



International Languages Curriculum – *Fact Sheet*

INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES

When teaching an international language, teachers need to provide students with varied strategies that allow them to use the language in an authentic way and help them achieve curriculum expectations. By using a variety of instructional strategies in consideration of students' diverse learning styles, teachers:

- > encourage students to apply inquiry and communication skills with a direct link to the cultural aspects inherent to every international language,
- > guide students through their own learning by means of student-centred tasks and scaffolding strategies that promote student self-awareness and personal learning style,
- > promote risk-taking for the development of each students' individual learning style and their well-being which includes cognitive, emotional, social, and physical needs.

LESSON PLANNING TIPS

- > A thematic approach and delivery can be highly beneficial in acquiring and consolidating knowledge as students develop a sense of intercultural understanding through authentic interaction.
- > A safe and supportive environment is also conducive to healthy relationships, which in turn, help students reach their full potential.

- > Accommodations for special education students and English language learners need to be considered as they may have different needs for language learning.
- > Provide ample opportunities for students to integrate the four language skills (reading, writing, speaking, and listening) through interaction, collaboration, and metacognition.
- > The belief that all students can be successful at learning should be at the heart of instructional planning for the international language classroom.
- > Well-being strategies promote equity and inclusive education given that risk-taking and consequential acceptance enable learning to become highly effective.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS FOR TEACHERS:

- What evidence do I have my students are learning?
- What new strategies have I tried lately that might benefit different learning styles?
- In what ways am I challenging students who are clearly being successful in my classroom?
- What do I do when students struggle trying to make themselves understood?
- How do I adapt my lessons to be inclusive?
- Do I promote the use of at least two of the four skills in every lesson?

1. ROLE PLAY

This strategy is considered highly effective in language instruction as it prepares learners for unpredictable real-life situations in which language is used authentically. The action-oriented task approach to language learning is heavily based on this strategy. It encourages students to apply critical thinking and problem-solving in order to communicate for a purpose, adding emotional intelligence, creativity, and logic. The use of this strategy promotes risk-taking and inclusive education as students interact with their peers with the goal of authentic communication at heart. The following are some examples of role play:



- > **Spontaneous dialogues:** Students are presented with a real-life situation in which an international language may be required, for example, ordering food at a restaurant or buying a ticket at a train station. These situations should be aimed at using language for understanding/making oneself understood. The teacher encourages volunteers to model the conversation for the rest of the class. The teacher provides hints in order for students to form sentences and carry on the conversation. Students interact with each other at the same time. After a few minutes, students rotate and have another conversation with a different classmate.
- > **Carousel:** This strategy provides scaffolding of new or already learnt material in a collaborative manner. It can be used to review a newspaper article, novel study or simply a text for reading comprehension. Students rotate roles and partners as they engage in speaking or listening stations that revolve around a specific story within a set period of time. Then students can re-enact the story/stories in groups for the whole class.

2. COOPERATIVE ACTIVITIES

- > **Think-pair-share:** This strategy encourages student interaction and sharing in a small group environment. It is recommended for large classes and for students that may not otherwise participate often or may not be comfortable to provide their opinion at a whole-class level. It provides students with the opportunity to come up with an idea or understand a concept by collaborating and communicating while using the language. Students first think of their individual response/opinion about a certain subject and then they pair up and share their ideas. In some cases, the teacher may encourage the pair to share their common idea/opinion with the rest of the class. Teachers may want to suggest topics that can spark conversation such as hypothetical scenarios (have you ever...?, what would you do if...?).
- > **Three-step interview:** With this format, each student is provided with the opportunity to take on a role (interviewer, interviewee, and reporter) to apply different levels of questioning and critical thinking. Some examples of themes for the interview could be solving a crime or applying for a job. The interviewer is responsible for formulating questions; the interviewee responds and the reporter records the conversation in order to relay it to the teacher or to another group of students/whole class.
- > **Jigsaw:** This activity is recommended for a medium/large class and it can be used as an introduction to a given topic, for example, a celebrity's biography. The class is divided into four or five groups. Each student in the group is given a number and is assigned a certain portion of the learning (celebrity's beginnings, career, contributions, interesting facts). At the teacher's cue all same numbers of each group find each other and form subgroups. They read the assigned material and learn it together. Then, members return to their original groups and retell their portion. At the end the group pieces together the learning and prepares a report to submit to the teacher.

or to present to the rest of the class.

