

# INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. [Practice Activities](#)
2. [Extension Strategies](#)
3. [Digital Strategies](#)

### Strategies to Promote and Practice Interpersonal Communication

- **Conversation Circles:** Students prepare questions to ask their peers, using new vocabulary words. They sit in a circle, and one student starts by asking a question of another student in the circle. Once that student answers, he or she will ask a question of someone else and so on.
- **Information Gap Activities:** Student A and Student B each have an incomplete activity sheet. Student A's sheet is missing information that Student B has and vice versa. They take turns asking each other questions to fill in the missing information on their sheet.
- **Jigsaws:** Students sit in groups of four. Each pair of students in the group has an aspect of a topic to research or to discuss with a partner. All four students then share answers in their group and report back to the whole class.
- **Picture Prompt:** Ask each student to bring in one picture that could be a prompt for discussion or description. Throughout the year, use these pictures to prompt pairs or groups of students to express their opinion, have a discussion or tell a story (either in writing or orally).

# INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

- **Inside/Outside Circles:**
  - Prepare question cards ahead of time for each student to ask his or her partner in the circle on topics or structures that have been read, listened to, or studied. Another option is for students to prepare the question cards themselves.
  - Have students form two circles (standing, or in desks), with one circle inside of the other. Students in the “outside” circle should be facing their partner in the “inside” circle.
  - Have the “inside” student state the question on his card to his “outside” partner. Once the “outside” partner has answered, she will then ask the “inside” partner the question on her own card.
  - Use a timer to give each partner a time limit for asking and answering questions, depending on the length and difficulty level of the question.
  - After time is up, have the “outside” circle move one person to the right. The “inside” circle doesn’t move.
  - Repeat the question-and-answer process with the new partner.
  - Continue this process until the “outside” circle has returned to their original partners.
  - Once the class is back together, lead a whole group sharing of information or answers.
- **Think -Pair-Share:** The teacher poses a problem or presents a topic. Students are given time to think and may be asked to jot down their thoughts or asked to respond individually, using tools such as PollEverywhere. They then pair with another student to discuss the topic or compare responses. Finally, they share their thoughts with the whole class.
- **Numbered Heads Together:** Students assemble into groups and count off. The teacher asks a question and tells the groups to put their heads together to discuss it. The teacher calls a number and selects a group. The student with that number in that group answers. The teacher then asks the students with the same number from the other groups whether they agree with the response or asks them to elaborate on the response. (Laura Terrill)
- **See It-Say It:** This activity helps with vocabulary reinforcement and review. The teacher prepares paper A with two columns. The first column (titled “SAY IT”) has a list of vocabulary words in the target language. The second column (titled “SEE IT”) has

## INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

images or synonyms of those same words. The teacher then makes paper B with two lists of the same words and images as the first paper, but in a different order.

Students work in pairs, with an A and B paper. Student A says the word at the top of the SAY IT column. Student B will find the word in the SEE IT column, look across to the SAY IT column and say that new word. Students continue this pattern until all of the words are used. (Laura Terrill)

- **Role-Play/Skit:** Students perform spontaneous role-plays and situational skits based on a theme or real-world situation. Keep a file of student-created situations to use throughout the year.
- **Problem-Solving Activities:** Have students work together to solve problems:
  - Task and Series: How do you wash a car? How do you solve the problem 76,509 divided by 13?
  - Charts, Graphs, Maps: Give a destination on a map, and the train or subway schedule. Students determine the fastest way to get there, the cost, etc.
  - Specific Occasions: What do you say if/when ...?
  - Advertisements: Create an ad to entice people to buy your product.
- **Unusual Topics:** Use unusual pictures or ideas to stimulate conversation, e.g., “What is strange about ... (a bird swimming)?”
- **Personalized Questions and Answers (PQAs)** ([Carol Gaab, Language Magazine, March 2014](#)): PQs are level-appropriate questions that are personally relevant to specific learners (or learner groups) and that revolve around a target language word or structure. The teacher uses PQs to elicit an engaging conversation that will provide the context and repetition language learners need as they begin the acquisition process.
- **Special Interest Area:** Identify a student’s Special Interest Area (SIA) by taking a multiple-intelligence inventory or including activities that incorporate visual/spatial, linguistic, logical/mathematical, kinesthetic, musical, interpersonal, intrapersonal, or artistic learning. This special interest can be used to motivate students and to teach academic and social skills.

# INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

## Strategies to Extend Interpersonal Communication

- **Higher-Level Thinking Skills:** Ask questions that require students to extend their thinking beyond merely finding details and facts. For reference, see Bryce Hedstrom's matrix of [Bloom's Taxonomy and Foreign Language Instruction](#).
- **Interaction Skills:** Teach students appropriate skills for having a conversation. For example, when talking with a partner, students should be facing each other rather than side by side.
- **Guest Speakers:** Invite guest speakers of the target language to the classroom. Students can prepare a few questions ahead of time, and/or the speaker can be given a topic ahead of time that the students have chosen.
- **Clarification and Rephrasing:** Teach and practice the skill of clarifying and rephrasing a request or statement when the other person doesn't understand what you are saying.
- **Body Language:** Demonstrate and practice proper and improper body language while conversing with a native speaker, e.g., eye contact, distance, hand gesture, firm or soft handshake, etc.
- **Silent Mingle (ASL):** Arrange for students to be invited by the students of the Ohio School for the Deaf to social occasions such as Valentine's Day, etc.
- **Reflection Questions:** Have students reflect on self-performance or achievement and set goals. Possible questions include the following: What did I do right? What did I learn? What do I still need to learn? What is my goal for next week? How can I achieve my goal?
- **Portfolio:** Have students keep track of their work in a portfolio so they can track their own growth and successes (e.g., [LinguaFolio®](#)).

## Digital Strategies for Interpersonal Communication

### Digital Literacy:

- Use discussion forums (e.g., Schoology, Edmodo) for interpersonal writing tasks.

## INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

- Use document-share technologies (e.g., Google Docs/Dropbox) for interpersonal writing tasks.
- Use email, Twitter, wikis, blogs, Weebly or other Web-based authoring tools to promote interpersonal writing activities.

### Online and Blended Environment:

- Conduct meetings or classes during synchronous sessions (e.g., Skype, Blackboard Collaborate, Adobe Connect, Elluminate, GoToMeeting).
- Use synchronous sessions for targeted instruction and conversation. Assign roles during dialogues.
- Use asynchronous tools for independent student work (e.g., Edmodo, Schoology, Camtasia, webinars).
- Use discussion forums (e.g., Schoology, Edmodo) for interpersonal writing tasks.
- Use document-share technologies (e.g., Google Docs/Dropbox) for student collaboration and interpersonal writing tasks.
- Use email, Twitter, wikis, blogs, Weebly or other Web-based authoring tools to promote interpersonal writing activities

## For Diverse Learners

- **Peer Tutoring:** Ask a high-achieving student to work with a student who has not yet mastered the skill. Teacher defines learning tasks and assigns roles. Students may take turns in the roles of tutor/tutee to give both students many opportunities to respond.
- **Visual Response:** Have students prepare answers to questions from the teacher or their partners in non-written form, e.g., drawings, graphic organizers, or charts.