniques by...**

- Modeling accuracy: Rewarding the student's attempts while acknowledging the content of the student statements
- Demonstrating the value of accuracy: Stating the meaning of the inaccurate construction
- Allowing students to correct themselves

• **Teacher promotes higher-level thinking skills by...**

- Asking students to synthesize the language by retelling material in their own words (not memorized speeches)
- Asking students to create imaginative situations
- Asking students to supply motivation for characters' actions in the story

• **Teacher differentiates by tailoring tasks to individual student ability by...**

- Being aware of ability levels of different students
- Asking many types and levels of questions
- Expecting multiple levels of answers to questions from different students  
(one-word answers, short phrases, complete sentences, extended discourse)
- Requiring longer, more detailed, and more accurate narration from the most capable students

## ***EFFECTIVE CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES***

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

- Teacher greets students as they arrive
- Students have a task for the beginning of class
- Students are on task
- Students arrive on time
- Students are prepared
- Class begins promptly (limited down time)

• **Teacher models proactive classroom management during the class by...**

- Showing genuine interest in students
- Taking the time to listen to student suggestions
- Moving closer to potential disruptions before they escalate
- Using body language to control student behavior
- Using facial expressions that are appropriate to the situation
- Providing meaningful brain breaks
- Changing activities frequently
- Offering choices to students who fail to co-operate
- Remaining calm
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

**Observations:**