

## 7 *A model for teaching speaking*

Teaching speaking is a principled and systematic endeavor. This chapter shows how the principles embodied in the methodological framework are translated into a pedagogical model for classroom implementation. It will answer the following questions:

1. What kinds of activities provide learners with a holistic experience for developing their speaking?
2. How should these activities be sequenced, and what kinds of materials are needed?
3. How can teachers develop a series of lessons that focus on speaking?

The following topics are addressed:

- A teaching cycle for developing students' speaking.
- Steps for planning with the cycle.

### Introduction

Many language teachers recognize the importance of speaking and take great pains in organizing activities for learners to practice their speaking. Many of these activities, however, do little more than set up contexts and opportunities for oral interaction. While learners spend more time talking with one another in the target language, they do not necessarily learn how to speak more effectively. One of the reasons is that, unlike the teaching of writing and reading skills, teachers are often not guided by any particular model for teaching speaking. As a result, learners develop their abilities in a random or incidental manner.

Based on what we have discussed in the earlier chapters, we propose that teachers should aim to help learners develop their speaking competence by encouraging them to do the following:

- Use a wide range of core speaking skills.
- Develop fluency in expression of meaning.
- Use grammar flexibly to produce a wide range of utterances that can express meaning precisely.

- Use appropriate vocabulary and accurate language forms relevant to their speaking needs.
- Understand and use social and linguistic conventions of speech for various contexts.
- Employ appropriate oral communication and discourse strategies.
- Increase their awareness of genre and genre structures.
- Increase their metacognitive awareness about L2 speaking.
- Manage and self-regulate their own speaking development.

In this chapter, we present a teaching cycle that can guide the planning and sequencing of learning activities to develop your students' speaking competence. We will also show how the cycle can be used for planning a series of speaking lessons or a unit of work that focuses on speaking. The principles specified in the methodological framework in the previous chapter are applied through the cycle so that the teaching and learning of speaking is made explicit to both teachers and learners.

**Think about it**

Select a chapter or a unit of work from a coursebook where speaking activities are used. Consider how these activities may or may not help learners develop their speaking in the ways highlighted in the bulleted points above.

**A teaching cycle for developing students' speaking**

Many speaking activities in the classroom are transient and occur as standalone or one-off activities. There is little overt attention paid to the process of learning about speaking, and the outcomes of the activities are not always documented. As a result, learners often may not understand or recall the purpose of a speaking activity, and are not able to say what it is that they have learned. Figure 7.1 shows how a series of learning activities are sequenced in the cycle. At each stage of the cycle, the teacher's role is crucial in facilitating practice and learning, and providing input and feedback. Collaboration and dialogue among peers are incorporated into various stages of the cycle so that learners not only benefit from working together, but also get many opportunities to speak.

Every stage in the teaching cycle supports the broad developmental objectives for speaking outlined in Table 7.1 on page 154. Some stages can support more than one objective, and the teacher can decide which objective

