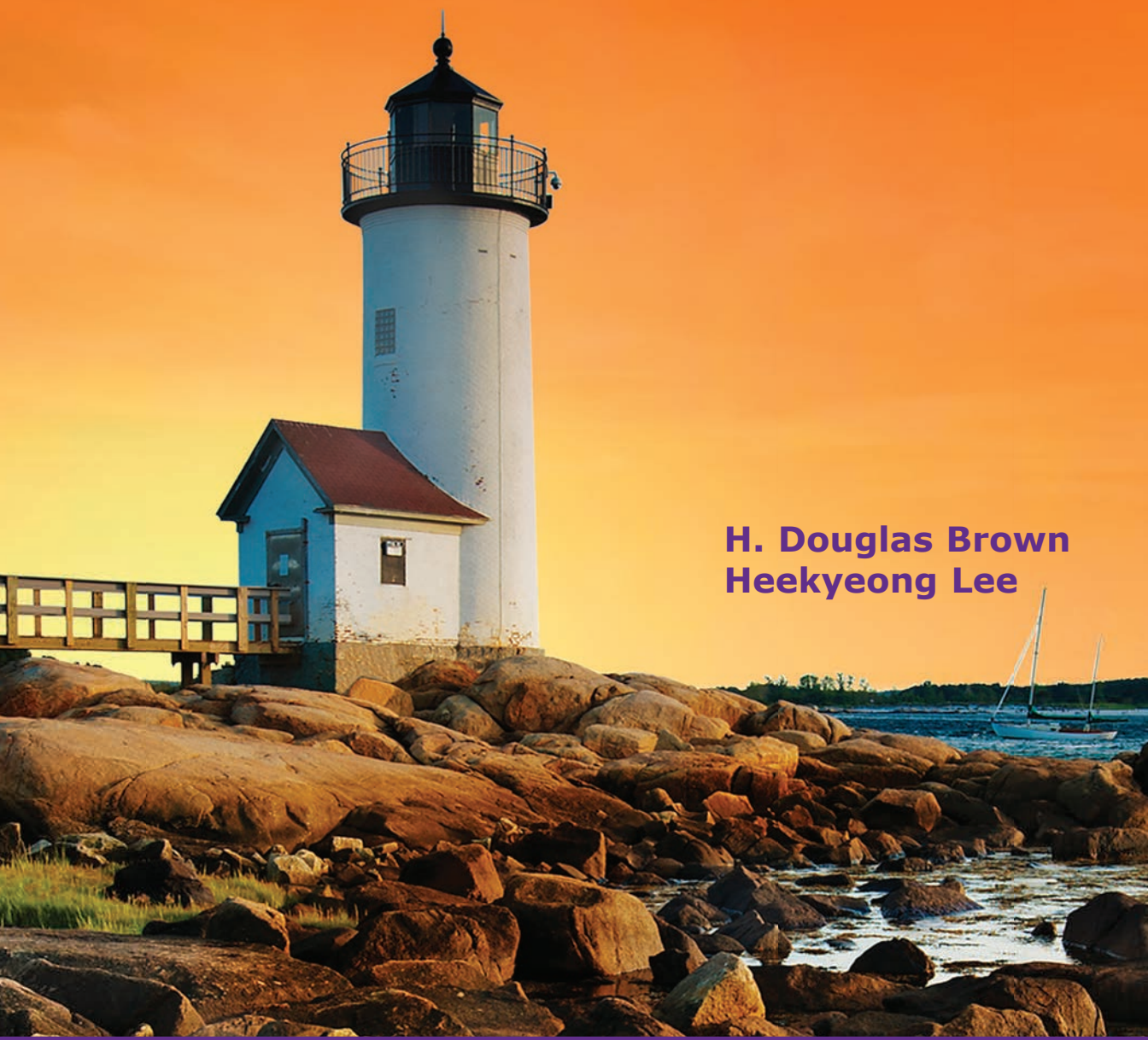
FOURTH EDITION

TEACHING *by* PRINCIPLES

AN INTERACTIVE APPROACH TO LANGUAGE PEDAGOGY



H. Douglas Brown
Heekyeong Lee

ALWAYS LEARNING

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AN INTERACTIVE APPROACH TO LANGUAGE PEDAGOGY

H. DOUGLAS BROWN
San Francisco State University

HEEKYEONG LEE
Monterey Institute of International Studies

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16. When the T calls them back together, she tallies the number of students who responded affirmatively to each movie, and in an unscientific poll, announces what appears to be their favorite movie. "It's a tie between *Gravity* and *The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel*!"
17. With the time that's left (about 5 minutes) the T asks Ss to complete the grammar practice exercise on page 19 in which they write responses to 6 questions or statements, such as "I'd love to see a drama tonight" and "Would you like to see a comedy?" Their responses range from "I'd rather not" and "It doesn't matter to me" to "Actually, I'd rather see an action movie."
18. As time runs out, and students gather papers together to exit the classroom, the T tells Ss to complete their written exercise as homework, and to try to see an English movie sometime before the next class (in one week's time).

ANALYZING THE LESSON

You've just observed a relatively effective class hour in which the teacher competently planned a lesson around a textbook lesson, managed most segments of the hour without major problems, and carried out the activities with some warmth and enthusiasm. This may seem like a simple accomplishment, but let's think about the preparation, classroom management, and intuitive decisions that lie "behind the scenes."

What you have just witnessed is the product of a teacher's experience and intuition grounded in reasonably sound principles of learning and teaching. For every tiny moment of that classroom hour, certain choices were made, choices that may or may not be justified by research on second language learning and teaching. Think about those choices as you contemplate the numerous pedagogical questions that arise out of each numbered "statement" that follows.

1. Why the small-talk (vs. just getting straight to the lesson)? What teaching principle justifies such an opening? Why did the T comment on a movie that students saw on the weekend as part of the small talk? How long should such chatter continue?
2. Why did the T mark attendance while engaging in the small talk? It apparently didn't interfere with the small talk—how did the T manage to do two things at once? Why didn't she just call out names and have Ss say "here"? Is there another way to check attendance more interactively, involving student responses?
3. The textbook began with the dialogue (see #9) that this T chose to insert later. Why do you suppose she didn't start with that dialogue? Was her choice a better segue from the initial small talk that began the class? What purpose was served by asking Ss to come up with names of movies themselves at the outset? Why didn't the T just provide a list of her own?

And if she simply wants names of movies, why restrict the list to movies in English? What purpose did that serve? She chose to write the names of movies on the board—what purpose did that list serve?

4. Here she initiated the names of the categories. What would have happened if she had asked the Ss to create that list on their own? The title of this lesson, indicated in the textbook, is "Discuss preferences for movie genres." Why do you think that the T wrote "categories" on the board instead of the term "genres"?
5. Why did the T ask Ss for definitions? Wouldn't it be more efficient for the T to provide them? What purpose was served by urging them to create their own definitions? When Ss had some difficulty with defining, they tended to become more silent. Why was that? Was it a good idea for the T to ask Ss individually to come up with definitions of the words?
6. At this point it was apparent that T felt the task was over Ss' heads—what led her to that determination? Was it a good idea to switch to providing definitions herself at that point? She then asked if everyone understood, and after seeing some heads nodding affirmatively, she assumed they understood. Is such a question appropriate in this situation? Do you think the Ss really understood? What alternatives might she have employed to carry out that informal assessment?

Notice, before you move on, that each question implies that a choice was exercised by the teacher. Among dozens of possibilities for teaching this lesson on movies, categories, and the *would rather* construction, Ms. Choi has chosen, either consciously or subconsciously, a particular set of activities, a particular order, and a particular tone for each. A relatively straightforward lesson is supported by a plethora of principles of learning and teaching. To further complicate matters, some of those principles are disputable. For example, when should a teacher simply *give* information to Ss (#6) versus urging "discovery learning" by the Ss? The context does not always clearly dictate the resolution.

7. She now sets in motion some pair work for Ss. This exercise did not come from the textbook; it was her own innovation, only distantly resembling one in the textbook. Why do you suppose she chose not to follow the book here? What would be an ideal seating arrangement for doing such pair work? What should the T consider for pairing up students for a classroom task? Were her pair work directions clear? Some teacher guidelines suggest modeling such pair work—why didn't she do so? What do you suppose she was listening for as she walked around the classroom during this pair work? Do you think any Ss spoke Korean during the pair work? If so, what might the T have said or done?
8. What purpose did the reporting and processing serve? When there was disagreement on which category a movie belonged to, what do you think she did? What would you have done?

9. The T chose at this point to play the opening dialogue for the lesson. Did the background of the first 10–15 minutes of class provide enough context and interest for the Ss? What advantages and disadvantages do professionally recorded audio sound bites offer in a classroom in this context? The dialogue isn't terribly exciting; is that okay for the purposes of this lesson? What do you think of the T's pre-listening instruction for the Ss? Is there anything the T could have said or done differently before playing the CD?
10. Choral drilling is a commonly used technique in language teaching. Was it appropriate and useful here for this particular group of Ss? How do you think the T mentally justified its use? Why didn't the drill continue for several more repetitions?
11. This is one of the moments in the lesson that the T turns Ss' focus to form—particularly grammatical structure. Does the textbook segment (from page 18 of the book) sufficiently explain the structure?
12. Is the T's explanation justified at this point? Or should Ss just intuitively get a "feel" for the would rather structure? Could the T have done anything differently to help Ss understand the meaning of the target form? And what do you think about providing some explanation, as the T did, in Korean? Why did she choose to so then, and was the language switch justified? What would be the role of using Ss' L1 in this particular situation? She seemed to be "lecturing" to Ss here; should she have asked explicitly for some kind of response from the Ss? Or should they have had some more choral or quasi-communicative practice at this point?
13. The grid is an adaptation of a similar one in the textbook, but the T added the feature of using it in face-to-face interviews. Why did she choose to have another communicative activity here instead of following the textbook's suggestion of having Ss listen to some movie reviews on the CD and write in their recommendations?
14. The whole-class mingling activity seems simple enough on the face of it, but Ss had a little difficulty initially figuring out the process. Were the T's directions sufficient and clear, once she was able to follow up after the looks of confusion? Was her use of the L1 appropriate and useful here? What could she have done to make this stage of the activity clearer?
15. What is the objective of this activity? It's clear what Ss are being asked to do: frame questions, respond to them, and record the responses. They seemed enthusiastic about the activity—why? Why was an activity with fairly routine grammatical practice met with enthusiasm? Were those 15 minutes put to good purpose?
16. Why do you think the T tallied Ss' responses? Did the informal tally serve the objectives of the activity or simply offer some interest? What purpose was served by announcing the result of the tally: the most popular movie?

17. It's possible that this last activity was squeezed into too short a time frame. Was that okay? When a T runs out of time at the end of a lesson, what should he or she do? What purpose did a writing activity (as opposed to the other three skills) serve here?
18. Sometimes these last-second comments are lost in the shuffle of students getting ready to leave the classroom. Was some purpose nevertheless accomplished? When the T asked Ss to see an English movie as "homework," should she have given some guidance to them about what to do while seeing the movie?

A final question: As you look back over the lesson you've just observed, do you think the initial objectives were accomplished? Is there anything you think you might have done differently? Remember, you're dropping in on a class that is ongoing, so it may not be possible to completely judge the effectiveness of this lesson without the context of preceding and following lessons.

You've now skimmed through some of the many questions that one could ask about why certain choices were made about how to teach this lesson. Some of the answers are relatively standard, with few disagreements. Other answers would find even the best of teachers arguing the merits and demerits of the teacher's choices. But the answers to all these questions can be found, in one form or another, in the huge stockpile of second language acquisition research and collective experience of language teachers around the world. And many those answers will appear in the chapters ahead of you in this book.

Your goal, as you continue this journey, is to make the connections between research/theory/principles, on the one hand, and classrooms/teaching/practice on the other. By making those connections as you learn to teach, you will perhaps avoid some of the pitfalls of haphazard guesswork and instead engage in teaching that is informed by research and theory, or put another way, teaching by *principles*.

FOR THE TEACHER: ACTIVITIES (A) & DISCUSSION (D)

1. **(A)** A good activity for the beginning of a course on teaching methodology is to ask the members of small groups of three or four to talk about who was the "best" teacher they ever had. In the process, each should specify why that teacher was the best. As each group reports back to the whole class, make a chalkboard list of such reasons, which should reveal some attributes for all to emulate. (This activity also serves the purpose of (a) getting students to talk early on, and (b) giving students in the class a chance to get to know each other. To that end, group reports could include brief introductions of group members.)

2. **(A)** On page 8, it was noted that teachers are constantly making *choices* in the course of a class hour. Assign to pairs two or three of the numbered items through #18. Ask them talk about (a) what the teacher chose to do, (b) why she made that choice, and (c) what alternative choices she could have made. Make sure they refer to the second matched set of items in which certain questions were posed, and try to answer the questions. Ask the pairs to report their conclusions to the whole class, and encourage others in the class to ask questions.
3. **(D)** If it's feasible to do so, arrange for your students to observe an L2 class in a convenient location. Alternatively, show a video of a class. At this stage, try asking them to observe the class without a checklist or agenda, and ask them to just get a feel for the *dynamics* of the classroom. If, as they observe, some questions come up about why the teacher made certain choices, ask them to jot down those questions. After all have had a chance to make this observation, ask them to describe what they saw and what questions occurred to them as they observed.
4. **(D)** As an extra-class assignment, ask students to find some currently popular textbooks in EAL (or other L2) and spend some time leafing through them, without a specific agenda—just noting things that they like and don't like about each. Ask them to share their impressions with the rest of the class.
5. **(A)** An alternative to #4 above is to secure enough copies of various L2 textbooks from whatever sources your institution may have. Distribute a different textbook to each of however many pairs are feasible in your class size. Ask the pairs to brainstorm features that they like and dislike, and to report these to the rest of the class. Some possible features for them to observe (you could list these on the board or distribute them in a small handout): layout, illustrations, color, attractiveness, exercises, adequate small group work, stimulation of authentic communication, distribution of focus on form (grammar, vocabulary, etc.) versus focus on meaning/communication. You might add your own features. Ask a few of the pairs to report to the rest of the class on the *ease* or *difficulty* of evaluating a textbook.

FOR YOUR FURTHER READING

Brown, H. D. (2014). *Principles of language learning and teaching* (6th ed.). White Plains, NY: Pearson Education.

This course in second language acquisition (SLA) is a comprehensive survey of issues and principles of SLA as they apply to language teaching. It is designed as a recommended textbook to accompany or precede *Teaching by Principles*.

With that introduction to the related concepts of identity and investment, consider the following summary of the principle:

> Learning to think, feel, act, and communicate in an L2 is a complex socio-affective process of perceiving yourself as an integral part of a social community. The process involves self-awareness, investment, agency (see Principle #8), and a determination, amidst a host of power issues, to frame your own identity within the social relationships of a community.

What does all this say by way of some tips for the classroom teacher?

GUIDELINES FOR OPTIMIZING IDENTITY AND INVESTMENT IN L2 CLASSROOMS

1. Overtly display a *supportive attitude* to your students. While some learners may feel quite helpless in this new language, remember that they are capable adults struggling with the acquisition of the most complex set of skills that any classroom has ever attempted to teach. Your patience, affirmation, and empathy need to be openly communicated.
2. Give your students credit for the many abilities and talents they already have, even though they feel somewhat incapacitated as they struggle with a new language. Try to incorporate those talents and skills into your teaching. Recognizing and using some of their artistic, musical, or sports-related skills will help to build self-confidence and worthiness as they seek to invest their time and effort in the L2 learning process.
3. Consider the fragility of students who are not only seeking membership in an imagined community, but who may also experience a considerable degree of *powerlessness*—in the classroom with the teacher "in charge," in a culture whose mores are not clearly perceived, or in a context in which race, classism, ethnocentricity, and other factors are at play.
4. Factor in learners' *identity* development in your decisions about whom to call on, when and how to give corrective feedback, how to constitute small groups and pairs, and how "tough" you can be with a student.
5. Give your students opportunities to make *choices* as much as your curriculum will permit. Students who can choose exercises, topics, time limits, homework, and even silence will be more apt to make an *investment* in their learning, and hence develop responsibility.

INTERACTION

> Frenchman François Gouin (1880), the inspiration behind the "Series Method" of foreign language teaching, learned a painful lesson at the age of about 40. Determined at his "ripe old" age to learn German, he went to Hamburg for a year of residence. But for months on end this shy man shut himself in the isolation of his room, engaged in a rigorous regimen of memorizing huge quantities of German vocabulary and grammar. Occasional ventures into the streets to practice German resulted in so much embarrassment for François that all such attempts to relate to the locals were abruptly terminated with further closeting to memorize more German. At the end of the year, he returned to France, a failure. But wait! On his return home, François discovered that this three-year-old nephew had, during that same year, gone from saying virtually nothing to becoming a veritable chatterbox in his native French! François concluded that **interaction** was the key to acquisition . . . and the rest is history.

Our progression of principles has been guided by a sense of movement from factors that are more individual and cognitive in their nature to those that conceive of L2 learning as a primarily social phenomenon with affective and cultural overtones. The Principle of Interaction clearly centers on the latter. It is not a skill that you learn in the isolation of your room, as poor François Gouin discovered.

