Reading Chapter 4: Teaching by Principles

Directions: Read the relevant textbook chapter. Then answer the questions below. Please provide specific examples from your own experiences when applicable. Turn in you answers either by email (jbrawn67@gmail.com).

1. What are the 8 principles of second language learning that the author wants us to use to organize our teaching practice?

2. Briefly describe and define what each of these 8 principles are

3. Provide and an example activity or procedure that allows us to integrate this principle into our lesson plans and teaching

Principle	Description / Definition	Example Activity / Procedure
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
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CHAPTER 4

TEACHING BY PRINCIPLES

Questions for Reflection

- What is meant by a *principle* of SLA? How do principles underlie an overall *approach* to language teaching?
- What are some of the key principles of SLA (eight are suggested in this chapter)?
- Among the eight principles, what are some related concepts or constructs that also form foundations for your teaching?
- What are some practical *implications* and *applications* of each of the eight principles?
- How would one prioritize the eight principles? How does one's context of teaching and learning determine which principles are more (or less) applicable?

So far in this book you have observed a classroom in action, examined a century of language-teaching history, and taken a look at major constructs that undergird current practices in language teaching. In the process, you already may have felt a little bewildered by the complexity of our profession. You may be asking questions like, "With all the options available, how can I make informed choices about what to do in the particular context of my classroom?" or, "How can I put into practice a cautious, enlightened eclectic approach?"

In order to sort through those questions and find some plausible answers, it's important for you to consider elements that are at the core of language pedagogy: foundational principles that can form the building blocks for your own theoretical rationale. For teachers, such principles comprise their *approach* to language teaching (discussed in Chapters 2 and 3).

In *Principles of Language Learning and Teaching* (Brown, 2014, hereafter referred to as *PLLT*), it was noted that the last few decades of research produced a complex storehouse of information on second language acquisition (SLA) and teaching. There are still many mysteries about SLA that lead us to be *cautious*, but there is a great deal that we do know about the process. We can be quite certain that among all the *eclectic* pedagogical options available, many of a teacher's choices can be grounded in established principles of language learning and teaching, and thereby be *enlightened*. You will be better able to see why you have chosen to use a particular classroom technique (or set of techniques), to carry it out with confidence, and to evaluate its utility after the fact.

You may be thinking that such a principled approach to language teaching sounds only logical. How could one proceed otherwise? Well, we have seen many a novice language teacher who would simply like to have "101 recipes for Monday morning teaching." Unfortunately, this sort of quick-fix approach to teacher education will not give you that all-important ability to comprehend when to use a technique, with whom it will work, how to adapt it for your audience, or how to judge its effectiveness.

We'll now take a broad, sweeping look at eight overarching principles of second language learning that interact with sound practice and on which your teaching can be based. These principles form the core of an approach to language teaching, as discussed in the previous chapter. There is no magic about the number eight. The previous edition of *Teaching by Principles* described twelve principles; Rod Ellis (2014) named ten; Tom Scovel (2001) cited five; but Bernard Spolsky (1989) named seventy! We have chosen eight for the sake of simplicity and inclusiveness.

Before we embark on a description of the eight principles, a special note is warranted for readers and instructors who have used the previous editions of *Teaching by Principles*. Times have changed. New findings and new approaches demand reconceptualizations. So, in this edition, not only will you find the number of principles reduced to eight, but you will also see some new concepts that must now be included in a comprehensive framework for teaching additional languages. All of the "old" principles are still here, but many are incorporated into broader, more powerful constructs.

The ordering of the eight principles is not random. The rationale is to move from the more cognitive psychological and individual principles to transactions of the self in relation to others, and finally to the learner as an agent within a cultural milieu. Of course, no single principle is discretely contained in a "box," unaffected by one or more of the principles. All eight categories have areas of overlap with their counterparts.

A further note: It may be helpful, as you are reading, to check referenced sections of *PLLT* (Brown, 2014) to refresh your memory of certain terms and background information.

AUTOMATICITY

> John Hersch is an accomplished pianist. He has played in night clubs and orchestras, and most recently accompanies a 120-voice chorus. When he looks at a musical score and prepares to play it, he doesn't have the cognitive or physical time to cogitate on every note and marking. He not only takes in multiple bits of musical information simultaneously, but he also "translates" that information into movement of fingers across the keyboard. The result? Beautiful, harmonic sounds of piano strings. But when John was first learning to play the piano, all that instantaneous input and output was by no means **automatic**. That complex ability developed over time with hours of daily practice.

Learning music and learning language have much in common, not the least of which is that both require the development of automaticity for successful learning. Children learning additional languages are classic examples of developing automatic skills "naturally," in untutored contexts (see *PLLT*, Chapter 3) with little or no analysis of the **forms** (e.g., grammar, phonology, vocabulary) of language. Through an inductive process of exposure to language input and opportunity to experiment interactively with output, they appear to learn languages without overtly noticing language forms. They do, however, focus very effectively on the **function** (meaning) of their linguistic input and output.

For adults, **automaticity** is sometimes impeded by overanalysis of language forms, which become too focal (DeKeyser & Criado, 2013; McLaughlin, 1990), too much the center of attention. In order to cognitively manage the incredible complexity and quantity of language systems, they need to develop strategies of high-speed, automatic processing in which language forms are on the periphery of attention. For pianist John Hersch, his remarkable ability was the result of, in his words, "not *thinking about* the music so much, and just playing the piano *for fun*."

For L2 learning, the Principle of Automaticity highlights the importance of meaningful use of the new language through communicative interaction; efficient movement away from a capacity-limited control (McLaughlin, 1990) of a few bits and pieces to a relatively unlimited automatic mode of processing language, often referred to as **fluency**; and an optimal degree of focusing on forms of language that encourages learners to **notice** errors in their output, utilize a teacher's feedback, and, when appropriate, to respond in some way (Leow, 2013; Schmidt, 1990).

The Principle of Automaticity may be summarized as follows:

> Efficient second language learning involves a timely progression from *control* of a few language forms to fluid and error-free *automatic* processing (in both production and comprehension) of a relatively unlimited number of language forms. Development of fluency—usually through extensive long-term practice—is aided by a primary focus on meaning, purpose, and interaction, and a secondary but optimal amount of attention to language forms.

Notice that this principle does *not* say that the road to automaticity is paved with unceasing, relentless communicative activities in which form-focus is a "no-no." In fact, adults can especially benefit greatly from a modicum of focal processing of rules, definitions, and guided practice (DeKeyser & Criado, 2013). The other side of the coin is that adults might take a lesson from children by speedily overcoming our propensity to pay too much focal attention to the bits and pieces of language and by effectively moving language forms to the periphery, using language in authentic contexts for meaningful purposes. In so doing, automaticity is built more efficiently.

What does this principle, which commonly applies to adult instruction, mean to you as a teacher? Here are some practical possibilities:

GUIDELINES FOR MAINTAINING AUTOMATICITY IN L2 CLASSROOMS

1. Make sure that a major proportion of classroom activity is focused on the use of language for purposes that are as authentic as a classroom context will permit. Examples include task-based activity, group and pair work, and involvement in topics that are relevant to students' lives.
2. Practice exercises and explanations dealing with grammar, vocabulary, phonology, discourse, and other forms have a place in the adult classroom, but don't overwhelm your students with a focus on form. Short, five-minute grammar-focus exercises, for example, may be more helpful than long explanations or "lectures" from you.
3. When you focus your students on form, your goal is to help them to notice forms, to modify or correct errors when appropriate, and ultimately to incorporate that information into their language use. Error correction, for example, is more effective if students are made aware of an error and/or are encouraged to self-correct.
4. Fluency activities, in which you deliberately do not focus on forms, may help students to attend to meaning or to accomplishing a task, and to "unblock" their overattention to form. A classic writing example is freewriting, in which students are asked to write about a topic of interest with virtually no attention, at this stage, to correctness.
5. Automaticity is a slow and sometimes tedious process; therefore, you need to exercise patience with students as you slowly help them to achieve fluency. Don't expect your students to become chatterboxes overnight in their new language!

TRANSFER

> Doug had been a tennis player for over two decades when one of his friends invited him to play racquetball. "It should be an easy sport for you," suggested his buddy, reasoning that both are racquet sports. In the first few games, Doug found that indeed certain abilities transferred relatively quickly: meeting the ball squarely, following through, positioning feet correctly, being ready for your opponent's next play. Even some of the strategic aspects of the game, figuring out the other guy's weaknesses and playing to one's own strengths, transferred positively. But there was some negative transfer: the side wall kept getting in the way, the ball bounced quite differently, and playing off three and sometimes four walls was disconcerting.

The Principle of **Transfer** plays a dominant role in learning an additional language. A historical look at research on language learning in the middle of the twentieth century reveals an obsession with transfer, especially from the first to the second language, known as **interlingual transfer** or **interference**. Some went so far as to claim that any difficulty in learning an L2 could be *equated* to the differences between a learner's first and second languages (Banathy, Trager, & Waddle, 1966).

It was not long before evidence mounted against the *predictability* of interference (Whitman & Jackson, 1972). Learner language manifested enough variation to dispute such claims of certainty, and further, when three or four or more languages were in question, the task of predicting became impossible. More recently, partly because transfer can work *both* ways, the SLA field has been using **cross-linguistic influence** as a more appropriate term to capture the relationship of two *or more* languages in contact (Jarvis & Pavlenko, 2008; Jarvis, 2013). The difference between today's emphasis on *influence*, rather than prediction, is important (Oostendorp, 2012) to capture the range of syntactic, lexical, discourse, and pragmatic interference that can occur.

In the 1960s and 1970s, **intralingual transfer** (within the L2), also known as **overgeneralization**, became a hot topic, especially in analyzing sources of error in learners' output, and in describing **interlanguage** of learners. These basic tenets of human learning undergirded a massive stockpile of research and helped propel SLA research into new unexplored territory. (See *PLLT*, Chapter 9.)

But strictly *linguistic* transfer is, in some ways, only a small piece of the psychology of learning an L2. Transfer is an all-encompassing principle that reaches across physical, cognitive, affective, and sociocultural domains. Virtually all learning is the product of transfer. We can define the term simply as the application of knowledge, skill, or emotion acquired in one situation to new situations. And transfer can be positive (advancing toward an objective) or negative (interfering with such advancement).

Closely related to the principle of transfer is a recent emphasis in cognitive psychology on what has come to be known as **embodied cognition** (Damasio, 2003; Gibbs, 2006). From this perspective, an organism's sensorimotor capacities, body, and environment play crucial roles in the development of cognitive (and linguistic) abilities. In other words, we are not merely thinking and feeling organisms, but our physical interactions with the world—our motor systems—are large determiners of the extent and diversity of our cognitive and linguistic competence. Embodied cognition offers an enlightening re-focus on the physical abilities that so preoccupied behavioral psychologists back at the turn of the twentieth century.

James (2006, 2010, 2012) demonstrated the importance of transfer in a number of academic contexts: general language skills to subskills (e.g., writing in general to writing for research purposes); certain skills (e.g., reading) to others (e.g., writing); earlier language courses to specific subject matter areas (e.g., engineering, business); and, of course, transfer from the classroom to real-world contexts. Likewise, **content-based instruction** (Snow, 2014) is successful because students are immersed in tasks and skills that are relevant to their lives and/or livelihood. Research on **dynamic systems theory** (DST), reminds teachers of the many, complex interconnections that learners make as their language abilities grow (Larsen-Freeman, 2012), all the result of transfer as learners connect one learning moment with another.

Half a century ago, cognitive psychologists revolutionized educational psychology by stressing the importance of **meaningful learning** (as opposed to **rote learning**) for long-term retention (Ausubel, 1963). That is, new material to be learned that is "attached" to existing cognitive structure (associated) will be more efficiently lodged. Transfer underlies all meaningful learning. For example, if a task in a group activity puts learners into a familiar context (such as the movies in Chapter 1), new grammatical, lexical, and discourse forms will be more easily embedded into students' L2 competence. And in learning to read and write, **schema theory** encourages students to relate existing knowledge, of both content and skills, to new material.

The Principle of Transfer may be summarized as follows:

> Because L2 learners naturally seek to transfer existing knowledge/ability to new knowledge or ability, efficient (and successful) learning will result from a process of making meaningful associations between a learner's existing knowledge, skills, and emotions and the new material to be learned.

Here are some classroom implications of the Principle of Transfer:

GUIDELINES FOR MAXIMIZING TRANSFER IN L2 CLASSROOMS

Capitalize on the power of transfer by anchoring new material to students' existing knowledge and ability. If topics and contexts for tasks are associated with something students already know, then linguistic features will be more easily learned.

1. Become acquainted with your students' backgrounds, interests, personalities, occupations, hobbies, likes and dislikes, and ground classroom activities on those individual characteristics.
2. When introducing new grammar, vocabulary, or discourse features, review previously learned material on which the new material is based through brainstorming or clustering activities. Use graphic organizers (e.g., charts, diagrams, concept maps) to help students see the relevance to the new material.

3. As you teach one skill area—say, listening—connect what students are learning to other skills such as speaking or reading.
4. Avoid the pitfalls of rote learning. Don't overdo grammar explanations, drills, activities that have no clear purpose, and tasks that are unclearly understood by students. Base your teaching as much as possible on content that learners can identify with, as opposed to grammar-driven teaching.

REWARD

> Here's a story about an experiment in the power of rewards (Kohn, 1990). Teenage girls were given the task of teaching some games to younger children. One group of "teachers" was simply given the teaching task, with no mention of a reward to be given. The other group was told that they would receive a free ticket to the latest "hot" movie for successfully completing the task. Results: The first group did their task faster, with greater success, and reported more pleasure in doing so than the second group!

Skinner (1938) and others demonstrated the strength of rewards in both animal and human behavior (see *PLLT*, Chapter 4). Virtually everything we do is predicated on the anticipation of a reward, whether physical, mental, emotional, or social. So what can we make of the above example? Does it contradict the reward principle? Not if you consider the *source* of rewards.

In Kohn's (1990) study, the first group of girls reported an **intrinsic motive** to succeed. They simply wanted the pleasure and satisfaction of having their young kids learn the game. No one promised them anything, and their internal drive to succeed shone through. The second group reported being more focused on getting the movie ticket, that is, on an **extrinsic motive** administered by someone else, and less on the results of their instruction (see *PLLT*, Chapter 6).

Psychologists (e.g., Maslow, 1970) and linguists (e.g., Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011) have for many decades acknowledged not only the power of rewards, but also the power of intrinsically driven behavior. Classroom techniques have a much greater chance for success if they are self-rewarding in the perception of the learner: The learners perform the task because it is fun, interesting, useful, or challenging, and only secondarily because they anticipate some cognitive or affective rewards from the teacher.

The implications of intrinsically and extrinsically driven behaviors for the classroom are more complex than they might seem. At one end of the spectrum is the effectiveness of a teacher's praise for correct responses ("Very good, Maria!" "Nice job!"), grades or "gold stars" to indicate success, smiles and affirmation from classmates, and other public recognition. At the other end, students need to see clearly *why* they are performing something along with its relevance to their long-term goals in learning, so that they are not dependent on external rewards. The ultimate goal is for students to engage in **self-determination**—to *choose* to make an effort because of what they will gain, in either the short or long run (Deci & Ryan, 2002).

The Reward Principle can be stated as follows:

> Human beings are universally driven to act, or "behave," in anticipation of a reward. The most powerful rewards are those that are intrinsically motivated: The behavior stems from needs, wants, or desires within oneself and is self-rewarding.

The key to making the reward principle work in the language classroom is to create an optimal blend of extrinsic (teacher-administered) rewards, especially for the minute-by-minute routine of a classroom, and intrinsically-driven rewards that become embedded in a student's journey toward language proficiency. How do you do that? Consider the following tips:

GUIDELINES FOR IMPLEMENTING THE REWARD PRINCIPLE IN L2 CLASSROOMS

1. Provide an optimal degree of immediate verbal praise, encouragement, and acknowledgment of "good work" as a short-term reward, just enough to keep them confident in their ability.
2. Capitalize on the energy of cooperative group work in which students are given opportunities to communicate with each other and ultimately to feel proud of their accomplishments. Encourage students to reward each other with compliments and supportive action.
3. Display enthusiasm and excitement yourself in the classroom. If you are dull, lifeless, bored, and have low energy, you can be almost sure that it will be contagious.
4. Encourage learners to see the intrinsic, long-term rewards in learning an L2 by pointing out what they can do with the language, the benefits of being able to use it, jobs that require it, and so on. As you utilize content-based activities, you will help students to become linguistically involved with interesting, relevant subject matter.
5. Give your students some choices in types of activities, content, or subject matter so that they feel some "ownership" of their language development. Encourage students to discover for themselves certain principles and rules, rather than simply giving them an answer.

SELF-REGULATION

> When Kathy accepted a two-year English teaching position in Turkey, she made a point, in the three months before relocating from her home in the United States, of studying as much Turkish as possible. In an online short course, she learned a lot "about" Turkish and managed to internalize a couple of dozen survival phrases. Upon arrival in Ankara, she was pleased that she could understand and speak a few phrases. But that didn't last long. She very soon felt a bit "lost" in everyday Turkish, and decided to benefit from her previous learning of Spanish (in Bolivia) and Japanese. She was a highly organized person and determined to make the best of her residence in Turkey. She made elaborate plans, set daily and weekly goals, and monitored her progress. By the end of the first year, her self-determination had paid off. She was comfortable in most conversations and was able to read Turkish newspapers. Success!

Four decades ago, Rubin (1975) named fourteen characteristics of "good" language learners. They all placed responsibility on the learner to take action, to "take charge" of their learning, to create opportunities for using the language, to utilize a variety of strategies, and to organize information about language. All of this advice still holds! Oxford (2011) noted that the key to successful language learning is **self-regulation**, "deliberate goal-directed attempts to manage and control efforts to learn the L2" (p. 12). One of the key foundation stones of effective L2 pedagogy today is to create a climate in which learners develop **autonomy**, "the capacity to control one's learning" (Benson, 2001, p. 290), and self-regulation is cited as a key ingredient of autonomy (Benson, 2007).

Such an approach is a far cry from the days when students entered a classroom, sat down dutifully at their desks, and waited in silence for the teacher to tell them what to do. Worse, those directives might have been to translate a passage, memorize a rule, or repeat a dialogue. Today, autonomy is now almost universally manifested in the classroom in the form of allowing learners to do things like setting personal goals, developing awareness of strategic options, initiating oral production, solving problems in small groups, and practicing language with peers.

Further, thanks to a stockpile of research, our language curricula now recognize the crucial goal of helping learners to use the language *outside* of the classroom. Teachers encourage learners to "take charge" of their own learning, and to chart their own "pathways to success" (Brown, 2002b; Benson, 2003). Such self-regulation of course means that learners are encouraged to take *responsibility* for their learning as they develop a battery of **strategies** for intake, organization, compensation, output, uptake, and social interaction. (See *PLLT*, Chapter 5.) They are proactive *agents* (see Principle 8) in determining their ultimate success.

Is the Principle of Self-Regulation a culturally loaded concept? Does it undermine the authority of the teacher within an educational system that reveres the role of the teacher? Possibly, but Schmenk (2005) suggested using some caution in making assumptions across cultural contexts and to account for "specific cultural backdrops and impacts" (p. 115) in promoting self-regulation and autonomy in the language classroom. Once those accommodations have been appropriately addressed, you should by no means refrain from helping your students to participate actively in linguistic exchange and to continue their learning beyond the walls of your classroom (Crookes, 2013; Norton & Toohey, 2004).

Briefly, the Principle of Self-Regulation states:

> Mastery of an L2 will depend to a great extent on learners' ability to proactively take charge of their learning agenda, to make deliberate, goal-directed efforts to succeed, and to achieve a degree of autonomy that will enable them to continue their journey to success beyond the classroom and the teacher.

Consider the following classroom implications of this principle:

GUIDELINES FOR MAXIMIZING SELF-REGULATION IN L2 CLASSROOMS

1. Learners at the beginning stages of a language will be somewhat dependent on the teacher, which is natural and normal. But teachers can help even beginners to develop a sense of autonomy through guided practice, strategy training (Wenden, 2002), and allowing some creative innovation within limited forms.
2. As learners gain confidence and begin to be able to experiment with language, implement activities in the classroom that allow creativity but are not completely beyond the capacity of students.
3. Encourage students to set some goals for their self-regulated learning: a number of vocabulary words to learn (and try out) each week; watch a TV show in English x times every week; speak English outside the classroom x times per week; write a story in English; and so on.
4. As much as possible, help your students to become aware of their own preferences, styles, strengths, and weaknesses, so that they can then take appropriate [self-regulated] action in the form of strategies for better learning. Self-regulation might be aided by checklists, and action can ensue as a choice on the part of the learner.

5. Share with your students what you believe are some of the "secrets" of your success in language learning. What strategies did you use that might also be helpful for your students? You could encourage risk-taking strategies, using nonverbal signals, avoidance tricks, methods for remembering vocabulary, and the list goes on. (See *PLLT*, Chapter 5.)
6. Pair and group work and other interactive activities that are focused on tasks provide opportunities for students to practice language, and to be creative in their choices of vocabulary, grammar, and discourse.
7. Praise students for trying language that's a little beyond their present capacity. Provide feedback on their speech—just enough to be helpful, but not so much that you stifle their creativity
8. Suggest opportunities for students to use their language (gauged for their proficiency level) outside of class. Examples include movies, TV, various social network avenues (Facebook, Twitter, etc.), the Internet, books, magazines, and practicing with each other.

IDENTITY AND INVESTMENT

> Heekyeong, born and raised in Korea, started learning English when she was in middle school. By the time she went to college in Korea, she had excelled in English and successfully pursued a major in English. Her identity at this point was still predominantly Korean. She then relocated to Canada, and, after completing her PhD a decade later, lived and worked in Italy, then moved to New York, and now lives and works in Monterey, California. After these experiences, who is this Korean-Canadian-American with a bit of Italian thrown in? What is her cultural and emotional identity? Is there a dominant side of her, or is the "real" Heekyeong comprised of bits and pieces of everywhere she has lived?

In the 1970s the budding field of SLA was introduced to a seminal construct in the form of research on the notion that one's linguistic ability was intertwined with one's sense of worth, self-esteem, and self-efficacy. The explanatory power of **language ego** (Guiora et al., 1972) provided a refreshing new psychological contribution to our understanding of the affective nature of L2 learning, stimulated a diversity of pedagogical applications, and paved the way for several decades of spin-off research. (See *PLLT*, Chapter 6.)

It made perfect sense. Learning an additional language can be threatening for even the most confident learners, and risking making an utter fool of yourself in the L2 takes intestinal fortitude. "You are what you speak," said Frank Smith (1975) over four decades ago, and no one to this day can deny how one's ability to "hold your head up high" is bound up in one's linguistic utterances in *both* an L1 and an L2. We *transact* ourselves chiefly through language.

The concept of language ego also meshed well with an increasing emphasis on emotion and **affect** in SLA research and teaching. The 1970s were revolutionary in the incorporation of the affective domain into theories of SLA (Brown, 1973; Scovel, 1978), as strictly cognitive theories fell short of involving the "whole person" in the enterprise of learning an additional language. Forty years later, we're seeing a refocus on affect and emotion as SLA research experiences an "affective turn" (Pavlenko, 2013) following a period of intense interest in the social dimensions of SLA.

Today the language ego concept is more elegantly refined and expanded into what Norton (2013) and others have described as **identity**: the extent to which L2 learners do not perceive themselves merely as individual entities but, more importantly, as "an integral and constitutive part" (p. 522) of the social world to which they are connected. And even more poignantly, identity research brings to light the dynamics of power—and powerlessness—inherent in every learner's journey toward belonging to a community. Further, while the language ego construct viewed the "real me" as possessing a unique, fixed, constant core, the identity concept "depicts the individual as diverse, contradictory, dynamic, and changing over historical time and social space" (Norton, 2013, p. 522).

Identity, then, is more than just a core concept; it is also a principle that has far-reaching implications. On one end of the spectrum is the call for *self-regulated* learners to accurately understand themselves as they become *aware* of their personal strengths and weaknesses, likes and dislikes, and preferences in **styles** of learning, thinking, acting, and communicating. (See *PLLT*, Chapter 5.)

On the way to the other end of the continuum is a rich and diverse cluster of social factors at work in the L2 learning process, where learners are considered to be members of historical collectivities, who appropriate the practices of a given community. The completeness of learners' participation in that community is partly predicated on their **investment** in the long and often winding road to success (Norton & Gao, 2008). While investment involves commitment and motivation in the traditional sense (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011), more importantly, learners are seeking to increase the "value of their cultural capital" (Norton, 2013, p. 3)

An L2 learner's cultural capital will always be a factor of power relationships in a classroom, community, culture, and country (Canagarajah, 2004). Such relationships include race, ethnicity, religion, gender, age, sexual orientation, status, economic wealth, and the list goes on. This web of intertwining power issues plays into what Anderson (1991) called **imagined communities**, that is, a community as *perceived* by a learner, or more simply, the *mental image* of a socially constructed community. For example, nationalism is viewed as an affinity to an "imagined" construct of variables that presumably define a country, whether or not in fact such constructs can be empirically identified.

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

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

1. **(A)** All of the eight principles summarized in this chapter are important. Ask your students, in pairs or small groups, to *prioritize* them, placing two or three principles at the top of the list. Then, have the groups compare their top three with others in the class. They may discover how difficult it is to choose only three to be at the top of the list.
2. **(A)** Have any principles been left out that should have been included? Ask small groups to brainstorm their thoughts, name any such principles (or concepts), and justify their inclusion in such a list. Then ask each group to share its conclusions with the rest of the class, perhaps by writing their ideas on the board. Encourage your students to ask questions of each other.
3. **(A)** Direct students back to Chapter 1, in which a lesson was described in detail. Notice that in the second part of the chapter, numbered sets of questions were raised regarding the lesson that was described. Assign one or more of those 18 sets to pairs. Ask each pair to (a) determine which principles in this chapter *justified* the teacher's choice in each case, and (b) decide whether any aspects of that lesson should have been *altered* on the basis of any one or more principles. Ask pairs to share their thoughts with the rest of the class.
4. **(D)** Ask students to look back at Chapter 2, in which a number of methods were descriptive of a brief history of language teaching. Make a chalkboard list of the methods to stimulate a class discussion of the extent to which each method can be *justified* by certain principles described in this chapter, and then, conversely, *criticized* by other principles.
5. **(A)** The eight principles given here form elements of a *theory* of second language learning and teaching (see *PLLT*, Chapter 10). Ask your students, as extra-class work on their own, to write a brief one-page synopsis of what each would state as their own personal *theory of language learning and teaching*, using as many of the principles (and other concepts) as possible that are articulated in this chapter. If time permits, you might ask a few students to volunteer to read their statements when they complete the assignment. Note: Make sure they save these statements to read again at the end of the course.
6. **(D)** If possible, try to arrange for your students to observe an L2 class, and as a checklist, use the eight principles (plus other concepts described here) to determine which principles supported various activities. In some cases a principle may explain why students are successfully achieving lesson objectives; in other cases a principle might articulate why objectives were *not* reached. Ask students to report their insights back to the class.

FOR YOUR FURTHER READING

Mitchell, R., Myles, F., & Marsden, E. (2013). *Second language learning theories* (3rd ed.). Oxford, UK: Routledge.

This book provides an accessible alternative to *PLLT* in its survey of current theories and issues in the field of second language acquisition. It serves as a vantage point from which to view the backdrops to the eight principles presented in this chapter.

Richards, J.C. (2002). Theories of teaching in language teaching. In J. Richards & W. Renandya (Eds.), *Methodology in language teaching: An anthology of current practice* (pp. 19–25). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Richards puts theories of teaching into an unusual and thought-provoking framework of four categories: science-research based, theory-philosophy, values-based, and art-craft conceptions.

Allwright, D., & Hanks, J. (2009). *The developing language learner: An introduction to exploratory practice.* New York, NY: Palgrave MacMillan.

The authors present an innovative approach to understanding the role of learners as practitioners of learning and the role of teachers as practitioners of teaching. Through the narratives of learners and teachers from around the globe, it offers how exploratory practice can engage learners as practitioners and eventually enhance their learning process.

Alsagoff, L., McKay, S., Hu, G., & Renandya, W. (Eds.). (2012). *Principles and practices for teaching English as an international language.* New York, NY: Routledge.

As research on learning and teaching languages has now become a global concern, with contributions to the field in many countries around the world, this anthology helps the reader to gain a perspective on English teaching in many contexts, especially those in which English is not a predominant L1.

Pavlenko, A. (2013). The affective turn in SLA: From "affective factors" to "language desire" and "commodification of affect." In D. Gabrys-Barker & J. Brelska (Eds.), *The affective dimension in second language acquisition* (pp. 3–28). Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters.

An interesting affective emphasis is offered in this well-researched article that gives you both a historical perspective as well as information on the recent "revival" of the affective domain as a key to language success.