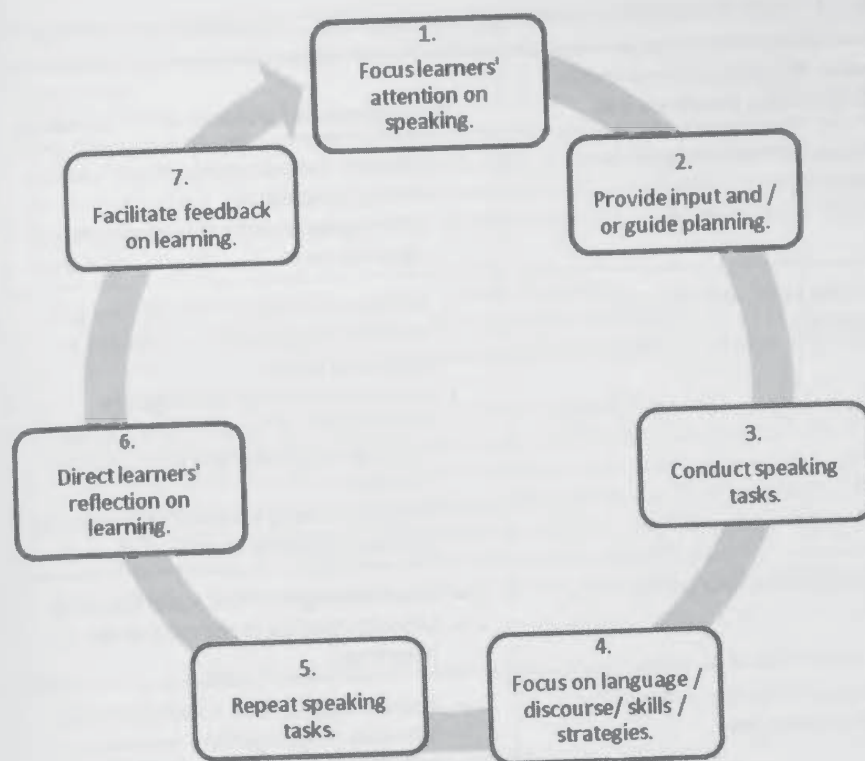


Figure 7.1: The teaching-speaking cycle.

is emphasized in a particular cycle by selecting or planning different learning activities. For example, Stage 4, which focuses learners' attention on features of the speaking task in Stage 3, can potentially help learners develop better control over language, skills, or strategies. It would not be practical or realistic, however, to address all of the objectives in one cycle, and so teachers should focus on just one of them. If the aim is to help learners acquire a particular communication strategy, for example, the use of feedback (see Chapter 5), learning activities that can contribute towards this objective can be planned for Stage 4.

### Stage 1: Focus learners' attention on speaking

In this stage, the teacher raises learners' metacognitive awareness about learning to speak in a second language. The focus of these awareness-raising activities is one or more of three recognized types of metacognitive knowledge: namely, person knowledge, task knowledge, and strategic knowledge. Metacognitive activities at this stage can serve one of the two following purposes.

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**Table 7.1:** *How the teaching-speaking cycle supports L2 speaking development*

Stages in the instructional cycle for L2 speaking development	Developmental objectives for speaking
1. Focus learners' attention on speaking.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop metacognitive awareness about L2 speaking.</li> <li>• Self-regulate performance and overall development.</li> </ul>
2. Provide input and / or guide planning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acquire appropriate vocabulary and accurate language form relevant to speaking needs.</li> <li>• Understand social and linguistic conventions of speech and speakers' roles and relationships for particular contexts.</li> <li>• Produce a wide range of utterances to express meaning more exactly.</li> </ul>
3. Conduct speaking tasks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learn a range of core speaking skills.</li> <li>• Develop fluency in expression of meaning.</li> </ul>
4. Focus on language / discourse / skills / strategies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acquire appropriate vocabulary and accurate language form relevant to speaking needs.</li> <li>• Understand social and linguistic conventions of speech for particular contexts.</li> <li>• Learn a range of core speaking skills.</li> <li>• Employ appropriate oral-communication strategies.</li> </ul>
5. Repeat speaking tasks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learn a wide range of core speaking skills.</li> <li>• Produce a wide range of utterances to express meaning more precisely.</li> <li>• Develop fluency in expression of meaning.</li> <li>• Employ appropriate oral communication strategies.</li> </ul>
6. Direct learners' reflection on learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-regulate performance and overall development.</li> </ul>
7. Facilitate feedback on learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop metacognitive awareness about L2 speaking.</li> </ul>

**Thinking about your experiences in learning to speak a second language**

It is important that you spend some time thinking about your own learning processes. It will help you to have better control over how you learn to speak in another language. You will also gradually become less dependent on your teacher. To help you get started, here are some simple questions. Write short responses to each one.