For some time now, L2 researchers have been focusing on a construct known as **willingness to communicate** (WTC), "a state of readiness to engage in the L2, the culmination of processes that prepare the learner to initiate L2 communication with a specific person at a specific time" (MacIntyre et al., 2011, p. 82). Observations of language learners' *un*willingness to communicate, for many possible reasons including anxiety, fear, and other affective factors, have led us to emphasize classroom activity that encourages learners to "come out of their shells" and to engage communicatively in the classroom. MacIntyre et al. (2011) also describe WTC as a socially constructed and dialogic process, rather than merely an internal attribute, highlighting the significance of perceived competence, error correction, and subtle features in particular social contexts.

The concept of WTC continues to be applicable across many cultures (Yashima, 2002). Many instructional contexts do not encourage risk-taking; instead they encourage correctness, right answers, and withholding "guesses" until one is sure to be correct. However, most educational research shows the opposite: task-based, project-based, open-ended work, negotiation of meaning, and a learner-centered climate are more conducive to long-term retention and intrinsic motivation.

As learners progress in their development, they gradually acquire the **communicative competence** (Canale & Swain, 1980) that has been such a central focus for researchers for decades (Hymes, 1972; Canale & Swain, 1980; Savignon, 1983, 2005). As learners engage in the meaningful use of the L2, they incorporate the organizational, pragmatic, strategic, and psychomotor components of language.

The key to communication, and ultimately to automatic production and comprehension of the L2, lies in what Long (2007) called the **interaction hypothesis**: Interactive communication is not merely a component of language

learning, but rather the very *basis* for L2 development. In a strong endorsement of the power of interaction in the language curriculum, van Lier (1996, p. 188) devoted a whole book to "the curriculum as interaction." Here, principles of awareness, autonomy, and authenticity lead the learner into Vygotsky's (1978) **zone of proximal development** (ZPD), that is, the stage between what learners can do on their own and what can be achieved with the support and guidance of a knowledgeable person or instructor. Learners are led, through the **scaffolding** support of teacher, materials, and curriculum, to construct the new language through socially and culturally **mediated** interaction. (See *PLLT*, Chapter 10.)

Long's interaction hypothesis has pushed L2 pedagogical practices into a new frontier. It has centered us on the language classroom not just as a place where learners of varying abilities and styles and backgrounds mingle, but also as a place where the contexts for interaction are carefully *designed*. It has focused teachers on creating optimal environments and tasks for **collaboration** and **negotiation** such that learners will be stimulated to create their own **community of practice** (Lave and Wenger, 1991) in a *socially constructed* process.

The Principle of Interaction may be stated as follows:

> Interaction is the basis of L2 learning, through which learners are engaged both in enhancing their own communicative abilities and in socially constructing their identities through collaboration and negotiation. The primary role of the teacher is to optimally scaffold the learner's development within a community of practice.

What teaching implications can be drawn from the Principle of Interaction?

GUIDELINES FOR MAXIMIZING INTERACTION IN L2 CLASSROOMS

1. Give ample verbal and nonverbal assurances to students, affirming your belief in the student's ability.
2. Sequence (scaffold) techniques from easier to more difficult. As a teacher you are called on to sustain self-confidence where it already exists and to build it where it doesn't. Your activities in the classroom would therefore logically start with simpler techniques and simpler concepts. Students then can establish a sense of accomplishment that catapults them to the next, more difficult, step.
3. Create an atmosphere in the classroom that encourages students to try out language, to venture a response, and not to wait for someone else to volunteer language.

4. Provide reasonable challenges in your techniques—make them neither too easy nor too hard.
5. Help your students to understand what calculated risk-taking is, lest some feel that they must blurt out any old response.
6. Respond to students' attempts to communicate with positive affirmation, praising them for trying while at the same time warmly but firmly attending to their language.

LANGUACULTURE

Katsu took the bold step at the age of 45 of taking a leave of absence from his high school English teaching job in Japan to pursue a master's degree in California. Upon leaving California and returning to Japan, Katsu writes about his three years in the United States:

"When I first arrived in California, I was excited! Many things were different: food, the way people talked, friendly professors, the bad transportation system, people not so punctual. It was great, though, and after living in Japan for many years, I looked forward to studying in the USA.

