

INVENTORY OF PRINCIPLES FOR COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING
SOUTH ASIA SUMMER LANGUAGE INSTITUTE

- 1) **Maximize use of the target language.** Am I giving classroom instructions in English? Am I falling back on English to explain grammar points that might be presented inductively? Am I modeling grammar rather than giving a linguistics lesson? Am I creating in-class assignments and tasks that directly or indirectly encourage English questions or statements from students? Do I permit students to use English in situations where they could/should use the target language?
- 2) **Analyze student needs.** Am I presenting language most likely to be needed by students or focusing too much on aspects that I enjoy: linguistics, literature/poetry, grammar, dialectical variants, etc.? Am I designing assignments and classroom activities that help students learn about the cultural contexts of language use, how to connect language to other areas of knowledge, and how to find communities that use the language?
- 3) **Focus on content and task-based exercises.** Am I teaching the forms, patterns, and vocabulary that my students are likely to need to use in their daily lives, or am I teaching forms or aspects of the language that are hardly used, archaic, or otherwise marginal to common communication situations?? Am I encouraging students *actually* to practice accomplishing things with the language themselves or *just* to observe things being done with the target language? Am I allowing an inferior textbook to dictate my lesson plans simply because it's easier? Am I emphasizing practice in using the language or do I spend large amounts of class time (more than 2-3 minutes at any time) explaining grammar and syntax? Do I sufficiently vary the types of activities and assignments in and out of class in terms of input medium (recording, website, print, etc.), technology required, group size, length, purpose, and the like? Are my students motivated because they love me or because they love the language?
- 4) **Tolerate mistakes and encourage experimentation.** Do I unintentionally discourage student creativity by frequent interruptions to correct their mistakes in speaking? Is it really essential that the mistake be corrected at that point, or could I address the point at a later time? Do I simply and quickly “unstuck” or facilitate conversations or oral presentations, as appropriate to the activity, or do I impose correct forms and models inflexibly?
- 5) **Attend to affective issues in the class.** Am I aware of and attentive to different learning styles that are present among my students? Do I know about any personal issues—work, family matters, etc.—that may be affecting a student's work? Have I addressed heritage issues and level discrepancies in a way that makes creative use of the students' skills?
- 6) **Diversify dynamics, skills, and activities.** Do I do most of the talking in class? Are students interacting mostly with me or do they have chances to interact with classmates in pairs, in small groups, or with guests? Am I dividing classtime and homework appropriately to the different language skills – speaking, listening, reading, writing? Am I balancing guided vs. open-ended practices – i.e. guided language drills that focus on language form (e.g., memorization, repetition drills) vs. interactive practice (creating personal meaning, negotiating message and information gaps, simulating real-world tasks).