

Annenberg/CPB  
Professional Development Workshop Guide

# **Teaching Foreign Languages K–12 Workshop**

An eight-part professional development workshop  
for K–12 teachers

**Produced by WGBH Educational Foundation**

## ***Teaching Foreign Languages K-12 Workshop***

is produced by  
WGBH Educational Foundation

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# Table of Contents

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Introduction .....	1
About This Workshop .....	1
Using This Workshop Guide .....	3
Course Credit .....	5
Using the Materials .....	6
About Action Research .....	8
National Standards for Foreign Language Learning .....	11
Facilitator Tips .....	13
Who's Who .....	14
Workshop 1. Meaningful Interpretation .....	17
Workshop 2. Person to Person .....	39
Workshop 3. Delivering the Message .....	63
Workshop 4. Subjects Matter .....	87
Workshop 5. Rooted in Culture .....	109
Workshop 6. Valuing Diversity in Learners .....	131
Workshop 7. Planning for Assessment .....	157
Workshop 8. Engaging With Communities .....	181
Appendix .....	205
Glossary .....	207
Credits .....	212



# About This Workshop

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## Overview

The *Teaching Foreign Languages K–12 Workshop* offers you a dynamic and interactive way to understand and apply current research in foreign language education to evaluate your teaching practice. Each of the eight workshop sessions examines one research topic from the American Council for the Teaching of Foreign Languages National Standards as it applies across languages and skill levels.

The eight video programs feature the work of leading researchers and the reflections of practicing teachers in a lively round-table discussion format. Classroom examples from the *Teaching Foreign Languages K–12* video library are shown throughout the workshop videos to illustrate the ideas being discussed. This companion workshop guide provides a stimulating learning experience for individual teachers or professional development study groups.

Become a student yourself as you watch the videos, complete a range of activities in the guide, and prepare to conduct research in your own classroom. For a streamed overview of the workshop, view the Overview Video on the workshop Web site.

To learn more about the workshop videos and guide, continue reading the Introduction section. Here you will find:

- summaries of each workshop session;
- descriptions of each guide component;
- information about obtaining course credit;
- suggestions for using the guide alone or with a study group;
- tips for facilitating a workshop;
- an introduction to each of the video participants;
- a description of each of the National Standards;
- technical notes to help you fully experience the content, interactivity, and design of the Web guide; and
- an introduction to the action research process that you will undertake as part of this course.

## Session Summaries

### Workshop 1. Meaningful Interpretation

In this session, you will look at ways of building your students' interpretive skills to move them beyond literal comprehension toward deeper interpretation of authentic texts. You will examine how to create effective interpretive tasks that tap into students' background knowledge while fostering critical thinking skills, and how to select appropriate authentic texts—such as art, film, folktales, advertisements, and books—based on their cultural and interdisciplinary content.

### Workshop 2. Person to Person

Focusing on interpersonal communication, this session addresses the importance of classroom conversations. You will explore how different teaching approaches encourage or discourage meaningful interaction, and then analyze the patterns of communication that exist in your classroom. You will then develop or add to your repertoire of effective communication strategies and plan for classroom interactions that help students improve their communication skills while they learn content.

# About This Workshop, cont'd.

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## **Workshop 3. Delivering the Message**

In this session, you will examine how to plan and organize effective presentational tasks for students that help them focus on a particular audience. You will look at ways to help students build strategies for completing written and oral presentational tasks, and explore how you might spiral tasks to make them appropriate for students at different proficiency levels.

## **Workshop 4. Subjects Matter**

This session addresses strategies for promoting language learning within the context of other curriculum areas, such as science and language arts. You will explore ways to effectively integrate content into language learning and choose the appropriate content according to your students' various ages and proficiency levels.

## **Workshop 5. Rooted in Culture**

In this session, you will focus on how to integrate cultural concepts into your foreign language teaching or extend the cultural content in your existing lessons. You will also analyze ways to move your students from a basic understanding of cultural products and practices toward a deeper sense of cultural perspectives, both in the target culture and in their own culture.

## **Workshop 6. Valuing Diversity in Learners**

This session addresses how to respond to the diversity of learners in a foreign language classroom. You will reflect on student differences that can affect foreign language instruction and learning—such as varying literacy and language skills, cultural backgrounds and experiences, and learning disabilities and approaches—and consider strategies for helping all students progress in their learning.

## **Workshop 7. Planning for Assessment**

This session examines how assessment can be embedded in relevant, meaningful, and authentic performance tasks throughout the year. You will explore ways of planning and carrying out assessments that inform both you and your students about their progress. You will also look at ways to provide students with feedback that helps them track their progress.