1. When and how did you learn to speak English?
2. What is your main reason for learning to speak English?
3. What did you like most about learning to speak English? Was there anything you did not like?
4. Do you feel nervous or anxious when you speak English?
5. What kind of learning activities do you like for your speaking lessons?
6. What would you like your teachers to do to help you speak better English?
7. What do you think you can do by yourself to improve your speaking ability?
8. If you are usually quiet in class, what can you do to participate more actively?
9. How would you describe your speaking ability right now?
10. Can you list three things about your speaking that you would like to improve?

Figure 7.2: A learner's self-observation sheet on speaking development.

ENCOURAGING LEARNERS TO PLAN FOR OVERALL SPEAKING DEVELOPMENT

The learners are given different types of prompts to encourage them to think about the demands of learning to speak in a second language and how they can prepare themselves for it. This is best done at the beginning of a course or a unit of learning. Figure 7.2 is an example of a practical task that can be used to encourage learners to plan for overall speaking development at the start of a course or program. Very low-level students could be allowed to answer these questions in their native language.

The questions in Figure 7.2 can also be modified to help learners manage any negative emotions before they prepare to approach a specific speaking task.

PREPARING LEARNERS TO APPROACH A SPECIFIC SPEAKING TASK

The prompts used for this purpose focus on the speaking task that has been planned for the teaching cycle. Through responding to the prompts, learners prepare themselves by familiarizing themselves with the outcomes of the task and by considering strategies they need to complete it. The prompts can also be used to activate learners' knowledge about the demands of the task. Figure 7.3 is an example of how teachers can activate learners' prior knowledge for a speaking task in order to facilitate conceptualization and formulation in speech production (see Chapter 3 again).

### Thinking about the overall structure of a spoken text of genre

In the speaking task that you will be doing, you have to speak for about two minutes to your group members on one of the topics listed below. What would you say for each topic, and how would you organize your information differently for each one? Write out your points or ideas for each one clearly.

1. Explain the process of applying for a passport in your country.
2. Compare a place you like with another that you dislike.
3. Narrate your favorite childhood story.

Figure 7.3: Activating prior knowledge of genre for a speaking task.

Stage 1 may take anywhere from 10 minutes if completed individually, to 20–30 minutes if learners are asked to share their thoughts and observations with others. This stage could also be done before class as preparation for Stage 2 below, and other stages that will be conducted in class. For further discussions of activities for Stage 1, please refer to Chapter 11.

### Stage 2: Provide input and / or guide planning

Speaking in a second language can create a great deal of anxiety for language learners. Some learners also experience cognitive overload as they try to attend to content and language demands when they speak. For these reasons, it is useful to include a stage where the learners can receive some support for the speaking task that they are about to do, or where they can be given time to plan what they are going to say and how they are going to say it. The purposes of this preparation stage include:

1. Introducing or teaching new language.
2. Increasing the chances for restructuring, or reorganizing, learners' developing linguistic knowledge.
3. Mobilizing, or activating, learners' relatively new linguistic knowledge.
4. Recycling, or reactivating, learners' specific language items for the task.
5. Easing learners' processing load by allowing them to clarify ideas and content for the task.
6. Pushing learners to interpret tasks in more demanding ways and use language to express more complex meanings.

(Skehan 1998a: 137–139.)



By including this stage before the actual speaking task, teachers can scaffold learners as they prepare to meet the demands of the speaking task. Maybin, Mercer, and Steirer (1992: 188) explain the concept of scaffolding as:

Not just any assistance which helps [learners] accomplish a task. It is help which will enable [learners] to accomplish a task which they would not have been quite able to manage on their own, and it is help which is intended to bring [learners] closer to a state of competence which will enable them eventually to complete such a task on their own.

One type of scaffolding that can be used in speaking tasks is vocabulary support, which can reduce learners' cognitive load so that they can direct more attention to using their available grammatical resources for completing the task (Willis 1994). Other forms of support include content, or information, that learners need to complete a task effectively. For example, if a speaking task requires learners to talk about their favorite authors, teachers can give the learners some time to find out more about the authors by reading up about them in the library or by consulting Internet sources. Learning more about factual details needed to accomplish a task is also a way in which learners can learn new vocabulary in a contextualized manner, and use it in their speech. Teachers can also scaffold learning by talking about their own favorite authors before the students do their task. In addition, teachers can explain how they themselves have prepared for this task. By modeling how a competent speaker accomplishes the task, teachers will show, in tangible ways, how the learners can work towards accomplishing their tasks.

Another type of activity in Stage 2 involves the learners in doing some planning for themselves. Teachers can guide them by identifying features of the speaking-practice task that may be challenging for them. If learners are going to participate in a dialogue or a discussion task, they can consider communication strategies that they can use if they meet with problems during the interaction. Planning is usually needed for complex, rather than simple, tasks. For example, if learners are to carry out a simple information-gap activity, such as completing a text by filling in the blanks with words, they may need nothing more than to review the key phrases to use when asking for clarification and repetition. If, on the other hand, they have to plan a short formal talk to explain a procedure (a genre that has the purpose of giving instructions), or a discussion (a genre that has the purpose of giving both sides of an argument), they will need time to plan the contents and the language (see Figures 7.4 and 7.5 as examples). Depending on the particular group of students, the teacher may need to circulate and help them come up with specific language they may wish to jot down.

CHAPTER 7  
TEACHING SPEAKING

### Explaining a procedure or process: planning and rehearsing

#### Part 1: Guidelines to help you prepare for the task

1. Identify a topic you are interested in or know quite a lot about (e.g., how to make your favorite fruit salad).
2. Write the main points you want to cover in the space provided below:
  - a. \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. \_\_\_\_\_
3. Write down a phrase or an expression you would use to show that you will be moving from Point A to Point B, and then on to Point C.
  - a. } \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. } \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. } \_\_\_\_\_

#### Part 2: Rehearsal (optional)

Practice giving the explanation. Use the points you have made, and link your ideas by using the signposting words you have just identified. Don't write down everything you want to say, so that you can practice bringing in different points!

Figure 7.4: A pre-task planning guide for giving a talk

### Planning for discussion: content and participation

In this lesson, you will be discussing *The best city in the world to live in*. The following guiding questions are meant to help you plan what you can say during the discussion. Write down your answers after each question.

1. Which country will you choose? Jot down three reasons for your choice.
   
\_\_\_\_\_
   
\_\_\_\_\_
   
\_\_\_\_\_
2. When you are giving your reasons, what phrases or expressions will be useful to help you present your views?
   
\_\_\_\_\_
   
\_\_\_\_\_
   
\_\_\_\_\_
3. What would you say to members in your group if they . . . ?
  - a. Disagree with you
  - b. Support your views
  - c. Do not explain themselves clearly
  - d. Make a good point

Figure 7.5: A pre-task planning guide for participating in a discussion.



Chapter 11 gives further suggestions on how teachers can help students prepare for a task.

**Discuss it**

How useful is planning time? What benefits do teachers and learners experience? What challenges and problems should teachers watch out for? Can anything be done to address these problems in advance?

***Stage 3: Conduct speaking tasks***

The purpose of this stage is to provide learners with context where they can practice speaking through a communication task. The task should encourage the learners to express their meaning with whatever linguistic knowledge, skills, and strategies they have. In other words, this stage of the cycle encourages learners to develop fluency of expression without having to pay too much attention to accuracy of form. Their efforts are also made less demanding by the teacher-guided or individual pre-task planning that has taken place in Stage 2.

Speaking tasks typically involve learners in some pair or group interaction. One of the basic principles for planning these kinds of activity is that, in order to encourage learners to use the target language, we must create situations in which they experience a communicative need and personal motivation to talk to one another. These situations are often in the form of pair or group tasks where information or opinion gaps exist among the various participants in the interaction (see Chapter 9 for examples of such tasks). This sets the stage for oral communication to take place. Equally useful speaking tasks include discussions and problem-solving tasks, as well as talks or other kinds of extended discourse where one person does most of the talking (see also Chapter 5 and Chapter 9).