- > **Group discussion:** This strategy works best with a small number of intermediate/advanced students. Different variations can be: debate format, "magic carpet" and themed dice. In a debate format, learners are provided with a specific topic and position that they need to defend in front of the whole class. For example, "Should weekends include Fridays?" or "Should school start at noon?". Following the allotted time for debating, the class discusses the different positions and votes to support their favourite presenter. In a "magic carpet" setting, the whole class is divided into two groups that face each other along an imaginary or real carpet. At the teacher's cue, students exchange opinions about a specific topic and try to convince their partner to join them in their position. At the end of the exchange students must take a position and join a group accordingly. The group with most members wins. This strategy can be expanded using a "themed dice" that may be rolled at the time of a partner exchange so learners can discuss various related topics.
- > **Broken telephone:** Students in a circle secretly pass on a message until it reaches the last member. Students then compare the original message to the final one, analyse where the message was modified and rectify it. Alternatively, the message can be shared publicly as each student adds a word to create a brief communal story.

3. STUDENT-TEACHER CONFERENCE

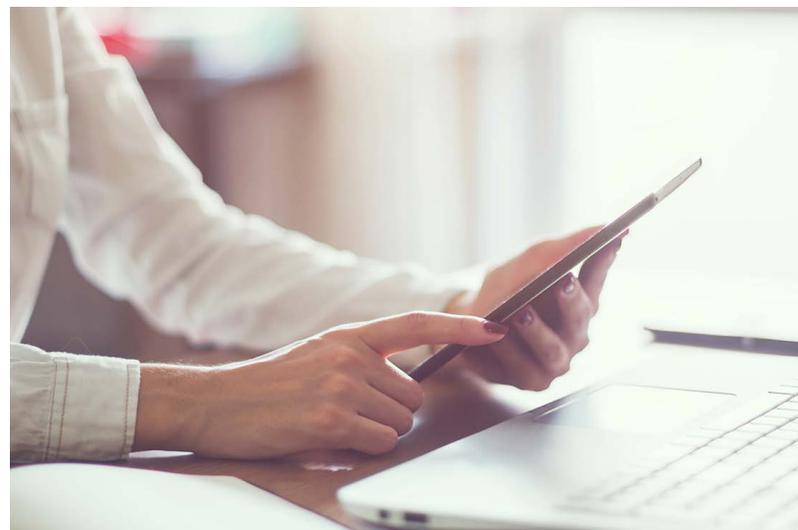
This strategy promotes problem-solving and spontaneous individual/pair conversation. The teacher takes on the role of the interviewer or detective and asks the student assigned questions with the purpose of using language for understanding. Students then relay the information to a fellow student who in turn must retell the responses of the first student or ask new questions.

4. ONLINE RESOURCES AND TOOLS

Information and communication technology can help teachers enhance instructional strategies

and support student learning. The integration of technology in the international language classroom is a natural extension of learning outcomes. The use of technology can give students an opportunity to explore cultural, historical, and social aspects attached to the language of study. Students can also practice, enhance, and consolidate their learning by use of different resources that are focused on the development of the four language skills previously outlined. Some examples are as follows:

- > **Kahoot:** This resource is designed to introduce or practise vocabulary, grammar structures or review a reading. It is a timed game that promotes learners' critical thinking through timed questions in a competitive and electronic format. Teachers can prepare their own games or use public ones.
- > **Quizlet:** This tool promotes student language metacognition and learning strategies. Teachers or students can create their own sets of vocabulary flashcards, practise spelling, test their knowledge and collaborate with other students in the learning task. Learners regulate their own understanding of the material by creating personalized tools that can help retention of the material.
- > **VoiceThread:** This tool allows for listening and speaking practice and interaction. It encourages participation and students' creative thinking skills through videos, class discussion threads and homework/assignment collaboration.



RESOURCES/REFERENCES

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