"After a few months, my view changed. First of all, I was much older than most of my classmates, but I felt like they treated me as equal. They didn't respect my age. I also had a lot of experience teaching, but my experience didn't seem very important to my teachers. Because I was student again, I was in kind of a position of low status. Also, I found American women very aggressive. I think expression is 'in your face.' I was surprised about professors, very casual, treated students like equal, maybe too friendly.

"But when I got back to Japan, I was surprised! My family said, 'you have changed, you act like an American!' I think now I am confused, but I hope I will soon adjust to Japanese culture."

Katsu learned firsthand what it meant to adapt to a new culture, and found that while he was surprised at some American culturally related issues, he himself went through a minor metamorphosis that became apparent on his return to Japan. Language and culture are intricately intertwined, and often an L2 is so deeply rooted in a culture that it is not quickly and easily discerned or internalized by a learner. Agar (1994) used the term **languaculture** to emphasize the inseparability of language and culture. "The *langua* in languaculture is about discourse, not just about words and sentences. And the *culture* in languaculture is about meanings that include, but go well beyond, what the dictionary and grammar offer" (p. 96).

How does one come to "belong" to a culture? How does a learner's identity (see Principle 5) evolve in the process of developing communicative ability in an L2? Gaining skill in the *interaction* discussed in Principle 6 very intimately involves connecting language and culture. Can learners be taught to be **interculturally competent**?

Culture is a complex, dynamic web of customs and mores and rules that involves attitudes, values, norms, and beliefs that are *imagined* to be shared by a community. Cultural parameters include such dimensions as individualism

(vs. collectivism), power, gender roles, age, time orientation, religion, and the list goes on (Matsumoto & Juang, 2013). Learning a second culture usually involves some effort to grasp the importance of shared cultural dimensions such as politeness, humor, slang, and dialect. More specifically, and perhaps more *authentically*, what books, music, movies, sports teams, celebrities, scandals, and electronic gadgets does everyone seem to be talking and tweeting about?

In a learner's process of socially constructing an identity either within (in the case of learning the L2 in the country that uses the L2) a culture or "outside" that culture, he or she will to some degree develop an **orientation** to the new context—and then integrate into or adapt to the culture (Gardner & Lambert, 1972; Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011). Courses in SLA commonly incorporate cultural dimensions in their functional syllabuses, providing contexts for the forms of language to be utilized.

Here's a statement of the Languaculture Principle:

> Whenever you teach a language, you also teach a complex system of cultural customs, values, and ways of thinking, feeling, and acting. As learners redefine their identities as they learn an L2, they can be aided by a direct approach to acknowledging cultural differences, an open affirmation of learners' struggles, of the value of their "home" culture, and of their self-worth in potential feelings of powerlessness.

Classroom applications include the following:

GUIDELINES FOR INCORPORATING LANGUACULTURE INTO L2 CLASSROOMS

1. Discuss cross-cultural differences with your students, emphasizing that no culture is "better" than another, but that cross-cultural understanding is an important facet of learning a language. Give illustrations of intercultural misunderstanding through (if possible) humorous anecdotes.
2. Include among your techniques certain activities and materials that illustrate the connection between language and culture, especially those that are more salient for your particular context.
3. Teach your students cultural connotations that will enable them to increase their interactive use of the L2, including politeness, humor, slang, "small talk," devices to keep a conversation going, and how to disagree with someone but still respect their right to an opinion.

4. Screen your techniques for material that may be culturally offensive.
5. Stress the importance of the L2 as a powerful tool for adjustment in a new culture.

AGENCY

> Seong-jin is a twenty-three-year old Korean man enrolled in an intensive ESL program in a Canadian university. He is in a high-intermediate writing class that aims to help students develop English language skills for academic or professional purposes. He values good writing skills and aspires to be a good writer in the future. He enjoyed free-writing tasks when he had just started the English program at a beginning level and he found himself enjoying creative writing.
>
> However, since he advanced to the high-intermediate class, he's been struggling with two conflicting discourses – a conventional way of writing an academic essay and his preferred personal writing style, which is to express his feelings freely. He recounts how he finds it very difficult to write an essay, such as an argumentative essay, in a formal academic style:
>
> "I like writing based on my intuition. I don't like writing based on logic and by adding references. There always has to be a fixed structure. You have to write a positive argument with example sentences first and then a negative argument with example sentences. At the end then, you have to come up with "solution" stating what the best argument is. This is a sort of what they consider as a good writing sample."
>
> It is obvious that he is aware of what is expected by his writing teacher in the assignment of writing an argumentative essay. However, he says:
>
> "Yeah, but I don't like to do that. My writing then becomes the same as all the other students. I don't like to follow the same form as others."