***Stage 4: Focus on language / skills / strategies***

A limitation of many lessons on speaking is the lack of attention given to the explicit teaching of relevant language, skills, and strategies that contribute to effective speaking. In fact, it is not unusual to find speaking lessons that consist of only two of the seven stages proposed in the teaching-speaking cycle covered in Figure 7.1. For example, teachers may provide some input (Stage 2), which is followed by students working on a fluency-oriented task (Stage 3), but that is where the activity stops. In some coursebooks, these are

sometimes referred to as the pre-speaking activity and the speaking activity respectively. Alternatively, we may find only the speaking activity (Stage 3), which may or may not be related to other parts of the chapter or unit of work. For example, in a unit that has recycling as a theme, students may be given a situation as follows: "You are members of the 'Go Green Society' in your college. Discuss, in your group, how you can encourage the students in your college to recycle and reuse their stationery and clothing." Thus, while language learners may be given an opportunity to practice speaking, there is no scaffolding to help them complete the activity. The "learning" often ends when the task is completed, and the outcomes are simply shared with the rest of the class. More importantly, there is no follow-up or feedback that helps learners develop explicitly their knowledge of the language, skills, and strategies implied in the task.

Stage 4 of the cycle is aimed at addressing this limitation by creating opportunities for learners to improve language accuracy, as well as enhancing their effective use of skills and strategies. In this stage, we draw learners' attention to selected "parts" of the fluency task they have completed. The parts include language features such as pronunciation, grammar, and text structures, as well as vocabulary. Many of the features highlighted in Chapters 4 and 5 can be examined more closely by learners at this stage. For example, they can focus their attention on one of the following: the structure of a genre, discourse markers, or intonation features – thereby allowing them to see how these areas are important for performing the speech functions needed for the task in Stage 3. To focus on these areas, learners can be asked to examine a transcript of the speech of a competent speaker performing the task and to identify language features such as discourse markers used to signal the different "moves" in the text. This activity can help learners see how a particular type of discourse is organized and can help them understand the function of grammar and vocabulary in achieving coherence. More on what can be done at Stage 4 will be discussed in Chapter 10.

### *Stage 5: Repeat speaking task*

At this stage, learners carry out the speaking task of Stage 3 again. The difference between Stage 3 and Stage 5 is that learners have had a chance to analyze and practice selected language items or skills during Stage 4, and, therefore, have been able to apply this knowledge in order to enhance their performance. Repetitions could be carried out in various ways. Bygate (2005) recommends repeating parts of the original task or repeating the entire task, which can be carried out by having students change groups or



partners. Alternatively, teachers could introduce a new task that is similar to the one the learners have just done. For example, instead of the topic used in Figure 7.5 above, learners could be asked to give instructions about a topic of their own choice. Thus, they would be rehearsing a procedure genre again, but, this time, with a new focus.

The benefits of task repetition have been highlighted in the previous chapter. Critically, since the task has already been carried out at least once in Stage 3, task repetition, because of reduced cognitive load and the benefit of "rehearsal," can facilitate automaticity in combining various types of linguistic knowledge and skills. Besides the obvious cognitive advantage, task repetition also enhances learner affect. By allowing learners to repeat a task, we offer them an opportunity to build on earlier attempts where communication may not have been completely effective. Being able to revise performance in this way can lead to greater confidence. Because learners have had at least one attempt at a task, they have greater awareness of what to expect and what is expected of them. Getting a second chance to do something right can be immensely motivating for many learners. For further discussions of activities for Stage 5, please refer to Chapter 10.

#### **Try it**

Select a speaking activity from a coursebook, and carry it out with another colleague. Record your own speech production. Carry out the same activity again a day later, and record yourself. Do you notice any differences in the way you performed in terms of content, fluency, and accuracy? Explain what the differences are, and why you think they exist.

#### ***Stage 6: Direct learners' reflection on learning***

The activities in the cycle continue with learners' reflections on their learning experiences. Unlike Stage 1, which directs learners' attention to the task of L2 speaking, Stage 6 encourages learners to self-regulate their learning through monitoring and evaluating what they have learned from the preceding stages. It is also an opportunity for learners to consolidate their new knowledge about language, skills, and strategy use. Reflection need not always be an individual effort. Teachers can encourage learners to think about their learning in pairs, or even in small groups. Individual and group reflection often has a cathartic effect on learners who may be feeling stressed and anxious, and think that they are the only ones feeling that way.



