

# Professional Development Consortium in Modern Foreign Languages

## Eight Principles for Effective Teaching and Learning of Languages Based on Research Evidence

### **Principle 1** ORAL INTERACTION

Target language input is essential for learning but it can be made more effective if learners are encouraged to check the understanding of it by asking questions of what the teacher is saying or asking the teacher to repeat.

### **Principle 2** ORAL INTERACTION

Learners need to be encouraged to speak spontaneously and to say things that they are not sure are correct

### **Principle 3** ORAL INTERACTION

Less spontaneous oral interaction should nevertheless be of high quality. By high quality we mean including substantial student turns; adequate wait time; cognitive challenge [e.g. by requiring a verb phrase or subordinate clause]; appropriate teacher feedback; nominating students rather than waiting for volunteers.

### **Principle 4** ORAL INTERACTION

Students should be explicitly taught strategies to use when faced with communication difficulties. These should be used alongside techniques for developing their oral fluency, such as repetition of tasks and chunking of pre-learnt words into whole phrases.

### **Principle 5** READING AND LISTENING

Learners need to be taught how to access a greater range of more challenging spoken and written texts, through explicit instruction in comprehension strategies and in the relationship between the written and spoken forms.

### **Principle 6** FEEDBACK

Learners need to develop their self- confidence and see the link between the strategies they use and how successful they are on a task.

### **Principle 7** WRITING

Writing should be developed as a skill in its own right not just as a consolidation of other language skills. For this to happen students should frequently write using the language and strategies they already know rather than resources provided by the teacher (e.g. textbooks, writing frames, dictionaries, etc. )

### **Principle 8 (underpins all other principles)**

The principal focus of pedagogy should be on developing language skills and therefore the teaching of linguistic knowledge (knowledge of grammar and vocabulary) should act in the service of skill development not as an end in itself.