Instruction

Instruction is learner-oriented, designed to meet the communication and content needs of the particular group of learners, and informed by TESL theory and practice.

41. **Instruction fosters a supportive community of learners in which learners feel comfortable, take risks with language, and engage in purposeful learning.**

   —The instructor creates a welcoming, supportive environment through any of the following:[37]
   — A friendly, welcoming demeanor.
   — Enthusiasm.
   — Positive, encouraging feedback.
   — Use of humour.

   —The instructor promotes an atmosphere of mutual respect through a selection of the following:
   — At the beginning of a course, articulating (and encouraging learners to articulate) classroom expectations related to treatment of peers, with reminders later as needed.
   — Welcoming a diversity of viewpoints.
   — Modeling respectful interactions with all learners.
   — Ensuring that learners treat each other with respect.
   — Presenting, and encouraging learners to use, the functions of language related to encouraging, complimenting, expressing polite agreement and disagreement, soliciting opinions, requesting clarification, etc.

   —The adult perspectives, intelligence, and wide range of skills and experiences that learners bring to class are acknowledged in ways such as the following:
   — The objectives and purposes of classroom activities

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[37] See TESOL (2003), Standard 3A4

are explained.
- — Learners share their prior knowledge of language and content.
- — Learners share their experiences and expertise.
- — Learners engage in tasks where they take on the role of "expert" and "teacher."
- — Other.

—Instructional activities are varied to address the individual differences of the learners:[38]
- — Learning activities appeal to different learning modalities (visual, auditory, interactive, kinesthetic) as learners interact verbally, write, read, role-play, debate, sort, move, sing, etc.
- — New language is presented in a variety of ways (e.g., verbal presentations are reinforced by demonstrations, writing on the board, handouts, games).
- — Learners are encouraged to use their language skills to explore topics of personal interest.

42. Instruction is both guided by the objectives and goals of the curriculum and responsive to the needs and goals of the learners.

—Course plans demonstrate direct connection to the objectives of the curriculum.

—Instructional activities reflect an appropriate balance of skills based on the learners' needs and goals (e.g., listening and speaking are not neglected in favor of grammar and writing).

—Instructors formally or informally gather input from learners regarding a selection of the following:
- — Interests.
- — Present and future needs and goals (as individuals; as members of families, communities, and workplaces).
- — Proficiency levels in listening, speaking, reading, writing.
- — Linguistic strengths and weaknesses (grammar,

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[38] See TESOL (2003), Standard 3F

vocabulary, pronunciation).
— Learning styles.
— Special needs (literacy, learning disabilities).
— Other.

—Information from learners is used when planning instruction to identify appropriate goals and objectives, materials, approaches, themes, and tasks.

—If relevant, Essential Skill (ES) resources are used to determine learners' needs and interests related to workplace skills. (See BP #60 for examples of ES resources.)

—Feedback from learners regarding class content is solicited (formally and informally).

—Changes to plans/content/materials/approaches are made in response to
— Learner performance.
— Feedback from learners.

43. Class content (e.g., themes, listening/reading texts, speaking/writing topics, communicative tasks) is meaningful, appealing and engaging, with a transparent connection to the learners' real-world needs and future goals.

—Listening, speaking, reading, and writing activities are related by topic, theme, or content.[39]

—Instruction is varied to appeal to different learning styles.

—Reading or listening materials
— Appeal to the interests and needs of the learners.
— Are authentic[40], including resources from community, workplace or further education settings.

—The topics/themes about which learners speak or write are engaging, interesting and relevant to the learners in a particular

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[39] See TESOL (2003), Standard 3E

[40] Authentic material is assumed to include material that has been modified by simplification, elaboration or reformulation while retaining the natural properties of authentic material.

class.[41]

— Classroom activities and tasks reflect authentic communicative, real-world interactions and tasks that learners could expect to participate in, in specific community/social, work or academic settings.

— If relevant, Essential Skills (ES) Profiles and ES-referenced resources are used to ensure real-life authenticity of tasks and readings geared to learners' workplace needs and goals. See BP #60 & 63 for examples of ES resources.

— In choosing language tasks, a selection of the following is considered:
   — The present real-world needs of the learners.
   — The future goals of the learners.
   — The experience, skills, knowledge and interests of the learners.
   — The proficiency level of the class.
   — The objectives of the lesson/course.

— What is done in class reflects the real-life use to which language will be put.

— There is a spiraling of instruction; curricular targets are "recycled" into new themes, contexts and tasks.

— Learning task design reflects deliberate linking and springboarding; that is, each task works to "launch" the next task.[42]

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[41] Cultural universalities can be drawn on for thematic development (e.g., Family life; Health practices; Work and play; Fashion; Food and nutrition). See Donald E. Brown's list of "human universals."

[42] Hetty Roesingh suggests the following series of tasks on the theme of "getting around town," each of which serve to launch the next task: (1) generating and rehearsing key questions for a mini-interview; (2) contacting and interviewing native speakers; (3) comparing data with peers and deciding how best to represent the data in graphs and charts; (4) using the graphs and charts as a scaffold for mini-class presentations; (5) writing a 5-paragraph essay from a template in which the instructor provides support for the opening paragraph, learners write the 3 body paragraphs on their own, and the entire class creates the concluding paragraph. See www.learningbydesign.ucalgary.ca for an online tool for designing thematic units as well as sample thematic units.

44. As learners interact with listening and reading texts, they identify and practice skills and strategies to access the content and to accomplish meaningful, real-life tasks.

— Pre-listening/reading activities – focused on the content, the organization, or the language of the text – ensure that listening/reading materials are accessible and raise awareness of target language and skills. Examples of pre-listening/reading activities include:
  — Vocabulary generation activities.
  — Discussion of questions that include target language items (vocabulary, grammar) from the listening/reading.
  — Discussion of inference statements, then listening/reading to confirm answers.
  — Making and then confirming/rejecting predictions.
  — Brainstorming and use of graphic organizers.
  — Pre-teaching information relevant to the content of the listening/reading.
  — Quizzes/surveys to raise awareness of content.
  — Other.

— Learners interact with the texts in ways that develop particular listening or reading skills, depending on the needs and level of the class, such as:
  — Skimming (listening/reading for the general idea).
  — Scanning (listening/reading for specific information).
  — Analyzing the meaning of words and structures.
  — Identifying main ideas.
  — Making inferences.
  — Relating ideas to real life.
  — Integrating ideas from two or more sources.
  — Taking notes.
  — Summarizing.
  — Other.

— Strategies for developing the above listening/reading skills, for improving listening/reading comprehension, and for improving reading speed are
  — Identified and discussed.
  — Demonstrated.
  — Practiced.
  — Reflected upon.

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—Learners use the content accessed in the listening/reading texts to accomplish tasks that are meaningful and related to real-life. For example, learners use information from a listening or reading text to do one or more of the following[43]:
  — Do or make something (e.g., follow instructions).
  — List and rank, sequence, or categorize.
  — Compare or contrast.
  — Advise/warn/convince.
  — Teach.
  — Debate.
  — Solve a problem.
  — Participate in a role-play or decision drama.
  — Plan a presentation.
  — Design a poster.
  — Prepare study questions.
  — Fill in a form.
  — Write a letter, memo, note, report, paragraph, research paper, etc.

—Learners listen to or read multiple texts on the same theme, content or topic, or by the same author/speaker (narrow listening/reading).

—Extensive listening/reading outside of class is encouraged.

45. **Instruction in speaking and writing provides a balance between fluency and accuracy, along with the opportunity to practice and incorporate feedback, as learners use their productive language skills to accomplish tasks.**

—Learners receive input before and/or while speaking/writing about a topic. This includes input on any of the following:
  — The issues, ideas, and content.
  — Language related to the content of the task (this could be in the form of vocabulary or a listening/reading text).
  — Language required to accomplish the task (e.g., language for expressing opinions, clarifying, disagreeing, convincing, contrasting).

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[43] Note: All of these (except perhaps the last 2) can be done collaboratively and orally, as learners negotiate in small groups, to ensure that oral skills are not ignored.

— The language that is targeted for focused instruction (e.g., vocabulary, grammar, functions) is based on any of the following:
  — The objectives of the course.
  — The level and needs of the learners.
  — The requirements of the task.

— Speaking/writing tasks require learners to do some of the following:
  — Consider purpose and audience.
  — Focus on both meaning and form.
  — Engage in real communication (i.e., an exchange of information, ideas, or opinions).
  — Plan language use (i.e., incorporate newly learned language into the task).
  — Accomplish a task with specific requirements and outputs that can be evaluated.[44]

— In both speaking and writing, there is a balance between a focus on fluency and a focus on accuracy appropriate to the task type. For example:
  — Giving a 3-minute speech to one partner, then repeating it with a second partner in 2 minutes, then repeating it with third partner in 1 minute (speaking fluency).
  — Journaling that is not corrected for grammatical accuracy (writing fluency).
  — Focusing on the correct use of a particular form (e.g., modals when giving advice) (speaking accuracy).

— A focus on accuracy (e.g., focus on grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary) moves towards an increasing focus on communication/meaning. For instance,
  — Practice activities may first focus learners almost entirely on a particular form.
  — Next, practice activities may require learners to focus on a particular form while communicating.

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[44] Take, for example, the following task for an ESL class focused on healthcare: "Respond appropriately to a patient's concerns regarding an upcoming treatment." Specific requirements could be included in instructions, such as "Be sure to introduce yourself professionally, break the ice, respond to questions and concerns, probe, check comprehension, provide information that is relevant to their concerns, reassure, and close the conversation appropriately." These requirements could be converted to a rubric and used for self, peer, and instructor evaluation.

- — Later, practice activities may have learners focus primarily on meaning, while paying attention to a number of different forms.

— Learners are provided with ample opportunities to practice their speaking/writing skills, both inside and outside of class[45].

— Learners receive timely feedback.

— Learners are given the opportunity to incorporate feedback into speaking and writing activities.

— Speaking tasks work towards a development of fluency through the use of any of the following:
  - — Formulaic sequences.
  - — Lexical fillers.
  - — Communication strategies.
  - — Repetition/rehearsal.

— Writing activities acknowledge the writing process and encourage peer involvement at different points throughout that process:
  - — Idea generating.
  - — Organizing.
  - — Drafting and re-drafting.
  - — Revising and editing.

46.(a) Explicit instruction of how the grammatical system works to express meanings is integrated into meaning-focused language teaching.

— Selection of which areas of grammar are explicitly taught in class is based on:
  - — The learners' current linguistic competence (i.e., developmental stage, identified errors and gaps).
  - — The learners' communication needs (e.g., related to tasks that they will perform).

— Grammar instruction is integrated into skills/meaning-focused language teaching
  - — To prepare learners for meaning-based communication tasks.
  - — In response to learner error.

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[45] Just living in an L2 environment may be considered an opportunity; however, instructors need to encourage participation in that L2 environment through, for example, tasks that require interaction with native speakers.

— Grammar instruction sometimes takes the form of isolated grammar lessons, especially related to those structures that
- — Are infrequent.
- — Are difficult to perceive[46].
- — Do not cause communication breakdown[47].

— Connections are made between the form of a structure and the meanings and use of a structure.

— Grammar practice is contextualized within a task/theme/topic.

— There is a spiraling of instruction; target structures are "recycled" into new topics, contexts and tasks.

— Learners are introduced to resources that they can access to support their own grammar learning (grammar texts, websites, etc.).

— Instructors have a deep understanding of the English grammar system and expertise in teaching grammar.

46.(b) Grammar instruction encourages learners to notice and analyze the forms, meanings, and uses of target structures; provides ample exposure to target structures; provides opportunity for pushed output, in which learners are encouraged to use new structures in spoken and written communication; and provides corrective feedback.

— Learners are encouraged to pay attention to grammatical forms and form/meaning/use connections (i.e., awareness-raising tasks)
- — In input (listening/reading).
- — In output (speaking/writing).

— Learners are encouraged to notice the gaps and errors in their own use of grammatical forms.

— Learners receive ample exposure to target structures.

— Grammar instruction includes focused practice activities that range from very controlled to more open-ended so that learners

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[46] thereby "helping learners notice language forms that occur frequently but are semantically redundant or phonologically reduced or imperceptible in the oral input" (Spada & Lightbrown, 2008, p. 195).

[47] Those errors that do not interfere with meaning are less likely to be noticed. Isolated instruction may be necessary to encourage learners "to notice the difference between what they say and the correct way to say what they mean" (Spada & Lightbrown, 2008, pp. 196-197).

can use their grammatical knowledge during meaning-focused communication.

— Grammar instruction goes beyond presentation and practice, ensuring that learners have opportunity to produce forms in meaning-focused communication.

— Learners receive feedback in response to errors, for instance, through
  — Explicit correction.
  — Clarification requests.
  — Elicitation of correct form.
  — Modeling the correct form, along with strategy training to increase awareness of the "reformulations"[48] they encounter both inside and outside of class.

— Corrective feedback occurs in a timely manner and ensures opportunity to incorporate that feedback back into speaking and writing activities.

47.(a) Explicit pronunciation instruction focuses on those factors that affect intelligibility.

— Pronunciation issues that affect intelligibility of learner speech are identified
  — Formally through individual assessment.
  — Informally as miscommunications occur or as the instructor identifies pronunciation issues during communication tasks.

— Selection of what to teach related to pronunciation is based on the learners' need to be understood:
  — The first priority is speaking habits that affect intelligibility (e.g., mumbling, slurring, volume).
  — The second priority is global issues (suprasegmentals) that affect intelligibility. These can include inappropriate sentence stress, syllable stress, intonation, and rhythm. These can also refer to problems related to unconnected speech, including addition of extra syllables and dropping

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[48] These reformulations are often implicit; that is, NSs often incorporate a "corrected version" of what the learner said in their responses; often, however, learners fail to attend to these less explicit corrections.

of final consonants.

— The third priority includes those sounds (segmentals) that most affect intelligibility, recognizing that most segments will improve on their own. Vowels are more important than consonants.[49]

47.(b) Pronunciation instruction raises awareness of the characteristics of spoken English and provides opportunity for both focused and communicative practice.

— Pronunciation instruction encourages awareness and analysis of the characteristics of spoken English (rhythm, intonation, sounds, stress, connectedness) in contrast to the visual/written forms of language. For instance, learners
  — Analyze and perceive target features in spoken language (e.g., on the radio, on TV, and in interactions outside the classroom).
  — Identify useful rules/patterns (e.g., for the pronunciation of -ed endings).
  — Engage in listening discrimination activities.
  — Learn how sounds are physically made.

— Pronunciation instruction provides opportunities for controlled practice, in which learners are focused primarily on form, such as
  — Perceptual exercises (perceiving the differences).
  — Listening & repeating, mimicking.
  — Jazz chants, poems, rhymes, dramatic monologues, etc.

— Pronunciation practice is focused on language that is familiar to learners (i.e., not obscure vocabulary) and contextualized (e.g., related to a text, theme, or task).

— Pronunciation instruction is integrated into regular classroom activities; it goes beyond presentation and practice and provides opportunities for instruction to be applied in communication. For instance,
  — Using high frequency formulaic sequences for pronunciation instruction and practice.

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[49] Issues of intelligibility are affected by the "functional load" of a sound (including the frequency of the sound along with the relative abundance of minimal pairs involving the sound). A useful article on this issue is Brown (1988).

— Practicing a particular pronunciation feature in preparation for a communication task (e.g., practicing the linking in phrases related to giving an opinion, or the word stress in a vocabulary list prior to a communication task requiring the use of those phrases/words).

— Simple information gap exercises targeting one pronunciation feature (e.g., rising intonation in WH-questions).

— Replays of communication tasks in which learners first do a communicative task with a focus on meaning and fluency, and then repeat the task with a focus on a particular pronunciation feature.

— Pronunciation instruction enables learners to identify and perceive those issues in their own speech that cause problems with intelligibility, developing an ability to monitor their own pronunciation.

— Instructors have some expertise in phonology, the English sound system, and teaching pronunciation.

48.(a) Vocabulary instruction encourages learners to notice and focus on new vocabulary items (single words as well as formulaic sequences) and links the forms of new vocabulary to meanings, collocations, and uses.

Learners are encouraged to notice and focus on new words, their meanings, uses, and pronunciation, in a variety of ways:

— Explicit discussion of target vocabulary prior to listening, speaking, reading or writing tasks.

— The incorporation of target vocabulary in pre-listening/reading activities to ensure multiple recalls of the items.

— Lexical elaborations (glosses) and textual enhancement in both paper and electronic readings.

— The use of visuals, e.g., writing vocabulary items on board, flip chart paper, etc.

— Presentation of new, thematically-related items prior to a unit in which the theme is explored through a variety of activities and modes.

— Quick L1 translations.

— Instruction in and allowance for appropriate and judicious dictionary use (bilingual, monolingual, and bilingualized).

— Pairing of the use of clues (context, visual) to determine vocabulary meaning with the use of dictionaries, glosses or group discussion to confirm guesses (to encourage retention of vocabulary).

— Presenting vocabulary in thematically-related clusters (e.g., frog, green, pond), rather than in semantically related clusters (e.g., red, yellow, blue, green) that can cause confusion.

— Other.

48. (b) Vocabulary instruction provides multiple opportunities to retrieve new vocabulary items; provides opportunities for pushed output, in which learners are encouraged to use new vocabulary items in spoken and written communication; and includes the explicit formal teaching of vocabulary learning strategies.

— Learners are provided with opportunities for maximum exposure to, engagement with, and retrievals of the target vocabulary and meanings, including a selection of the following:
   — Multi-mode exposure to target vocabulary in thematic teaching (listening, speaking, reading, writing).
   — Vocabulary exercises (matching, cloze, collocation).
   — Narrow reading (reading a number of texts on a particular topic or by a particular author).
   — Vocabulary quizzes and tests.
   — Other.

— Learners are pushed to use target vocabulary in speaking and writing tasks, facilitating long-term retention, through either of the following:
   — Explicit target vocabulary instruction prior to speaking and writing tasks. This includes pre-teaching of vocabulary related to the content of the task, as well as pre-teaching of vocabulary related to language functions.
   — Requiring the use of the target vocabulary in speaking/writing tasks (e.g., "Choose 3 of the new statements for expressing opinions and use them during the debate" or "Choose 8 of the new words

to incorporate into your paragraph").

—— Learners are enabled to manage their own vocabulary learning through deliberate exposure to, instruction in, and sharing of vocabulary development strategies, including a selection of the following:
  —— Strategies for using the morphology of the word to make meaning/form connections (roots, affixes).
  —— Dictionary strategies (paired with guessing from context).
  —— Encoding and mnemonic techniques (e.g., relating a new word to existing knowledge as in the linking an L2 word to an image or a sound-alike L1 word).
  —— Strategies for spaced (rather than massed) repetition. That is, repetition occurs at varying frequencies (more often at the beginning, less often later on) over a longer period, as opposed to quick "cramming" for a vocabulary test.
  —— Strategies for encouraging multiple and varied types of vocabulary retrieval (e.g., flashcards, a vocabulary notebook).
  —— Strategies for eliminating boredom, and for encouraging and rewarding vocabulary learning[50].
  —— Strategies for putting new words to immediate use.
  —— Computer-assisted learning and concordancing tools, such as www.lexTutor.ca
  —— Other.

49. Technology is used to encourage learners to explore and create language, as well as to use language to explore ideas, solve problems, develop new skills, and negotiate and communicate with an expanded audience.

—— Technology is used to build language skills.

—— Technology is used to support task-based and content-based learning.

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[50] These strategies, which often involve pairing vocabulary learning with an activity a learner finds pleasurable, can be individual and innovative. For instance, learners have suggested the following strategies: going for a walk while reviewing flashcards; listening to music or eating a favorite snack while reviewing vocabulary; bouncing a ball while rehearsing; and creating a matching vocabulary game. Encourage learners to share the strategies that have worked for them.

—Technology is used to individualize instruction.

—Technology is used to build new skills (e.g., computer literacy) that can transfer to real life.

—Technology is used to foster learner autonomy.

—Technology provides opportunity for learners to develop the language skills for communication through diverse media (e.g., writing an email, contributing to a discussion board, reading a website or a multi-media document).