Learners' reflection should be guided by different types of metacognitive knowledge, described in the methodological framework in Chapter 6 and Chapter 11. Reflection can focus on one or more of the following points:

- Demands of the speaking tasks that learners have become aware of.
- The strategies that are useful for meeting the demands of the task.
- Learners' informal assessment of their capabilities and performance.
- Areas of their performance that show improvement.
- Areas to be further improved.
- Plans for improving specific areas.

Learners could also be encouraged to draw on their experiences and to consider how they could prepare themselves for future tasks of a similar nature, whether these tasks are in the classroom or in communicative contexts outside the classroom. Figure 7.6 gives an example of the general prompts that can be used for Stage 6. These prompts can be given to learners as handouts to complete. Alternatively, they can be given to learners as headings to be used in their journals. Teachers can also encourage students

Evaluating my speaking performance	Your teacher's / classmate's response
1. In this week's lessons, I learned to do the following in spoken English: _____ _____ _____	
2. I also learned to use the following useful expressions that can help me speak more effectively: _____ _____ _____	
3. This is how I feel about my learning this week: a. I am confident that I can do this again. (    ) b. I am not very confident that I can do this again. (    ) c. I am still unsure about what I have to say and do in such a situation. (    ) d. I still feel anxious about speaking. (    ) e. I feel less anxious about speaking. (    )	
<i>Put a check (✓) next to the sentence that best describes how you feel right now.</i>	

Figure 7.6: Prompts for learner reflection on learning.

to start a blog to express their thoughts about their experiences in learning to speak a second or foreign language. The use of audio blogs is becoming popular, too, and can be an effective way of combining speech production with reflection (Tan & Tan 2010). This stage of the teaching-speaking cycle is individual work and can be completed at home or in class.

### ***Stage 7: Facilitate feedback on learning***

In this final stage of the teaching-speaking cycle, the teacher provides learners with important feedback on their performance in earlier stages of the cycle. In large classes, it is often impossible to monitor student learning and give immediate feedback to every student. However, as students have had to record their thoughts in Stage 6, it is now possible to offer some personal feedback based on what individual learners say or write about their own learning experiences. This feedback can take many forms, and the teacher does not always have to be the one giving it. Learners can also be guided on how to give one another peer feedback. Generally, feedback can take the form of:

- Comments or grades about an individual student's skills and performance from observation sheets used during the speaking task.
- Exchange of written individual learner reflections and comments on each other's progress and achievements.
- Consolidated comments from the teacher, based on written reflections from the class.
- Written comments in students' journal.
- Comments and informal assessment in learner blogs.

The prompts given in Figure 7.6 can be printed and given to learners at the end of every cycle. The column on the right allows you to write comments there. Students can also be asked to comment on one another's reflections. The feedback given can also be based on the students' performance in a spoken task that the teacher has been able to observe. See Chapter 12 for further discussions about feedback in assessment.

### **Planning with the teaching-speaking cycle**

The teaching-speaking cycle is not intended to be conducted and completed in one or even two lessons. It is important, therefore, that teachers pace each stage appropriately and not rush through any one of the stages. For teachers who are familiar with the concept of a unit of work for syllabus

