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CHAPTER 15

PRINCIPLED ECLECTICISM & THE HOLISTIC APPROACH TO LANGUAGE TEACHING AND LEARNING

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- ▶ Historical Perspectives on Principled Eclecticism
- ▶ Principles of Principled Eclecticism
- ▶ Learner Outcomes (What does the research say?)
- ▶ Suggestions for Practice and Further Study
- ▶ Sample Lesson Plan
- ▶ References
- ▶ Author Bios

Learning Goals

This chapter will focus on the theoretical principles and practical aspects of the principled eclectic approach. At the end of this chapter, readers will be able to:

1. Explain the development of principled eclecticism and its move “beyond methods;”
2. Describe the general elements of a principled eclectic approach;
3. Discuss instructional practices in relation to lesson procedure, techniques, setting and roles of the teacher and students;
4. Debate the merits of the approach in relation to implementation in a tefl context;
5. Design a lesson plan based on principled eclecticism’s teaching principles and techniques.

“[T]he postmethod learner is an autonomous learner...”

Dr. B. Kumaravadivelu

A Historical Perspective on Principled Eclecticism

Throughout this book, we have explored a number of approaches to teaching English as a foreign language. Some of these developed as so-called “designer methods,” including *The Silent Way*, *Total Physical Response*, *Community Language Learning*, and *(De) Suggestopedia*. As you have read, each of these designer teaching methods drew on specific beliefs about theories of learning, theories of language, and theories of language acquisition. As these and other methods took root in classrooms, some teachers committed fully to the method that spoke most clearly to them, carrying out the instructional strategies and learning designs with fidelity. Other teachers turned increasingly to their students,

Focus on the Learner:

Together with a partner, create a profile of students who are (or will be) in your class. Consider the following differences amongst the students:

- reasons for learning English (personal/professional goals);
- orality and literacy in other languages;
- experiences with other cultures;
- opportunities to use and interact with English in authentic settings;
- preferred communication styles;
- cultural norms for learning and engaging with others;
- knowledge about and interest in specific topics.

How can similarities and differences amongst the students inform your instructional choices? What shared strengths do you see? What different needs might there be? What are some topics and goals that you may consider including?

searching for proof that the methods worked, and found ways to pick and choose elements of multiple methods to increase student engagement, language use, and communicative capacity.

Until the early 1990s, the field of language teaching continued to be flooded with a vast range of methods, each requiring a full commitment to their philosophies of learning and language acquisition. Even today, there are variations of these methods that are embraced by language learning programs or individual teachers (e.g., TPRS). However, these methods are often incapable of providing effective learning environments for the great diversity of language learning contexts and students learning English across the globe (Adamson, 2004). At this time, work by Prabhu (1990) and Kumaravadivelu (1994) began to push back against the adherence to single methods in language teaching and learning, ushering in the *postmethod era* and the introduction of *postmethod pedagogy*. In 1994, Kumaravadivelu published a pivotal paper for the field, calling for the embrace of a “postmethod condition.” He argued that it was time for language teachers to regain their capacity as instructional decision makers for their students’ learning and for learners of English to be given the opportunity to become autonomous learners. This could be done, he claimed, by recognizing and using a range of approaches and methods to language learning. He called on teachers to develop broader bases of knowledge to include stages of second/foreign language acquisition; understandings of students’ experiences, goals, and learning and communication styles; and a range of approaches and principles that can be employed to support optimal student language learning and use.

Reflective Activity

Choose four of the methods you have learned about throughout this book. Create and fill out an overview chart with the following information:

Approach	Theory of Learning	Theory of Language	Key Teaching Methods
...
...

In small groups, gather your thoughts on the strengths and weaknesses of each approach, keeping a variety of learners and lesson foci in mind. When and for whom might elements of the different approaches be particularly useful?

