

CHECKLIST FOR OBSERVING A WORLD LANGUAGE CLASSROOM

Informal Observation Form

TARGET LANGUAGE USE

• **The teacher speaks in the target language.** *Check one box.*

- | | |
|--|--|
| <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? Because students can't acquire spoken language if they don't hear it.

Since 2011, ACTFL has recommended over 90% target language use in the classroom.

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 uses varied comprehension checks often.** *Check as many boxes as you observe.*

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Observing student facial expressions and body language | <input type="checkbox"/> Observing response time and confidence of students |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Asking questions to the whole class (choral answers) | <input type="checkbox"/> Listening for spontaneous responses (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? Because students can't acquire a language if they don't 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 it.

• **Teacher offers opportunities for sophisticated language use by...** *Check as many boxes as you observe.*

- Reflecting and 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 just:
 - a) Repeating
 - b) Responding with formulas
 - c) Memorizing dialogues
 - d) Conjugating verbs

WHY? Because students can think 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 ages and at all course levels.

BEST PRACTICE WORLD LANGUAGE TEACHING METHODS

Check as many boxes as you observe in this section.

• **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 to individual students | <input type="checkbox"/> Talking about 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 language correction techniques by...

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

• Teacher promotes higher-level thinking and language 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, or extended discourse, depending on student ability)
- Requiring longer, more detailed, and more accurate narration from the most capable students

EFFECTIVE CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES

Check as many boxes as you observe in this section.

• There seems to be a routine to begin the class

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

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

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

• 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 (limited down time)
- Students are not packing up 5 minutes before the end of class. (limited down time)
- Students wait to be dismissed by the teacher, not the bell

Observations: