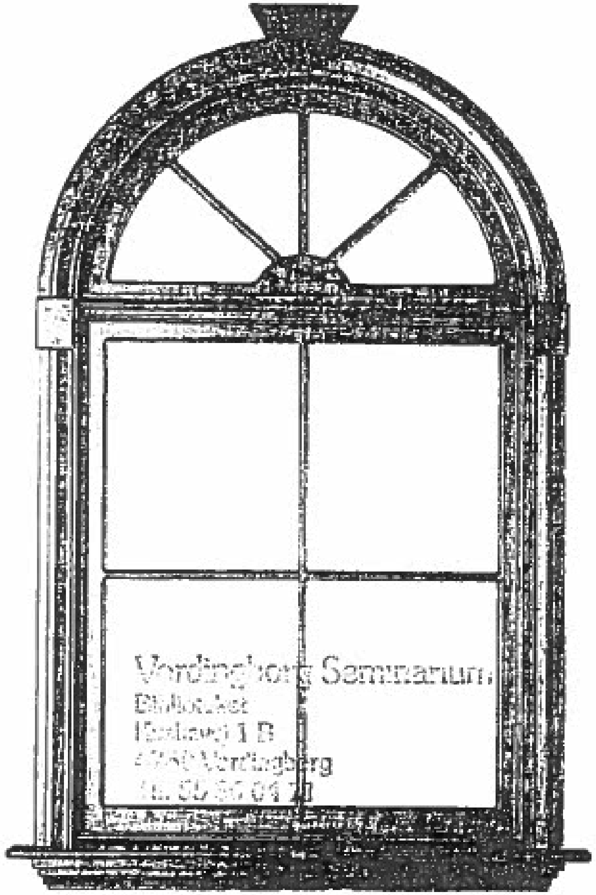
TEACHING *by* PRINCIPLES

An Interactive Approach to Language Pedagogy

SECOND EDITION



Longman

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Table 2.1. Approaches and methods—an overview (adapted from Nunan 1989)

	Theory of language	Theory of learning	Objectives	Syllabus
Audiolingual	Language is a system of rule-governed structures hierarchically arranged.	Habit formation; skills are learned more effectively if oral precedes written; analogy, not analysis.	Control of structures of sound, form, and order, mastery over symbols of the language; goal: native-speaker mastery.	Graded syllabus of phonology, morphology, and syntax. Contrastive analysis.
Total Physical Response	Basically a structuralist, grammar-based view of language.	L2 learning is the same as L1 learning; comprehension before production, is "imprinted" through carrying out commands (right-brain functioning); reduction of stress.	Teach oral proficiency to produce learners who can communicate uninhibitedly and intelligibly with native speakers.	Sentence-based syllabus with grammatical and lexical criteria being primary, but focus on meaning, not form.
The Silent Way	Each language is composed of elements that give it a unique rhythm and spirit. Functional vocabulary and core structure are key to the spirit of the language.	Processes of learning a second language are fundamentally different from L1 learning. L2 learning is an intellectual, cognitive process. Surrender to the music of the language, silent awareness then active trial.	Near-native fluency, correct pronunciation, basic practical knowledge of the grammar of the L2. Learner learns *how* to learn a language.	Basically structural lessons planned around grammatical items and related vocabulary. Items are introduced according to their grammatical complexity.
Community Language Learning	Language is more than a system for communication. It involves whole person, culture, educational, developmental communicative processes.	Learning involves the whole person. It is a social process of growth from childlike dependence to self-direction and independence.	No specific objectives. Near-native mastery is the goal.	No set syllabus. Course progression is topic-based; learners provide the topics. Syllabus emerges from learners' intention and the teacher's reformulations.
The Natural Approach	The essence of language is meaning. Vocabulary, not grammar, is the heart of language.	There are two ways of L2 language development: "acquisition"—a natural subconscious process, and "learning"—a conscious process. Learning cannot lead to acquisition.	Designed to give beginners and intermediate learners basic communicative skills. Four broad areas; basic personal communicative skills (oral/written); academic learning skills (oral/written).	Based on selection of communicative activities and topics derived from learner needs.
Suggestopedia	Rather conventional, although memorization of whole meaningful texts is recommended.	Learning occurs through suggestion, when learners are in a deeply relaxed state. Baroque music is used to induce this state.	To deliver advanced conversational competence quickly. Learners are required to master prodigious lists of vocabulary pairs, although the goal is understanding, not memorization.	Ten unit courses consisting of 1,200-word dialogues graded by vocabulary and grammar.
Communicative Language Teaching	Language is a system for the expression of meaning; primary function—interaction and communication.	Activities involving real communication; carrying out meaningful tasks; and using language which is meaningful to the learner promote learning.	Objectives will reflect the needs of the learner; they will include functional skills as well as linguistic objectives.	Will include some/all of the following: structures, functions, notions, themes, tasks. Ordering will be guided by learner needs.

Activity types	Learner roles	Teacher roles	Roles of materials
Dialogues and drills, repetition and memorization, pattern practice.	Organisms that can be directed by skilled training techniques to produce correct responses.	Central and active teacher-dominated method. Provides model, controls direction and pace.	Primarily teacher-oriented. Tapes and visuals, language lab often used.
Imperative drills to elicit physical actions.	Listener and performer, little influence over the content of learning.	Active and direct role; "the director of a stage play" with students as actors.	No basic text; materials and media have an important role later. Initially voice, action, and gestures are sufficient.
Learner responses to commands, questions, and visual cues. Activities encourage and shape oral responses without grammatical explanation or modeling by teacher.	Learning is a process of personal growth. Learners are responsible for their own learning and must develop independence, autonomy, and responsibility.	Teachers must (a) teach (b) test (c) get out of the way. Remain impassive. Resist temptation to model, remodel, assist, direct, exhort.	Unique materials: colored rods, color-coded pronunciation and vocabulary charts.
Combination of innovative and conventional. Translation, group work, recording, transcription, reflection and observation, listening, free conversation.	Learners are members of a community. Learning is not viewed as an individual accomplishment, but something that is achieved collaboratively.	Counseling/parental analogy. Teacher provides a safe environment in which students can learn and grow.	No textbook, which would inhibit growth. Materials are developed as course progresses.
Activities allowing comprehensible input, about things in the here-and-now. Focus on meaning, not form.	Should not try to learn language in the usual sense, but should try to lose themselves in activities involving meaningful communication.	The teacher is the primary source of comprehensible input. Must create positive low-anxiety climate. Must choose and orchestrate a rich mixture of classroom activities.	Materials come from realia rather than textbooks. Primary aim is to promote comprehension and communication.
Initiatives, question and answer, role-play, listening exercises under deep relaxation.	Must maintain a passive state and allow the materials to work on them (rather than vice versa).	To create situations in which the learner is most suggestible and present material in a way most likely to encourage positive reception and retention. Must exude authority and confidence.	Consists of texts, tapes, classroom fixtures, and music. Texts should have force, literary quality, and interesting characters.
Engage learners in communication, involve processes such as information sharing, negotiation of meaning, and interaction.	Learner as negotiator, interactor, giving as well as taking.	Facilitator of the communication process, participants' tasks, and texts; needs analyst, counselor, process manager.	Primary role in promoting communicative language use; task-based materials; authentic.

CHAPTER 13

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

Is teaching an art or a science? Are teachers born or made? Is the learning-teaching connection poetic or predictable? These questions are commonly found swirling about in the minds of educators, not so much as "either-or" questions but rather as "both-and" questions. I think you can easily agree that teaching is both an art and a science, that some innate ability complements learned teaching skills, and that with all of our best-laid lesson plans there still remains an intangible aura surrounding acts of learning. But how do the two traditions coexist in practice? How do art and science mingle in the principles and approaches and techniques and plans of ESL teachers?

In the previous three chapters, you have considered the process of planning a lesson, of initiating interaction among students, and of designing effective small-group interaction. The next step in a succession of practicalities for the language classroom is to grapple with what we call *classroom management*, which encompasses an abundance of factors ranging from how you physically arrange the classroom, to teaching "styles," to one of my favorite themes: classroom energy. By understanding what some of the variables are in classroom management, you can take some important steps to sharpening your skills as a language teacher. And then, as you improve some of those identifiable, overtly observable skills, you open the door to the intangible—to art, to poetics, to the invisible sparks of energy that kindle the flames of learning.

THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT OF THE CLASSROOM

One of the simplest principles of classroom management centers on the physical environment for learning: the classroom itself. Consider four categories:

1. Sight, sound, and comfort

As trivial as it may first appear, in the face of your decisions to implement language-teaching principles in an array of clever techniques, students are indeed profoundly affected by what they see, hear, and feel when they enter the classroom. If you have any power to control the following, then it will be worth your time to do so:

- The classroom is neat, clean, and orderly in appearance.
- Chalkboards are erased.
- Chairs are appropriately arranged (see below).
- If the room has bulletin boards and you have the freedom to use them, can you occasionally take advantage of visuals?
- The classroom is as free from external noises as possible (machinery outside, street noise, hallway voices, etc.).
- Acoustics within your classroom are at least tolerable.
- Heating or cooling systems (if applicable) are operating.

Granted, you may be powerless to control some of the above. I have been in classrooms in tropical countries where there is no air conditioning, the concrete walls of the classroom echo so badly you can hardly hear anyone, and jackhammers are rapping away outside! But if these factors can be controlled, don't pass up the opportunity to make your classroom as physically comfortable as possible.

2. Seating arrangements

You may have had the experience of walking into a classroom and finding the movable desks all lined up in columns (not rows) that are perpendicular to the front wall of the room. Neat and orderly, right? Wrong. If you won't get fired from your teaching post by doing so, change the pattern immediately! Students are members of a team and should be able to see one another, to talk to one another (in English!), and not be made to feel like they just walked into a military formation.

If your classroom has movable desk-chairs, consider patterns of semi-circles, U-shapes, concentric circles, or—if your class size is small enough—one circle so that students aren't all squarely facing the teacher. If the room has tables with two to four students at each, try to come up with configurations that make interaction among students most feasible. Give some thought to how students will do small-group and pair work with as little chaos as possible.

Should you determine who sits next to whom? Normally, students will soon fall into a comfortable pattern of self-selection in where they sit. You may not need to tamper with this arrangement unless you feel the need to force a different "mix" of students. In some ESL contexts or where students come from varied native language backgrounds, English will be more readily practiced if students of the same native language are not sitting next to each other. And if some adjacent students are being disruptive, you may decide to selectively move a few people. When assigning small groups, as noted in Chapter 12, you may of course want to do so with a certain plan in mind.

3. Chalkboard use

The chalkboard is one of your greatest allies. It gives students added visual input along with auditory. It allows you to illustrate with words and pictures and graphs and charts. It is always there and it is recyclable! So, take advantage of this instant visual aid by profusely using the chalkboard. At the same time, try to be neat and orderly in your chalkboard use, erasing as often as appropriate; a messy, confusing chalkboard drives students crazy.

4. Equipment

The "classroom" may be construed to include any equipment you may be using. If you're using electrical equipment (say, an overhead projector or a video player), make sure that

- the room has outlets,
- the equipment fits comfortably in the room,
- everyone can see (and/or hear) the visual/auditory stimulus,
- you leave enough time before and after class to get the equipment and return it to its proper place,
- the machine actually works,
- you know how to operate it,
- there is an extra light bulb or battery or whatever else you'll need if a routine replacement is in order.

You would be surprised how many lesson plans get thrown out the window because of some very minor practicality surrounding the use of equipment.

YOUR VOICE AND BODY LANGUAGE

Another fundamental classroom management concern has to do with you and the messages you send through your voice and through your body language.

One of the first requirements of good teaching is good voice projection. You do not have to have a loud, booming voice, but you need to be heard by all the students in the room. When you talk, project your voice so that the person sitting farthest away from you can hear you clearly. If you are directing comments to a student in the first row sitting right in front of you, remember that in whole-class work, all the rest of the students need to be able to hear that comment. As you speak, articulate clearly; remember, these students are just learning English, and they need every advantage they can get.

Should you slow down your normal rate of delivery? For beginning level classes, yes, but only slightly so, and not to the point that the rate of delivery is downright silly. Keep as natural a flow to your language as possible. Clear articulation is usually more of a key to comprehension than slowed speech.

Your voice isn't the only production mode available to you in the classroom. Nonverbal messages are very powerful. In language classes, especially, where students may not have all the skills they need to decipher verbal language, their attention is drawn to nonverbal communication. Here are some pointers:

- Let your body posture exhibit an air of confidence.
- Your face should reflect optimism, brightness, and warmth.
- Use facial and hand gestures to enhance meanings of words and sentences that might otherwise be unclear.
- Make frequent eye contact with all students in the class.
- Do not "bury yourself" in your notes and plans.
- Do not plant your feet firmly in one place for the whole hour.
- Move around the classroom, but not to distraction.
- Follow the conventional rules of proxemics (distance) and kinesthetics (touching) that apply for the culture(s) of your students.
- Dress appropriately, considering the expectations of your students and the culture in which you are teaching.

UNPLANNED TEACHING: MIDSTREAM LESSON CHANGES

Now that you have considered some of the factors in managing the physical space and your physical self, imagine that you have entered the classroom and begun your lesson. The warm-up has gone well. You have successfully (with clear, unambiguous directions) introduced the first major technique, which, let's say, has to do with different countries' forms of government. Students are clear about why they are doing this task and have launched themselves into it. Then one student asks about the political campaign happening right now. Another student responds, and then another, and before you know it, students are engaged in a very interesting, somewhat heated debate about current political issues. This theme is related to your lesson, but the discussion is not what you had in mind. Nevertheless, students are all alert, interested, participating, and using fairly complex English in the process. You realize that your lesson will have to change in some way.

This scene is commonplace. What would you do now? Should you have cut off the conversation early and nipped it in the bud? Or were you wise to let it continue and to discard some other activities you had in mind? Classroom management involves decisions about what to do when

- your students digress and throw off the plan for the day,
- you digress and throw off the plan for the day,
- an unexpected but pertinent question comes up,
- some technicality prevents you from doing an activity (e.g., a machine breaks down, or you suddenly realize you forgot to bring handouts that were necessary for the next activity).

- a student is disruptive in class,
- you are asked a question you don't know the answer to (e.g., a grammatical point),
- there isn't enough time at the end of a class period to finish an activity that has already started.

And the list could go on. In short, you are daily called upon to deal with the *unexpected*. You have to engage in what we'll call unplanned teaching that makes demands on you that were not anticipated in your lesson plan. One of the initiation rites that new teachers go through is experiencing these unexpected events and learning how to deal with them gracefully. And the key is *poise*. You will keep the respect of your students and your own self-confidence by staying calm, assessing the situation quickly, making a midstream change in your plan, and allowing the lesson to move on.

TEACHING UNDER ADVERSE CIRCUMSTANCES

Under the category of "adverse circumstances" are a number of management concerns of widely divergent nature. What is implied here is that no teaching-learning context is perfect. There are always imperfect institutions, imperfect people, and imperfect circumstances for you to deal with. How you deal with them is one of the most significant factors contributing to your professional success.

1. Teaching large classes

I was once asked by a student in a teacher education course about how to deal with large classes. I began to list the kinds of adjustments he could make with classes of fifty to seventy-five students, when he said that he meant really large classes: somewhere in the neighborhood of 600 students! As I caught my breath, my only response was to ask him how he would teach 600 people to swim in one swimming pool without displacing all the water in the pool!

Ideally, language classes should have no more than a dozen people or so. They should be large enough to provide diversity and student interaction and small enough to give students plenty of opportunity to participate and to get individual attention. Unfortunately, educational budgets being as paltry as they are, most language classes are significantly larger. Classes of fifty to seventy-five are not uncommon across this globe. While you need to keep reminding administrators (who too often believe that languages are learned by rote memorization) of the diminishing returns of classes in excess of twenty-five or thirty, you nevertheless may have to cope with the reality of a large class for the time being. Large classes present some problems:

- Proficiency and ability vary widely across students.
- Individual teacher-student attention is minimized.

- Student opportunities to speak are lessened.
- Teacher's feedback on students' written work is limited.

Some solutions to these problems are available. Consider the following that apply to one or several of the above challenges:

a. Try to make each student feel important (and not just a "number") by learning names and using them. Name tags or desk "plates" serve as reminders in the early days of the course.
b. Assign students as much interactive work as possible, including plenty of "get-acquainted" activities at the beginning, so that they feel a part of a community and are not just lost in the crowd.
c. Optimize the use of pair work and small-group work to give students chances to perform in English. In grouping, consider the variation in proficiency levels (see next section, below).
d. Do more than the usual number of listening comprehension activities, using tapes, video, and yourself. Make sure students know what kind of response is expected from them. Through active listening comprehension, students can learn a good deal of language that transfers to reading, speaking, and writing.
e. Use peer-editing, feedback, and evaluation in written work whenever appropriate.
f. Give students a range of extra-class work, from a minimum that all students must do to challenging tasks for students with higher proficiency.
g. Don't collect written work from all of your students at the same time; spread it out in some systematic way both to lighten your load and to give students the benefit of a speedy return of their work.
h. Set up small "learning centers" in your class where students can do individualized work.
i. Organize informal conversation groups and study groups.

2. Teaching multiple proficiency levels in the same class

There is often a wide range of proficiency levels among students in the same class, especially in large classes, but even relatively small classes can be composed of students who in your estimation should not all be placed at the same level. In either case, you are faced with the problem of challenging the higher-level students and not overwhelming the lower-level students, and at the same time keeping the middle group well paced toward their goals. Most of the time, the phenomenon of widely ranging competencies in your class is a byproduct of institutional placement procedures and budgetary limits, so there is little you can do to "kick out" the students at either extreme. So, how do you deal with this? Here are some suggestions to consider:

a. Do *not* overgeneralize your assessment of students' proficiency levels by blanket classifications into "the good students" and "the bad students." It is a common mistake among teachers (we all do it!) to talk about smart and dumb students in our classes. We must be very sensitive to the issue of *proficiency* vs. *ability*. In a set of skills as complex as language, it is often difficult to determine whether a student's performance is a factor of aptitude, ability, a "knack," or a factor of time and effort.
b. For most students, competencies will vary among the four skills, within each skill (e.g., in reading, lexical knowledge, meaning-seeking strategies, speed, efficiency, etc.), and by context. As much as possible, identify the specific skills and abilities of each student in your class so that you can tailor your techniques to individualized needs. Through diagnostic tests and exercises and day-by-day monitoring of students, you may be able to pinpoint certain linguistic objectives and direct your students toward those.
c. Offer choices in individual (written and extra-class) techniques that vary according to needs and challenges. In doing so, sensitively convey to your students that they *all* have challenges and goals to pursue and that if some students seem to be "ahead" of others, it is no doubt due to previous instruction, exposure, and motivation (see item [a] above).
d. Take advantage of whatever learning centers or tutorial laboratories may be available in your institution. All proficiency levels can benefit from laboratories that provide computer software for review and practice, or trained tutors that can diagnose needs and suggest avenues of further work. Students at higher levels and lower levels of proficiency can thereby be challenged to meet their needs.
e. Obviously, the tenor of your classroom teacher talk (instructions, explanations, lectures, etc.) will need to be gauged toward the middle of the levels of proficiency in your class. But group work tasks offer opportunities for you to solve multiple-proficiency issues. Sometimes you can place students of varying ranges in the same group, and at other times students of the same range in a group together. Both scenarios offer advantages and disadvantages.

3. Compromising with the "institution"

Another adverse circumstance is one that most teachers have to deal with at some time in their careers: teaching under institutional conditions that do not meet their ideal standards or philosophy of education. Sometimes such circumstances focus on an individual in charge, a director or principal. And sometimes they center on administrative constraints that are beyond the scope and power of one individual. Some examples:

- classes that are far too large to allow for the kind of results that the administration expects (see above),
- physical conditions in the classroom that are onerous,

- administratively imposed constraints on *what* you have to teach in your course (the curriculum, possibly in great detail),
- administratively imposed constraints on *how* you should teach (a specific methodology that you disagree with is required),
- courses that satisfy an institutional foreign language requirement, in which students simply want a passing grade,
- courses that are test-focused rather than language-focused.

All these and even further adverse circumstances are part of the reality of teaching and ultimately of classroom management because they all impinge in some way on what you can do in your lessons. Your handling of such situations will almost always demand some sort of compromise on your part. You must, as a professional "technician" in this field, be ready to bring professional diplomacy and efficiency to bear on the varying degrees of hardship.

4. Discipline

Many volumes of research and practical advice have been written on the subject of classroom discipline. If all of your students were hard-working, intrinsically motivated, active, dedicated, intelligent learners—well, you would still have what we could label "discipline" problems! Without making this section a whole primer on discipline, I will simply offer some pointers here and let you make the applications to specific instances.