Resistance to postmethod *eclecticism* came most commonly as a concern over the perceived ineffectiveness of a teacher randomly choosing bits and pieces of theories, methods, and approaches and applying them at random (Whittlesea & Wright, 1997). One quote often attributed to Henry Widdowson (best known for his development of Communicative Language Learning) speaks directly to these concerns: “If you say you are eclectic but cannot state the principles of your eclecticism, you are not eclectic, merely confused” (Lochana & Deb, 2006). From these concerns, the concept of *principled eclecticism* has arisen. In short, this promotes the integration

of eclecticism into classrooms and other language learning environments coupled with intentional decision-making, rooted in theoretical understandings of language acquisition, concepts of cognitive and social-emotional development, and understanding of motivating factors for learner investment and engagement (Kumaravadivelu, 2001; 2002; 2003; Manzo & Manzo, 1997; Mellow, 2002; Morrone & Tarr, 2005; Panggabean, 2012).

As postmethod pedagogies of principled eclecticism have become more common, they have been taken up as *holistic learning and assessment*, *differentiated learning and assessment*, and *student-centered engagement*, to name a few. Increased usage of principled eclecticism requires teachers to embrace professionalism that is intentional in decision-making with students in mind and capable of defending pedagogical choices by relying on their professional training and theoretical grounding. Still, tensions exist, such as pressures for teachers to assume prescribed roles in the classroom and cultural mismatches.

Principles of Principled Eclecticism

Ultimately, the aim of principled eclecticism is to intentionally design learning topics, tasks, and environments that promote efficient development of the second or foreign language across all four modalities (listening, speaking, reading, and writing). Promoters of postmethod pedagogies seek balanced opportunities for development of receptive (listening and reading) and productive (speaking and writing) language skills and are mindful of seeking out and creating authentic texts and tasks for learners to engage in meaningful language, seeing errors and corrective feedback as opportunities for focused language instruction. For teachers utilizing principled eclecticism, language acquisition inhabits a space where risk-taking and mistakes are supported (and often modeled), informal assessment of learning occurs on a regular basis and informs next-steps in lesson planning, and goals for success remain student-driven. Within this framework, the three main signifiers of the principled eclectic practitioner can be considered as follows:

- as a promoter of **professional teacher autonomy** by proving s/he is intentional in instructional and assessment choices, regardless of prescribed curriculum, and is able to back up those choices by referring to current theories of learning and language acquisition vis-à-vis students’ needs/goals;
- as an enactor of **principled and pragmatic eclecticism** which is focused on students’ experiences, strengths, needs, and cultures;

Reflect on ... Action

Think about your own teaching, or a teacher who embodied one or more of these three signifiers. Write or explain to a classmate an example of what each looks like in action:

- **professional & autonomous;**
- **intentionally student-focused;**
- **instructional variety.**

- as a seeker of **alternatives to a single method**, seeing it as the teacher's responsibility to create environments and tasks that facilitate authentic and meaningful language use.

Teacher Autonomy: Teacher Professionalism

Principled eclecticism places a great deal of focus on the autonomy and assumed professionalism of the language teacher. Of course, this professionalism can only be assumed if it is first proven on the part of the teacher. This role of professionalism and earned autonomy goes beyond qualification on the basis of language skill or pedagogical knowledge alone. Postmethod pedagogical professionalism moves the power of instruction and assessment decisions out of the hands of textbooks and top-down curriculum and into the hands of the capable, well-informed teacher.

Reflect on Professionalism

What are some of the pressures or difficulties English teachers come up against in their work that make it difficult to be treated as a skilled professional?

Think about the skills, knowledge, and attitudes you need to be able to act with autonomy as a professional language teacher.

Set three goals you must work towards to strengthen your ability to do this. For each goal, create two or three shorter-term benchmarks you can work towards to achieve this.