Level: Pre-intermediate. Topic: Introductions and talking about oneself. Speaking skills: Introduce oneself and others formally and informally. Respond to introductions. Describe personal preferences. Language focus: Formulaic expressions for making and responding to introductions. Strategies: Ask for clarifications and repetitions. Duration: 180 minutes (including time for introduction and closure of lessons).			
Stage	Activities	Estimated time	Resources
<b>1. Focus learners' attention on speaking.</b>	Students write short responses to questions about learning to speak in English.  (Teacher tells the students that he / she will collect the self-observation notes at the end of the unit of work and will read the notes before returning them.)	10 minutes	Self-observation sheet / prompts; e.g., Figure 7.2.
<b>2. Give input and guide planning.</b>	Students prepare: • A short introduction of themselves. • Some useful phrases for introducing others.	10 minutes	• A pre-task planning guide; e.g., Figure 7.4. • A list of vocabulary items based on the prompts.
<b>3. Conduct speaking task.</b>	a. Students introduce themselves to each other in pairs. b. Next, they ask each other the questions they prepared.	20 minutes	Students own notes based on Stage 2.
<b>4. Focus on language / skills / strategies.</b>	a. Students listen to an audio recording or watch a video recording of different people: • Making self-introductions. • Introducing one person to another. b. They identify and write down expressions that are used for making introductions and responding to introductions. c. Students listen again with the help of the transcript, highlighting the relevant expressions when they hear them. d. Teacher discusses with students the differences between formal and informal registers when making and responding to introductions, and how these are signaled by some formulaic expressions. e. Students listen to / watch the recording again. This time, they are asked to observe any gestures or actions and routines that accompany some of the introductions.	40 minutes	• A recording by the teacher or from another course book. • Transcripts of the recording.  Examples of expressions that can be highlighted are: "Hi, my name is Z." "Let me introduce you to Y." "Meet my friend, X." "It's my pleasure to introduce X." "Nice to meet you, X."

Figure 7.7: Planning a unit of work using seven stages of the teaching-speaking cycle.

(continued)



Stage	Activities	Estimated time	Resources
5. Repeat speaking task.	a. Students in their pairs are matched with another pair. One person in the pair introduces himself / herself briefly before introducing his / her partner to the other pair. b. Students do an informal interview activity to meet other members of the class. c. Selected students are asked to use the information they obtained from the activity to introduce a classmate to their teacher formally. (To maximize learner talk-time in a large class, this can be done in groups instead, with selected students taking the role of the teacher.)	50 minutes	An adaptation of the prompts in Stage 2.
6. Direct learners' reflection on learning.	a. Students compare the way introductions are made in English and their first language. b. They compare their observations with a partner's. c. Students refer to their responses to prompts in Stage 1 of this chart. They change and add what they have written. d. Teacher collects the reflection sheets to find out more about the students.	20 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reflection sheets</li> <li>• Reflection prompts; e.g. Figure 7.6. Figure 7.2 used in Stage 1 can also be modified for this purpose.</li> </ul>
7. Facilitate feedback on learning.	Teacher reads and writes comments on the reflection sheets before returning them to the learners. Students consider how their learning can be transferred to a new task in another unit of work / series of lessons.		Some prompts for Stage 1 that build on the learners' experience in the previous teaching-speaking cycle.

Figure 7.7: Planning a unit of work using seven stages of the teaching-speaking cycle.

planning, it will be useful to think of a cycle as consisting of a series of lessons based on a theme. Depending on the duration of each lesson in the timetable, the various stages of the cycle may spread over an entire week or less. Teachers can use the sequence in the cycle to focus systematically on planning each stage, and on developing tasks and materials. Teachers who teach from prescribed textbooks can also benefit from the principle of organizing learning activities in the cycle by including additional materials on the same topic and purposely repeating some of the activities. Figure 7.7 above shows how teachers can plan a unit of work. This planning can be conducted at the start of a speaking or general language course.

## Summary

This chapter presented a model for sequencing and conducting learning activities to develop second language speaking in a holistic manner. The teaching-speaking cycle translates theoretical and pedagogical principles from the methodological framework and can guide teachers in planning activities that engage learners at the cognitive and affective level. The cycle consists of seven stages of classroom procedures. It can be used for planning individual units of work in a speaking course or for adapting materials you are already working with. It demonstrates how various types of metacognitive-awareness, fluency, language, and skills-training activities can be combined to optimize learning opportunities. The cycle emphasizes the following:

1. The teaching of speaking should foreground the respective roles played by the teacher, the learner, and the materials.
2. The main aim of speaking tasks is to help students develop the fluency of expert speakers, where meaning is communicated with few hesitations and in a manner that is appropriate for the social purpose of the message. This is achieved through the use of:
  - Accurate language and discourse routines.
  - Appropriate speech enabling skills.
  - Effective communication strategies.
3. Learners' speaking performance can be enhanced through pre-task planning and task repetition, as these activities can reduce cognitive load during speech processing.
4. Learning involves noticing key information and storing it in long term memory. Activities that focus learners' attention on language, skills, and strategies are, therefore, an important part of teaching speaking.
5. Activities that help learners develop metacognitive knowledge and self-regulation of their speaking and learning processes are also needed to address affective and other cognitive demands of learning to speak a second or foreign language.

By planning lessons according to the stages in the teaching-speaking cycle, teachers can address all these concerns and provide valuable scaffolding for learners as they engage in speaking tasks. Learners will not only practice expressing meaning using their existing language resources, but they will also receive timely input and guidance for improving their performance. In the next chapter, a cycle that takes the *product* – the genre or text – as a starting point will also be presented.

### *Group-learning tasks*

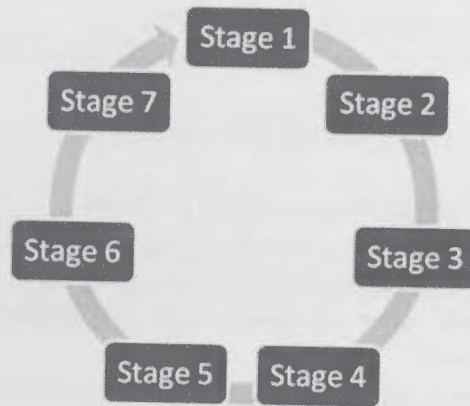
1. Work in pairs to interview some language teachers. Find out from them how they plan and conduct their speaking lessons. In particular, find out how many of these teachers do the following:
  - a. Include the explicit teaching of language, skills, and strategies for speaking.
  - b. Use activities for raising their students' awareness about learning to speak.
  - c. Repeat speaking tasks with the same group of students.
2. Do this task if you have access to a group of language learners. Adapt a speaking activity from a textbook by including some pre-task planning by the students. After you have conducted this activity, reflect on the following points:
  - a. How long was the planning time? Why do you think this amount of time is suitable?
  - b. What was the purpose of the planning activity?
  - c. Did you guide your students in the way they should use their planning time, or did you allow your students to use the time in any way they liked?
  - d. Did pre-task planning have any apparent effect on your students' spoken-language performance and overall behavior during the task?

Interview a small number of students to find out how they used their planning time and whether or not they think pre-task planning is useful.

3. Select one set of activities for speaking from a coursebook. Suggest how you would modify these activities to incorporate the stages in the teaching-speaking cycle. To help you get started, here are some points to consider:
  - a. Do the activities support learners' awareness of their speaking development and provide adequate support for the demands of the speaking task? Can you suggest an activity that would offer this support if there is none?
  - b. What kinds of preparation, if any, are learners expected to do before carrying out the main speaking task?
  - c. Identify one or two language features that can improve your students' spoken performance during this activity. What techniques would you use to teach the language feature(s) you've selected?
  - d. How can the students be asked to repeat the main speaking task, either in parts or in its entirety?



Work with a colleague to label the stages in the teaching-speaking cycle below. Then present your ideas to other course participants using the stages in the teaching-speaking cycle as a template.



### Further reading

- Willis, D. (2004) Towards a new methodology, *English Teaching Professional*, 33, 4–6.
- Richards, J. C. (2006) Materials development and research – making the connection, *RELC Journal*, 37 (1), 5–26.
- Riggenbach, H. (1999) Discourse analysis in the language classroom, Vol. 1: *The Spoken Language*, Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press.
- Van den Brandon, K. (2012) Task-based language education, In A. Burns and J. C. Richards (eds.) *The Cambridge Guide to Pedagogy and Practice in Second Language Teaching*, New York: Cambridge University Press.