

# Teaching for Today in the Modern Language Classroom

---

Tri-Conference 2017

# Responsibilities of the Language Teacher

- Provide rich and meaningful examples of target language in practical use.
- Encourage students to think about the functions of language and their implications.
- Provide opportunities for both structured and spontaneous target language practice.
- Promote understanding of other cultures, the place of the target culture in the world at large, and the role of their own culture in society.

# What have we already tried?

Grammar-Translation

Audiolingual

Direct Method

Communicative Language Teaching

Natural Approach

# How does this work in the day-to-day?

- Listening
- Reading
- Speaking
- Culture

# Listening Activities

## Bottom-up Techniques

1. Phonics tasks: Repeat, identify sounds they will likely hear.
2. Word meaning recognition: Recognize relationships between words.
3. Metalinguistic awareness: Categorize what part of speech words are.
4. Gap-fill: Remove sections to be filled in by students.
5. Listening with a transcript: Find errors to be corrected.

## Top-down Techniques

1. What comes next?
2. Summarize the main points to report to another.
3. Modeling inference: Parse details using context, for example.
4. Mixing and matching half sentences.
5. Brainstorm previously learned material students will anticipate appearing.

# Reading Activities

1. Identify words in the text from definitions given in target language.
2. Identify words or phrases from L1 translation.
3. Rearrange order of sentences about the text in the L1 using the source text as the guide.
4. Find synonyms and antonyms from the text.
5. Present more than one text about the same subject for comparison.
6. Have students cross out words they do not understand and construct meaning from what is left.

# Encouraging L2 Speaking

1. Eliminate idle time.
2. Change seats or select groups often.
3. Design tasks that require **meaningful** information exchange.
4. Students must expect the unexpected.
5. Post high-frequency phrases and refer to them when used.
6. Inside-outside circles and “speed dating.”
7. Encourage ridiculous answers--humor always wins!





# Teaching Culture

1. Authentic materials.
2. Culture capsule: Given an item or picture, students must research to discover the function and relevance of the object.
3. Students/Families as Ambassadors.
4. Ethnographic studies.
5. Literature as catalyst: *la négritude*, for example.
6. Film, music, television, music, commercials--anything in the media!

## To consider...

What aspects of culture are evident in the film?

What linguistic features could be used as a starting point for further instruction?

Is there a culturally-related follow up lesson or unit to this film?



# What can we learn from the language classroom?

1. Students need abundant and comprehensible input to stimulate acquisition.
2. Students need to practice language constantly.
3. Independent learning must occur outside the classroom, as well as in.
4. Focus lessons on high frequency vocabulary and grammar.
5. Aim to enhance proficiency--What's the point if they can't use language quickly in real situations?
6. Correction is necessary, but only if students interact with the feedback they're given.
7. Technology for technology's sake doesn't work.
8. Focus on today's world and its issues to motivate students.

Avez-vous des questions?

---