By embodying the role of a trusted professional, teachers show their ability to develop as critical and reflective practitioners of both their own and their colleagues' teaching. They are able to provide evidence for their pedagogical choices and are able to turn to student work and language production to closely analyze and assess the success of their instructional choices towards their students' language acquisition. Furthermore, they seek to question their own choices and find evidence that may support continuing with a certain approach, adapting instruction, providing alternative supports or

extensions for students on both ends of the achievement spectrum. One way this can be seen is through teachers designing and carrying out classroom *action research*, followed by sharing their deepening understandings with colleagues (for more on action research, see Mertler, 2008).

Learner Autonomy: Learner-focused

One area many teachers, both novice and experienced, struggle with is handing the responsibility of learning over to their students. One of the signifiers of principled eclecticism is the ability to create learner-focused lessons that shift a sense of autonomy of learning onto the student. The goal is for students to be invested in their learning and to identify with the tasks and outcomes designed by their teacher (Peirce, 1995). By utilizing an eclectic range of real-world texts and designing authentic, meaningful tasks that speak to students' experiences, goals, and language strengths and needs, learners embody language and learning objectives. When students take responsibility for their own learning, seek clarification and negotiate meaning and deeper understandings independently, and experience decreased inhibition to use

the language, this is called *learner autonomy*. True learner-focused lessons draw the teacher out of the spotlight and reconstruct their role into that of a facilitator, monitoring learning, providing instruction and correction as needed, and designing opportunities for both inductive and deductive learning (Mellow, 2002). Learner-focused lessons not only access higher-order thinking and language skills through the use of problem-solving, inquiry, synthesis of ideas, and inference (for more on Bloom's taxonomy, see Anderson, Krathwohl, & Bloom, 2005; Krathwohl, 2002); they also utilize students' background knowledge, experience, and cultures as foundational elements of instruction, interaction, and assessment.

Reflect on ... Learner Autonomy

Think about your preferences as a learner and your developing preferences as a teacher. What aspects of creating learner-focused lessons are you most interested in exploring more? What aspects do you have concerns about? In a small group, brainstorm ideas about ways you can:

- build autonomy among your students;
- get to know your students' varying backgrounds, cultures, and interests;
- facilitate learner-centered tasks and interactions that allow students to help each other.

Intentional Choices: Macro-strategies

When we think about creating and supporting teacher and learner autonomy, the principle that ties these two together is that of informed instructional and assessment choices. Remembering Widdowson's commentary on eclecticism – that, without the ability to name and support your choices, eclecticism is merely confusion – perhaps the most important principle of postmethod pedagogy is *intentionality*. As many language teachers have discovered, however, there are countless choices to make on a daily basis. To be intentional about each one can be overwhelming. Current technology provides access to an even greater array of information and curricula promising to lead to fast and effective language acquisition. Principled eclecticism requires teachers to sift through existing theories, instructional practices, methods, and supports to find what's best for their students within the parameters of specific language and lesson goals. One of the tenets of postmethod pedagogy is the need for teachers to assess their instructional choices based on the effect they have on student language learning.

This *principled pragmatism* of using classroom data to inform intentional choices draws from Widdowson's (1990) pedagogical belief in the need for the practice teaching to inform relationships and connections between theories of learning and effectiveness with individual students. Prabhu (1990) furthered this by stating that teachers' own *sense of plausibility* (in part, their sense of autonomy) relies on an understanding of their instructional choices based on their students' responses to them. "Teachers need to operate with some personal conceptualization of how their teaching leads to desired learning – with a notion of causation that has a measure of

credibility for them” (p. 172).

As we can see, the three main signifiers of principled eclecticism are tightly intertwined. As such, Kumaravadivelu (1994, 2002) suggested a framework of what he called *macro-strategies*. These ten macro-strategies are a suggested skeleton around which language teachers could construct their lessons and assessments beyond the demands of any single method. While variations exist, they continue to be a strong framework for pedagogical decision-making. These macro-strategies are meant

to provide broad guidelines to help language teachers formulate micro-strategies that speak to the needs of the students in their classrooms and align to teacher personality. The intention is to provide flexibility, as opposed to constraining language instruction to a single path. It may be helpful to think of Kumaravadivelu’s framework as more of a mindset or philosophy of teaching. With this in mind, there is a necessity for the principled eclecticism practitioner to have reason and knowledge of students and language learning theory to support micro-strategy choices. Let’s look more closely at what these macro-strategies mean.

10 Macro-strategies for Language Instruction:

Instruction:

- o Maximize learning opportunities
- o Facilitate negotiated interaction
- o Minimize perceptual mismatches
- o Activate intuitive heuristics
- o Foster language awareness
- o Contextualize linguistic input
- o Integrate language skills
- o Promote learner autonomy
- o Raise cultural consciousness
- o Ensure social relevance

Maximize learning opportunities

- Co-construct learning such that learner input and background knowledge inform unit content and task design (e.g., language foci, vocabulary, authentic texts and tasks, corrective feedback).
- Differentiate lessons using extensions and scaffolds that challenge students with varying proficiencies in each of the four modalities.
- Revise your syllabus if necessary based on diagnostic and formative assessments of students’ strengths, needs, and goals.
- Use texts for integrated language instruction (e.g., fluency tasks to access background knowledge, accuracy tasks to draw and build relevant vocabulary, focused reading tasks for comprehension and making inferences, writing or presentation extension that allows learners to use language to synthesize or problem-solve around the text’s central themes).

Facilitate negotiated interaction

- Create learner-learner and learner-teacher interactions that are meaningful and use authentic language.
- Have learner-initiated discussions.
- Focus on higher-level thinking for higher-level language (e.g. clarifying, confirming, checking for understanding, making requests, correcting and repairing, reacting, turn-taking).
- Allow lower proficiency students to be “expert” to create authentic higher-level language interactions.

Minimize perceptual mismatches

- Be responsive and respectful to different communication styles (personal/cultural).
- Consider how a student’s “resistance” is read and motivated. Is it really resistance? What is causing it?
- Be aware that intended messages and received messages may not be the same (see also, Kumaravadivelu, 1991).

Activate intuitive heuristics

- Choose texts that are authentic and connected to learners’ lives.
- Design tasks that engage learners with real-world language use.
- Choose language foci and vocabulary based on what is needed for these authentic texts and tasks.
- Design backwards (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005). What do you want the students to do at the end of the lesson/unit? What language do they need to do this?

Contextualize linguistic input

- Design high-interest extended interaction tasks and teach language needed to support success.
- Connect tasks and texts to a larger concept, theme or goal.
- Teach all aspects of language, not just vocabulary and grammar (e.g., discourse, pragmatics, semantics).
- Create higher-order thinking language use scenarios (e.g., role-playing, problem-solving and simulations).

Integrate language skills

- Use combinations of all four language modalities in tasks. Do not focus solely on listening, speaking, reading and writing.
- Collaborate (learner-learner, learner-teacher) to construct meaning.

Raise cultural consciousness

- Understand culture as multiple ways of being and thinking.
- View language and culture as connected (e.g., discourse, pragmatics).
- Incorporate culturally relevant topics and teaching.
- Integrate the goals of multilingualism and heritage language maintenance in your teaching practice and learning environments.
- Teach and practice intercultural awareness.
- Turn to students and others for cultural input. Learn more about students' and other speakers' funds of knowledge (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992) and let these play out in language, task, and content planning.

Ensure social relevance

- Focus on maintaining multilingualism and bilingualism in students. English is not meant to take the place of home or heritage languages. Access other language competencies, including code-switching, to support the acquisition of English.
- Know students' goals for learning English and what their opportunities to use the language are outside of the classroom. How does this affect the varieties of English, discourse styles, pragmatic elements, etc. that will be taught and used most prevalently in the classroom?
- Keep learners' goals in mind when finding texts and designing tasks and units. What are their communicative and intercultural competence needs? What functional language is most important?
- Be aware of larger social and political influences on students' schooling and English acquisition (e.g., who has access to English classes).

Reflect on ... Macro-strategies

Review the descriptions of Kumaravadivelu's macro-strategies for language instruction. Write a (+) next to those you feel you understand, a (++) next to those you feel comfortable implementing in your teaching practice, and a (!) next to those you need to seek out more resources for before understanding or incorporating them.

Tensions in the Field

As an increasing number of educators adopt the tenets of principled eclecticism in a variety of English as a foreign and second language settings, pressure to implement the eclectic macro-strategies (or some adaptation of them) have increased as well. A quick online search will likely lead you to a number of websites, blogs, and videos of teachers and students using principled eclecticism with success and touting its many virtues for building communicative competence and motivating learners. Still, in recent years, some teachers and researchers have begun to voice concerns about its widespread implementation and the perception that, if implemented mindfully, it can be "fail-proof" in supporting learners' English acquisition.

Conflicting Expectations?

One factor that may contribute to principled eclecticism's varied success is the ability of the teacher to put the philosophy into practice. You will recall that one of the three signifiers of a functioning postmethod pedagogy is a teaching and learning environment that promotes *professional teacher autonomy*. Perhaps because of this autonomy and professionalism, the macro-strategies of principled eclecticism may be quite appealing and energizing to the classroom. However, as Khatib and Fat'hi (2012) argue, there may be too many systemic constraints placed on teacher to truly promote its effective implementation. Mandated testing, pressure to follow a textbook as the sole and linear curriculum, even top-down standards of language or content benchmarks can contribute to the feeling that eclectic strategies are doomed to fail or be edged out of the learning environment. One response to this argument is for the principled eclectic instructor to rely on their understanding of learning and language acquisition theories alongside proof of student engagement and language development to support their practice. Bell (2003) posits that the truly intentional teacher knows how to choose from traditional or designer methods and that, in fact, a method chosen with the learners in mind can go far in supporting successful learning. Bell asks the question you may have asked yourself: Are "methods" and postmethod "strategies" really so different?

What do you think?

Consider Bell's (2003) question here. What is your response and why? Now, read his argument. Where do you and your classmates stand?

Cultural Mismatch?

A number of studies (Adi, 2012; Gao, 2011; Liu, 2004; Nakata, 2011; Pennycook, 2006; Tsuda & Nakata, 2013; Yu, 2013) have drawn attention to the issue of cultural mismatch when applying the principles of eclecticism, which were developed largely in the North American and Western European context, to English language teaching globally.

For example, Nakata (2011) and his colleague (Tsuda & Nakata, 2013) describe potentially unique complexities present in both teachers and students in Japanese

EFL classes in terms of readiness for promoting and taking on learner autonomy. Work by Liu (2004) claims that certain cultural norms may require more traditional methods-based teaching, particularly when considering English language teaching in some Asian contexts.

One recent study by Yu (2013) points to the Chinese cultural literacy tradition of learning texts by heart as underscoring the need for English language teachers to develop practices that are culturally responsive to these and other ways of thinking, learning, and being. Indeed, several of Kumaravadivelu's macro-strategies point to the need for cultural awareness and responsiveness in creating effective instruction and interaction for learners. Complexities such as these move postmethod instructors and theorizers to search out ways to adapt and perhaps re-conceptualize principled eclectic practices in broadening contexts with increasingly diverse learners and learning environments.

Learner Outcomes for Principled Eclecticism – What the Research Says

Because aspects of principled eclecticism have been taken up and adapted in numerous ways into English language instruction in the past decades, it may be easier to find older research that speaks directly to its theoretical implications. Since its theoretical development, it has been enmeshed into language instruction in the form of *differentiated instruction*, *authentic assessment*, and *learner-centered instruction*. As you've also learned, a number of recent studies have spoken out about its complexities and the deep role that culture plays in making intentional choices about teaching English as a foreign language. Current work continues to be published as eclecticism makes in-roads into EFL teaching across the globe. The following includes a number of recent studies that have come from the Turkish EFL context.

