IS YOUR INSTRUCTION ALIGNED TO THE 6 PRINCIPLES?

See if your instruction is similar to Ms. James’ in the following vignette.

Loray James teaches third grade in a dual language classroom. This year her class has five students whose families have emigrated from Guatemala. The children are at varying language proficiency levels, but all of them are below grade level in reading and writing skills. Ms. James has decided to teach a social studies unit based on the agriculture, climate, vegetation, food, and customs of Guatemala. Her language learners contribute excitement. Ms. James has never seen Guatemala. The children are very proud of the places their families lived in pictures, recipes, and descriptions of the places their families lived in Guatemala. The children are very excited. Ms. James has never seen her language learners participate so enthusiastically in their learning. They love reading the books that she found about Guatemala.

Use tools like this sample of the 6 Principles checklist to reflect critically on your own practice.

**Principle 2: Do you create conditions for language learning?**

- You promote a positive and organized classroom with attention to reducing student anxiety and developing trust.
  - For example, you
    - create a welcoming environment for the students
    - organize the physical environment for individual and group work and for student-student communication
    - identify mentors for new students
    - use clear, patterned, and routine language to communicate with new learners
    - invite and support use of student home languages and cultures in lessons
  - You demonstrate expectations of success for all your learners.
    - For example, you
      - believe all students will learn academic English and content to a high level
      - praise effort and persistence
      - use a variety of instructional approaches for diverse learners
      - teach learners strategies to participate in instructional conversations
  - You plan instruction to enhance and support student motivation for language learning.
    - For example, you
      - prompt students to connect their learning to their own lives
      - build a repertoire of learning tasks that students enjoy
      - motivate students and structure behavior with projects
      - expect student ownership and support students in engagement with learning

THE 6 PRINCIPLES FOR ALL

The 6 Principles are relevant to all school personnel including principals, curriculum directors, reading specialists, and instructional coaches. Successful programs establish a strong culture of shared responsibility among educators. Work with your colleagues to ensure that high-quality programs and instruction are designed to support all learners’ educational success in a positive, welcoming school climate.

According to Jim Cummins, the 6 Principles can “act as a catalyst for a process of collective pedagogical inquiry in schools across the United States and internationally.... [W]ithin schools, educators always have choices—degrees of freedom within which we can chart directions that reflect and shape our identities as educators. The principles map the landscape in ways that enable us to embark confidently on that journey.”

WHY DO WE NEED THE 6 PRINCIPLES?

- TESOL’s mission is to advance the quality of English language teaching around the world. As the number of English learners soars, a common understanding of second language learning and effective instructional and assessment design is needed.
- In some settings, teachers need more preparation to effectively educate English learners. When TESOL professionals fully implement the 6 Principles, their students participate in high-quality lessons for language development and experience educational success.
- The 6 Principles provide teachers with the knowledge to make informed decisions to improve instruction and assessment, so curricula and courses for English learners are rigorous, relevant, and designed and delivered with second language acquisition in mind.
- The 6 Principles will help educators
  - respect, affirm, and promote students’ home languages and cultural knowledge and experiences as resources;
  - celebrate multilingualism and diversity;
  - support policies that promote individual language rights and multicultural education;
  - guide students to be global citizens.

THE 6 PRINCIPLES FOR EXEMPLARY TEACHING OF ENGLISH LEARNERS

The 6 Principles are a core set of principles for the exemplary teaching and learning of English as a new language. They are universal guidelines drawn from decades of research in language pedagogy and language acquisition theory. The 6 Principles are targets for teaching excellence and should undergird any program of English language instruction.

1. Know your learners.
2. Create conditions for language learning.
3. Design high-quality lessons for language development.
4. Adapt lesson delivery as needed.
5. Monitor and assess student language development.
6. Engage and collaborate within a community of practice.

You must implement the 6 Principles as a whole. You cannot just know your learners, for example, and then not act on that knowledge when you plan instruction.