We can all at some level identify with Seong-jin's plight, as reported by Lee and Maguire (2011). From early childhood we experience demands for structure imposed by "outside" agents: parents, teachers, peers, and social mores. We yearn to "breathe free" and function autonomously. For Seong-jin, perhaps his frustration with conforming to academic writing conventions is a product of his own creative urge to "be" himself, to express himself freely, and to realize his identity as a participant in his Canadian community of practice. His **agency** is at stake.

The Principle of Agency is our final principle in the list of eight for a number of reasons. First, it's a superb instance of a concept that is emblematic of the more recent "social turn" (Ortega, 2009) in SLA research, extending our horizons well beyond psycholinguistic, cognitive-interactional models that characterized much of the research of the last half of the 20th century. Second, agency provides an ample stockpile of pedagogical implications for the classroom teacher in concrete methodological terms. And finally, it's a construct that is so comprehensive in scope that it subsumes all the other principles we've described thus far—so sweeping, in fact, that the next chapter of this book will take a detailed look at agency as a prime example of how principles are embodied in our teaching.

In simple terms, agency refers to "people's ability to make choices, take control, self-regulate, and thereby pursue their goals as individuals, leading potentially to personal or social transformation" (Duff, 2012, p. 417). When learners capitalize on their role as an agent, they can make specific efforts to take on new roles and identities within their communities of practice and sociocultural milieu. Vygotsky (1978) reminded us that children gain agency as they acquire cognitive and linguistic abilities that enable them eventually to function autonomously.

The implications for the L2 classroom are myriad, as you will see in the next chapter. In some ways, agency is a further refinement of Maslow's (1970) hierarchy of needs, which garnered a great deal of attention in educational circles. As learners slowly develop the basic sustaining factors of belongingness and affirmation (by teachers and peers), they are enabled to reach for the ultimate goal of **self-actualization**. The difference between Maslow's self-actualization and current sociocultural concept of agency lies in the *ongoing* role (from the earliest stages) of agency as a means to achieve social transformation.

The Principle of Agency helps to frame a surprising number of other principles and constructs in SLA (Yashima, 2013). At the core of *motivation* is agency: the act of making *choices* in acts of self-determination. **Self-efficacy** theory emphasizes the importance of a learner's self-appraisal, a foundation stone of agency. Our *self-regulatory* processes, with the ultimate utilization of *strategies* and eventual achievement of *autonomy*, are all intertwined with agency. Even the *scaffolding* and *mediation* involved in successful L2 pedagogy are essential pathways to learners fully assuming their agency.

Finally, and perhaps most poignantly, from a "critical" perspective, Norton (2013) and Yashima (2013) both emphasized the crucial role of agency within the various power structures of one's social milieu. As Canagarajah (2013a) noted, agency helps us "go beyond the monolithic notions of culture and power" (p. 204) in intercultural communicative contexts of globalization and migration. In recent years we have seen more research on L2 learning by immigrants and refugees, and by those who are in "subtractive" roles in a society (where the L2 is seen as superior in some way to a learner's heritage language). Such contexts often involve learners in a struggle to appropriate a new language and to fight social constraints as they negotiate an identity (Yashima, 2013, p. 5).

Briefly stated, the Principle of Agency can be summed up as follows:

> Agency, which lies at the heart of language learning, is the ability of learners to make choices, take control, self-regulate, and thereby pursue their goals as individuals within a sociocultural context. Teachers are called on to offer appropriate affective and pedagogical support in their students' struggle for autonomy, development of identities, and journey toward empowerment.

Pedagogical implications and practical classroom applications are spelled out in detail in the next chapter. There, we focus exclusively on this powerful and foundational principle of SLA, *agency,* and all its concomitant influences on successful acquisition of additional languages.

The eight principles that have just been reviewed (listed for your convenience in Table 4.1) are some of the major foundation stones for teaching practice. While they are not by any means exhaustive, they can act for you as major theoretical insights on which your methodology can be based.

With these eight principles, you should be able to evaluate a course, a textbook, a group of students, and an educational context, and to determine solutions to pedagogical issues in the classroom. You should be able to assess the strengths and weaknesses of lessons you've observed or lessons you plan to teach. In short, you should be able to frame your own *approach* by considering the extent to which the eight principles inform your understanding of how languages are successfully learned and taught.