- ▶ **Akalın (2011)** details EFL instruction that was designed to replicate real-world situations and the role it played in developing speaking skills. The study hinged on developing tasks that removed the presence of the teacher when students engaged in the real-world task.
- ▶ **Cenoz and Gorter (2011)** explore how teachers can utilize students' multilingual repertoires and use them as tools to support the development of language learning strategies in students. Particular focus is given to accessing code switching, translanguaging, and code meshing and their instructional implications in supporting EFL development.

Reflect on ... Culture

Think about the range of English learners you will work with. What do you know about different cultural norms of learning, communication, literacy practices of narrative and reading/writing development, etc.? Do you think principled eclecticism is capable of adapting to global contexts, or do you think it is a poor fit for certain countries or students from certain cultures? Discuss as a class.

- ▶ **Çelik (2008)** examines arguments for and against utilizing students' L1 (home or heritage language) in EFL instruction. Specific, research-backed suggestions for intentionally utilizing students' L1s to support English learning are provided.
- ▶ **Dinçer, Yeşilyurt, and Göksu (2012)** discuss psychological and instructional factors that may influence extended English fluency and accuracy by both students and teachers. They draw on a number of approaches to provide strategies and suggestions for use in EFL instruction.
- ▶ **Gao (2011)** gives a case study that reveals some of the cultural mismatches experienced in one Chinese EFL context. The case study describes how teachers' eagerness and interest to implement postmethod strategies were met with the challenge of adequate training and knowledge required for true autonomy in syllabus and curriculum design.
- ▶ **İnözü (2011)** portrays the case of a single English teacher in Turkey and a journey of facilitating learner autonomy in an EFL classroom. Challenges to implementing this facet of principled eclectic pedagogy are detailed, including student resistance, and struggles to motivate students to take part in student-student engagement tasks.
- ▶ **İnözü, Tuyan, and Sürmeli (2007)** describe a longitudinal study conducted with EFL students to draw their attention to their own character traits, strengths, weaknesses and goals. Implications of fostering awareness of these and the purpose for using a range of learning approaches in the classroom on students' motivation to learn English are discussed.
- ▶ **Kreshesh (2012)** explores the how teachers and students choose to use students' L1 (home or heritage language) when learning English. Five classes ranging from beginning to advanced were observed multiple times, and both students and teachers were interviewed. The study explores how L1 use was chosen, how it was used to support extended English use, and cultural factors that influenced teacher and learner strategies and choices for autonomy.
- ▶ **Min (2009)** describes a case study of how principled eclectic pedagogy can be applied to teach EFL writing. This case study examines application in one Taiwanese EFL class.

Suggestions for Practice and Further Study

- I. Think about your own experiences as both a language learner and teacher, and refer to your checklist of macro-strategy strengths and needs from earlier in the chapter. Write a short paper (5-6 pages) that discusses how you could incorporate principled eclectic strategies into your EFL teaching. As you write, consider a specific group of students (you may want to use your student profiles from the beginning of the chapter or a class you have observed recently). Include the following:
 - a. Which macro-strategies do you connect to your identity as a teacher?

- b. Briefly describe the class profile in terms of anticipated goals, strengths and needs.
 - c. Provide specific examples of how you could use different macro-strategies in action.
 - d. Discuss which strategies you are most unsure about using successfully and why.
- II. Design a lesson plan that includes the following:
- a. Three example learner profiles that include age, other languages spoken, English goals, access to English, known interests
 - b. Materials
 - c. Anticipated problems/concerns
 - d. Theme/topic and how it connects to students' lives
 - e. Language objective linked to theme and text
 - f. Authentic text (visual, written, or audio/video)
 - g. Pre-reading/listening (to access existing background knowledge)
 - h. Accuracy/fluency focus
 - i. Higher-order thinking skills extension
- III. Choose one of the *Reflect on...* tasks throughout the chapter. Take part in a small group discussion that explores this aspect of principled eclecticism. Before you start, use the Internet, books on teaching practice, journal articles or other resources to explore your opinion more deeply. Refer specifically to potential benefits and weaknesses of the postmethod approach in terms of the students you plan to work with.