- Learn to be comfortable with your position of authority.
- Gain the respect of your students by treating them all with equal fairness.
- State clearly and explicitly to your students what your expectations are regarding their behavior in class (speaking, turn-taking, respect for others, group work, individual work, test-taking, etc.), attendance (tardiness and absence policy), and any extra-class ("homework") obligations.
- Be firm but warm in dealing with variances to these expectations.
- If a reminder, reprimand, or other form of verbal disciplinary action is warranted, do your best to preserve the dignity of the student (in spite of the fact that you could be frustrated enough to want to humiliate the student in front of classmates!).
- Try, initially, to resolve disciplinary matters outside of class time (ask to see a student after class and quietly but firmly make your observation and let the student respond) so that valuable class minutes aren't spent focusing on one student.
- In resolving disciplinary problems, try to find the source of the problem rather than treating symptoms (for example, if a student isn't paying attention in class, it could be because of a lack of sleep caused by trying to work a late night shift, in which case you could suggest a different shift or a different time bracket for the English class).

- If you cannot resolve a recurring disciplinary problem, then consult your institution's counselor or administrator.

5. Cheating

Cheating is a special disciplinary matter that warrants careful treatment. For the sake of definition, we will say *cheating* is a surreptitious violation of standards of individualized responses to tests or other exercises. The first step to solving a perceived problem of cheating is to ascertain a student's own perception: Did he or she honestly believe they were doing something wrong? There is a good deal of cultural variation in defining what is or isn't cheating, and for some, what you may think is cheating is merely an intelligent utilization of resources close at hand. In other words, if the answer that is written on the test is correct, then the means used to come up with the correct answer are justified. Once you have adequately ascertained a student's perception, then follow the disciplinary suggestions as a guide to a solution.

Minimizing opportunities to cheat—that is, prevention—may prove to be more fruitful than trying to tangle with the mixture of emotions that ensue from dealing with cheating after the fact. Why do students cheat? Usually because of pressure to "excel." So if you can lower that pressure (see Chapters 21 and 22), you may reduce the chance that someone will write notes on a fingernail or glance across the aisle. Remind students that you and the test are there to help them and to give them feedback, but if you don't see their "real" selves, you won't be able to help them. If the classroom size permits, get students spread out as much as possible (this "elbow room" also promotes some physical relaxation). Then, consider an "A" and "B" form of a test in which items are in a different order for every other person, thereby making it more difficult for someone to spot an answer.

TEACHERS' ROLES AND STYLES

In these final sections on classroom management, we turn a little more centrally to the affective or emotional side of being and becoming a good teacher.

1. Roles

A teacher has to play many **roles**, as was pointed out in Chapter 11. Think of the possibilities: authority figure, leader, knower, director, manager, counselor, guide, and even such roles as friend, confidante, and parent. Depending on the country you are in, on the institution in which you are teaching, on the type of course, and on the makeup of your students, some of these roles will be more prominent than others, especially in the eyes of your students.

For growing comfortable and confident in playing multiple roles, two rules of thumb are a willing acceptance of many ways that students will perceive you, and a consistent fairness to all students equally. Know yourself, your limitations, your strengths, your likes and dislikes, and then accept the fact that you are called upon to be many things to many different people. Then, as you become more comfortable with, say, being an authority figure, be consistent in all your dealings with students. There is something quite unsettling about a teacher who is a sympathetic friend to some students and a dispassionate authority figure to others. Such waffling in playing out your roles can set students against each other, with many feeling shut out from an inner circle of "teacher's pets."

2. Teaching styles

Your **teaching style** is another affective consideration in the development of your professional expertise. Teaching style will almost always be consistent with your personality style, which can vary greatly from individual to individual. As you consider the teaching styles below, remember that each represents a continuum of possibilities:

shy	⟷	gregarious
formal	⟷	informal
reserved	⟷	open, transparent
understated	⟷	dramatic
rational	⟷	emotional
steady	⟷	moody
serious	⟷	humorous
restrictive	⟷	permissive

Where do you place yourself on these continua? Do you feel it is necessary to lean toward one end in order to be an effective teacher? If you do, you may be succumbing to a stereotype that doesn't jibe with your most effective "self" in the classroom. I have seen excellent teachers on both ends of these style continua. As you grow more comfortable with your teaching roles in the classroom, make sure your style of teaching is also consistent with the rest of you and with the way you feel you can be most genuine in the classroom; then, learn how to capitalize on the strengths of your teaching style.

3. Cultural expectations

Western cultures emphasize non-directive, nonauthoritarian roles and teaching styles in the right-hand column in the list above. One major consideration, therefore, in the effectiveness of playing roles and developing styles is the culture in which you are teaching and the culture of your students.

Listed on the following page are a number of cultural expectations of roles and styles as they relate to teachers and students and schools (adapted from Hofstede 1986).

• Teachers are expected to have all the answers.	• Teachers are allowed to say "I don't know."
• Teachers are expected to suppress emotions (and so are students).	• Teachers are allowed to express emotions (and so are students).
• Teachers interpret intellectual disagreement as personal disloyalty.	• Teachers interpret intellectual disagreement as a stimulating exercise.
• Teachers reward students for accuracy in problem solving.	• Teachers reward students for innovative approaches to problem solving.
• Students admire brilliance in teachers.	• Students admire friendliness in teachers.
• Students should speak in class only when called on by the teacher.	• Students are encouraged to volunteer their thoughts.
• Teachers should never lose face; to do so loses the respect of students.	• Teachers can admit when they are wrong and still maintain students' respect.
• Students expect the teacher to show them "the way."	• Teachers expect students to find their own way.

Wherever you find yourself teaching, the above forces will come into play as you attempt to be an effective teacher. If you feel that one column is more "you" than the other, then you should be cautious in developing a relationship with students and colleagues who may come from a different tradition. Always be sensitive to the perceptions of others, but then do what you feel is appropriate to negotiate changes in attitude. Be ready to compromise your ideal self to some extent, especially when you begin a teaching assignment. There is little to be gained by coming into a teaching post like gangbusters and alienating all those around you and finding yourself unemployed a couple of months later. If you have convictions about what good teaching is, it pays to be patient in slowly reaching your goals. After all, you might learn something from them!

CREATING A POSITIVE CLASSROOM CLIMATE

The roles you play and the styles you develop will merge to give you some tools for creating a classroom climate that is positive, stimulating, and energizing.

1. Establish rapport

Rapport is a somewhat slippery but important concept in creating positive energy in the classroom. Rapport is the relationship or connection you establish with your students, a relationship built on trust and respect that leads to students' feeling capable, competent, and creative. How do you set up such a connection? By

- showing interest in each student as a person,
- giving feedback on each person's progress,
- openly soliciting students' ideas and feelings,
- valuing and respecting what students think and say,
- laughing *with* them and not *at* them,
- working *with* them as a team, and not *against* them, and
- developing a genuine sense of vicarious joy when they learn something or otherwise succeed.

2. Balance praise and criticism

Part of the rapport you create is based on the delicate balance that you set between praise and criticism. Too much of either renders it less and less effective. Genuine praise, appropriately delivered, enables students to welcome criticism and to put it to use. Table 13.1 shows the contrast between effective praise and ineffective praise.

Table 13.1. Effective praise versus ineffective praise (adapted from Brophy 1981)

Effective Praise	Ineffective Praise
• shows genuine pleasure and concern • shows verbal and nonverbal variety • specifies the particulars of an accomplishment, so students know exactly what was performed well	• is impersonal, mechanical, and "robotic" • shows bland uniformity • is restricted to global comments, so students are not sure what was performed well
• is offered in recognition of noteworthy effort on difficult tasks	• is offered equally strongly for easy and difficult tasks
• attributes success to effort, implying that similar success can be expected in the future	• attributes success to ability, luck, or other external factors
• fosters intrinsic motivation to continue to pursue goals	• fosters extrinsic motivation to perform only to receive more praise
• is delivered without disrupting the communicative flow of ongoing interaction	• disrupts the communicative flow of ongoing interaction

3. Generate energy

What is classroom "energy"? I like to use this term for a force that is unleashed in a classroom, perceivable only through a "sixth sense," if you will, that is acquired in the experience of teaching itself. Energy is what you react to when you walk out of a class period and say to yourself, "Wow! That was a great class!" or "What a great group of students!" Energy is the electricity of many minds caught up in a circuit of thinking and talking and writing. Energy is an aura of creativity sparked by the interaction of students. Energy drives students toward higher attainment. Students (and teachers) take energy with them when they leave the classroom and bring it back the next day.