We hope you have gained from this discussion the value of undergirding your teaching with sound principles that help you to understand why you choose to do something in the classroom: what kinds of questions to ask yourself before the fact about what you are doing, how to monitor yourself while you are teaching, how to assess after the fact the effectiveness of what you did, and then how to modify what you will do the next time around.

Table 4.1 Principles of language learning and teaching

Principles	Related Constructs
1. Automaticity	attention, processing, noticing form and function, fluency
2. Transfer	cross-linguistic influence, interference, interlanguage, dynamic systems, meaningful learning, skill acquisition, embodied cognition
3. Reward	motivation (intrinsic & extrinsic)
4. Self-Regulation	autonomy, self-awareness, strategies, self- determination
5. Identity and Investment	language ego, imagined community, emotion and affect, styles
6. Interaction	willingness to communicate, feedback, communicative competence, collaboration negotiation, scaffolding, mediation, ZPD
7. Languaculture	communities of practice, intercultural competence, acculturation, language-culture connection
8. Agency	empowerment, self-actualization, self-efficacy

CHAPTER 6

TEACHING ACROSS AGE LEVELS

Questions for Reflection

- What are the pertinent *age* factors to incorporate into designing lessons and courses?
- What are the unique characteristics of *children's* learning of additional languages, especially in classroom contexts?
- How do mental, emotional, and physical differences between *adults* and *children* affect teaching across age levels?
- What are some of the characteristics of students "in between" childhood and adulthood?
- What kinds of tasks and activities are appealing and challenging to teenagers?

Those of us who are language teacher educators are occasionally asked about how one can prepare to teach an L2. They might ask something like, "Since English is my native language, I won't have any problem teaching it as a second language, will I?" Or on the eve of their departure for another country (without the slightest clue of who their future students will be), "Can you recommend a good textbook for my students?" Or maybe even, "I'd like to learn how to teach Chinese. Can you recommend a good workshop?"

These questions may be buoyed by advertisements in the media that promise lifelong employment as an English teacher (in exotic places) if only you'll attend someone's weekend seminar and of course pay a hefty enrollment fee. So far in this book, you undoubtedly have begun to sense the complexity of teaching an L2, and you have begun to appreciate the array of questions, issues, approaches, techniques, and principles that must be included in any training as a language teacher—a complexity that cannot be covered effectively in a weekend workshop.

As you saw in Chapter 3, part of this complexity is brought on by the multiplicity of contexts in which languages are learned and taught. Even if you could somehow pack a suitcase full of the most current teaching resources, you would still have to face the question of *who* your learners are, *where* they are learning, and *why* they are learning.

This chapter begins to deal with contextual considerations in language teaching by addressing the learner variable of *age*. Chapter 7 then covers the variable of language proficiency (beginning, intermediate, and advanced). And Chapter 8 surveys some of the often thorny variables introduced by sociopolitical

students are predominantly immigrants from Spanish L1 countries. Students attend this 50-minute class twice a week to develop their English skills so that they can eventually "mainstream." The class consists of 14 students who are of low intermediate proficiency in English. The lesson focuses on speaking fluency, with reading and listening skills supporting this aim. As you read her lesson plan, think about the extent to which the activity takes into account the "tips" outlined above.

Lesson Outline

Setting: ESL junior high school students attending a public school in Monterey, California

Learner Background Information:

- Class size: 10-14
- Age: 13-14
- Students are from Spanish L1 background
- English proficiency level: Low Intermediate

Lesson Length: 50 minutes

Terminal objectives

Students will be able to:

- Obtain specific information from peers using wh-questions.
- Provide specific information to peers by responding to wh-questions.
- Share their opinions with peers using wh-questions.

Enabling objectives

Students will be able to:

- Gather information to make plans to see a movie by using wh-questions in an information gap activity.
- Respond to questions about movie listings by reading and paraphrasing their contents in an information gap activity.
- Give suggestions by using wh-questions, e.g., "How about . . . ?"

Materials and Equipment

1. Attendance sheet
2. Whiteboard and dry erase markers
3. Movie Listings Handout, 7 copies (see Appendix A)
4. Student B Handout, 7 copies (see Appendix B)
5. Movie Night Handout, 14 copies (see Appendix C)
6. Notebooks (Students have these)
7. Timer
8. Student dictionaries (Students have these)
9. Student journals (Students have these)