Sample Lesson

Because the principled eclectic approach relies strongly on students' backgrounds, goals, and language production to drive decisions in the lesson, embedding opportunities for students to use language to explore their identity, interests, and goals can provide valuable authentic language use as well as important information to support learner autonomy.

Unit Topic: Giving opinions / Online commenting

Class Description: 36 low-intermediate teenage learners; multiple home languages include Turkish, Kurmanji, and Russian; English goals include being able to speak with others through social media and online gaming.

Class Length: 55 minutes

Assumptions: Some students use code-switching with one another to understand concepts and search for vocabulary; students want to have an excuse to talk to one another and to use technology.

Anticipated Problems: Students encounter a wide-variety of inappropriate

commenting on-line and may bring this language and discourse style into the classroom.

Objectives

Functional: Students will be able to make complaints and apologies appropriately in writing and orally (in the form of forums, commenting sections, video responses, or role-plays).

Grammatical: Students will use the correct modals (*could, would, and would you mind + verb-ing*).

Pronunciation: Students will use correct stress and intonation to make complaints or rephrase complaints to sound more polite.

Materials: Sample comment sections from online websites, handouts.

Lesson

1. Language Used in a Real-World Context

Access background knowledge

- Ask students what sorts of things people complain about (in person, on-line, behind people's backs). How do they respond differently? What is this based on (person's age, relationship, physical proximity, etc.)?
- Role-play watching an online video that is upsetting/annoying. Show examples of rude comments. What are different choices of response? Use students as "viewers;" think-pair-share.

Focus on the language

- What phrases did people use to complain? How did they make others feel? **Discuss cultural differences in how certain phrasing may be received.*
- Put 2 categories on board: Polite / Impolite
- Two groups work at the board writing responses; teacher adds as needed.
- Highlight target phrases: modals and *would you mind + verb-ing*

Checking Learning

- Look at phrases: When do we tend to use each (formal vs. informal)? When we are upset? When we want to get something in return? When we need to repair something "lost in translation?" With friends? With strangers?
- How do we feel when we make complaints?
- What are different ways we start a complaint in the cultures/languages we know? Are there differences?
***Use small group discussions with numbered-heads-thinking together to have multiple students share their group's thoughts. Students toss a ball from group to group.*

2. Practice in Meaningful Contexts

Focus on Accuracy

- Chain drill: Model activity below. Give multiple students cue cards; have them give cues and then join the chain.
- Complaint chains: Students are organized in circles of six. The teacher provides complaint cues on the overhead. Students complain to their classmates. Receiving classmates call “polite” or “impolite” and rephrase the complaint as the other type (polite vs. impolite, etc.). *Alternative: give cue cards to students in each group; they must change the cue after two student pairs to allow for faster/slower circles.
- Volunteers perform role play for class (*compete for fastest pair)

Focus on Fluency

- Brainstorm times when you might complain impolitely (on purpose or by accident).
- Students role-play with multiple partners interactions when they complain. Be sure to rephrase for politeness and find a solution to the problem or feelings of frustration.
- Feedback: How did you solve your complaints? Who had the most creative solution?

Application/Extension

- Students in small groups receive copies of online comments. They must try to resolve the problems caused depending on how the complaints were made. Students discuss the issue and decide what caused people to become upset based on the phrasing; they then come up with ways to repair the complaint. *Have students work with multiple groups and with multiple complaints, if time.

Exit card: Students give the teacher a piece of paper with one thing they have complained about.

*Use some of these as topics for a follow up lesson on making apologies.

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