—Technology is used for learning projects and tasks that involve the use of language skills and communication, for instance:
  — PowerPoint presentations
  — Videos
  — Blogs
  — Email

—Technology, such as the Internet and multimedia software, are used so that learners do some of the following:
  — Explore, investigate, learn about, and/or creatively play with language.
  — Use or comprehend a wide variety of language while focused on meaning and high interest activities.
  — Access extensive input and produce output related by theme, topic or content (i.e., reading, listening, interacting, writing on a particular topic).
  — Access knowledge and information that is interesting and useful for accomplishing authentic tasks.
  — Access authentic audiences, thereby motivating speaking/writing.
  — Interact and negotiate with peers, other speakers, and the instructor (e.g., voice chat, text chat, e-mail, blogs).
  — Participate in collaborative learning (with peers; globally).
  — Receive expanded opportunities to practice and receive feedback.
  — Access learning opportunities outside of class.

50. Instructional activities are culturally sensitive, and they encourage learners to share and celebrate aspects of their

cultures, to explore their own and others' world views, and to expand their capacity to live and work in Canada.

— Instruction is sensitive to the cultural/religious norms of the learners.

— Instructors (as insider members of Canadian culture) mediate for learners the hidden culture of beliefs, values, and ways of knowing in Canada.[51]

— Classroom activities expand learners' capacity to live and work in a multicultural environment by encouraging learners to do a selection of the following:

   — Explore the impact of their own cultural assumptions on their own expectations, behaviours, choices, values, communication styles, etc.

   — Explore the impact of the cultural assumptions of those they meet in Canada (e.g., Canadians in particular communities; Canadians in particular workplaces) on the expectations, behaviours, choices, values, communication styles, etc. of those individuals.

   — Explore and analyze consequences of embracing or rejecting the beliefs and practices of those they meet in Canada.

   — Develop skills for coping with and reflecting on incidents where differences in cultural assumptions, expectations, behaviours, values, communication styles (etc.) have resulted in dissonance, discomfort, or confusion. For instance, learners learn to brainstorm a variety of possible interpretations of a behaviour, rather than accepting the first (often negative) interpretation that comes to mind.

   — Learners have opportunity to celebrate and share in a diversity of cultures and customs (e.g., through class presentations, celebrations of festivals and holidays, exposure to literature/art/music, performances, publishing of relevant writing

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[51] The content and concept information which learners access through reading and listening activities is a vehicle or "carrier" of cultural information; part of the instructor's role is to mediate, or "unpack" this cultural information for learners.

assignments, discussions).

51. Instruction fosters independence and autonomous learning as learners take responsibility for and manage their own learning.

—Learners are encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning by, for instance,
  — Setting goals.
  — Developing strategies for self-assessment.
  — Documenting their own progress.
  — Maintaining a learning portfolio.
  — Taking responsibility for aspects of class management[52].

—Learners identify, share, develop and practice strategies for language learning, such as strategies for
  — Engaging with native speakers[53].
  — Increasing reading speed.
  — Learning vocabulary.
  — Other.

—Learners use their language skills to access useful and meaningful interaction, knowledge, skills and services that allow them to be more independent and self-sufficient. This may include, for example,
  — Using the Internet and databases to access information.
  — Participating in role-plays that transfer directly to real-life needs (e.g., role-playing a telephone conversation with a potential landlord).
  — Completing tasks that mirror tasks required in real life (e.g., filling out an injury report).

—Learners participate in activities that prepare them for success in future academic endeavours, such as
  — Organizing learning materials.
  — Completing homework assignments.
  — Practicing academic skills such as note taking,

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[52] E.g., depending on the class, learners may take responsibility for organizing a social activity, planning a fieldtrip, taking attendance, leading a discussion, etc.

[53] E.g., non-verbal strategies for indicating a desire to communicate; strategies for opening a conversation; strategies for responding to compliments in ways that encourage rather than terminate a conversation.

outlining, and test taking.
— Researching information and presenting research.
— Learning and practicing critical thinking skills.
— Making oral presentations.

—Learners make plans to continue learning once the class has ended.

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