How do you create this energy? Not necessarily by being dramatic or flamboyant, witty or wise. Sometimes energy is unleashed through a quiet, reserved, but focused teacher. Sometimes energy forces gather in the corporate intensity of students focused on rather mundane tasks. But you are the key. Because students initially look to you for leadership and guidance, you are the one to begin to get the creative sparks flying. And by whatever means you accomplish this, you do so through solid preparation, confidence in your ability to teach, a genuinely positive belief in your students' ability to learn, and a sense of joy in doing what you do. You also do so by overtly manifesting that preparation, confidence, positive belief, and joy when you walk into the classroom.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION, ACTION, AND RESEARCH

[Note: (I) Individual work; (G) group or pair work; (C) whole-class discussion.]

1. (C) Ask members of the class to volunteer stories about classes they have been in (or taught) where (a) something went wrong with the physical environment of the classroom, (b) some kind of unplanned or embarrassing moment occurred, or (c) some form of adverse circumstance took place. What did the teacher do? What *should* the teacher have done?
2. (G) Assign different groups to (a) large-class issues and (b) multiple-proficiency issues. Direct them to look at the lists of suggested solutions, and to discuss the extent to which the solutions are practical. Do they apply to actual classes that someone is familiar with? What further measures can be taken to maximize student learning in each of the two circumstances?
3. (G/C) Have groups brainstorm solutions to the following situations, then report back to the rest of the class: Suppose you have been assigned to teach in a language institute for adults in (you name the country). The director insists that students will learn best through the Grammar Translation Method, mainly because that's the way he learned three foreign languages. He has asked you to use this method, and the textbooks for the course are a grammar reference guide and a book of readings with vocabulary words listed at the end of each reading. Your class is a group of intermediate level young adults, all currently employed in various places around the city. They want to learn English in order to get into a university. What would you do? How would you resolve the difference between what you believe your students need and the dictates of your director? (You need the money, so don't get yourself fired!)
4. (C) Discuss the following questions with your class: What is cheating? How is it defined in your culture and how does that vary across cultures? Has a classmate ever tried to cheat in a class you have been a student in? What did the teacher do, if anything? What would you have done had you been the teacher?

5. (I/G) Rate yourself on the continua of teacher styles on page 201. Use four categories in between the extreme of each factor for your rating by designing a chart something like this:

   shy ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ gregarious

   Check just one box for each pair of adjectives. Check the left-most box if the left-hand adjective is *very* much like you, the second from the left if it *somewhat* describes you; check the right-most box if the right-hand adjective is *very* much like you, and the second from the right if it *somewhat* describes you. Do you feel that you need to change some of those natural styles when you enter a classroom? If not, why do you feel that your present styles are adequate? Are there any tendencies that might work against you? What should you do to prevent such a problem? Share your results with a partner.
6. (G) Arrange groups preferably with heterogeneous representations of people who are from or have knowledge of varied cultures. Consider the society your students know and ask them to address the following questions: Where does that society fall on the list of continua describing cultural expectations of students? Would you add any other expectations to the list? Consider each factor and discuss specific ways in which you would deal with a conflict of expectations between your students and yourself.
7. (I/G/C) In your own words, describe "energy." Share your description with a partner. Observe a class and see if you can identify things that the teacher or the students do that make you feel that the class is "energized." Share your observations with others in your class.

FOR YOUR FURTHER READING

Underwood, Mary. 1991. *Effective Class Management.* London: Longman.

This very practical little book provides details of classroom management issues in a number of categories, ranging from the physical environment of the classroom to large classes to discipline.

Crookes, Graham and Chaudron, Craig. 1991. "Guidelines for classroom language teaching." In Celce-Murcia 1991b.

A number of classroom management issues are dealt with here as the authors focus primarily on various classroom techniques (referred to in Chapter 9). Of special interest is a section on "classroom climate."

Lawrence, Gordon. 1984. *People Types and Tiger Stripes: A Practical Guide to Learning Styles.* Gainesville, FL: Center for Applications of Psychological Type.

This fascinating book outlines implications of the various Myers-Briggs personality types for educational settings. Teachers are introduced to Jung's

theory of psychological types. They are then given practical guidelines for understanding the roles of teachers and learners, and for developing classroom activities that maximize learning.

Oxford, Rebecca et al. 1998. "Clashing metaphors about classroom teachers: Toward a systematic typology for the language teaching field." *System 26:* 3–50.

This article was recommended in Chapter 11. It is helpful in sorting out different roles of teachers in language classrooms.