## **Workshop 8. Engaging With Communities**

In this session, you will identify opportunities for students to use the target language with native or fluent speakers. In exploring such community interactions (including in-person, telephone, and electronic interactions), you will examine ways to prepare the students and the native speakers prior to their interactions, monitor and assist during the interactions, and debrief the interactions afterwards to ensure a successful experience for all.

# Using This Workshop Guide

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The *Teaching Foreign Languages K–12 Workshop* can be used by individuals or groups. The videos and workshop guide (also available online at [www.learner.org/channel/workshops/tfl/](http://www.learner.org/channel/workshops/tfl/)) provide a complete professional development experience for teachers, including pre- and post-viewing activities, video discussion questions, readings, interactive activities on the Web site, and other resources to help you reflect on your practice and enhance learning.

## Guide Components

Each workshop session is organized into the following sections. This is the suggested order for completing each session, but you may elect to watch the video before reading the articles for an introduction to the session topic. However, it is important that you have the information from both the articles and the video before moving on to the activities in the Examine the Topic and Put It Into Practice sections.

### Introduction

The Introduction page for each session provides an overview of the session topic and outlines the learning goals. It also lists the key terms and any materials needed in the session.

### Before You Watch

This section includes two parts: Reflect on Your Experience and Examine the Research. In Reflect on Your Experience, you are asked to draw on your own classroom work as a way to begin thinking about the session topic. In Examine the Research, you read research-based articles and answer related questions to begin your exploration of the session topic. To find these readings on the workshop Web site, click on the session title from the home page, then click on Before You Watch. In this section, scroll down to Examine the Research and click on the article name. The article will open as a PDF file, for which you will need Adobe Acrobat.

### Analyze the Video

This section provides a summary of the companion workshop video, as well as questions for you to reflect on after watching the video.

### Examine the Topic

This section provides an opportunity for you to explore the session topic further through an activity that you can do using this guide or as an interactive activity on the workshop Web site.

### Reflect on Your Learning

This section helps you to review and summarize what you have learned about the session topic.

### Put It Into Practice

This section lets you apply what you have learned to your own teaching practice by helping you develop resources, such as lesson plans, based on your students' needs.

### Action Research Project

This section leads you through the process of planning an action research project—an investigation that you can incorporate into your practice with the goal of effecting positive changes in teaching and learning—based on that session topic. If you are completing this workshop for credit, you will need to submit one action research project from any one of the eight workshop sessions as an assignment.

# Using This Workshop Guide, cont'd.

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Within each of the above sections, you will be asked to answer questions and complete activities. These will be marked with either the word *Reflection* or *Assignment*.

## **Reflections**

Reflection questions are designed to help you access your prior knowledge and experience in foreign language instruction. They also give you the opportunity to compare your experience with what you observe in other foreign language classrooms featured in the workshop videos. You are encouraged to respond to these questions, but you are not required to submit your answers for credit or professional development points.

## **Assignments**

Assignments are designed to help you internalize new information and develop a deeper understanding of the session content. You will be asked to answer questions about the readings, delve into the content through an interactive activity, apply new learning to the development of new lessons or activities for students, develop an action research project, and summarize what you have learned in each session. If you are taking the workshop for credit or professional development points, you will be required to submit your completed assignments, so be sure to save your work as you go.

## **Resources**

This section provides a list of additional books, articles, and/or Web sites that you can use to explore the topic further.

## **Assignments**

The Assignments page at the end of each session provides a list of the required assignments for the workshop session. You can use this page to make sure you've completed all the assignments required for professional development or graduate credit. All forms and handouts for assignments and activities can be found at the end of each chapter of this guide.

## **Library Videos Chart**

Each workshop video features classroom excerpts from the *Teaching Foreign Languages K–12* video library. The Library Videos Chart lists each lesson in the order in which it appears in the workshop video. Go to the workshop Web site to access more information about each library video.



# Course Credit

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This workshop can be used for noncredit or credit study. Study groups whose members wish to receive a certificate of completion can do so by having their facilitator register with Annenberg/CPB. (Note: Certificates of completion are not granted for individuals.) Participants can choose to enroll for two graduate-level semester credits through Colorado State University pending the successful completion of all required assignments for the workshop, plus an additional written assignment. Go to [www.learner.org/channel/workshops/graduate\\_credit.html](http://www.learner.org/channel/workshops/graduate_credit.html) for a complete explanation of required coursework and enrollment procedures. If you are getting credit via another organization, you must check with that institution to determine their requirements.

Individuals should plan to spend approximately 2 1/2 hours per session, not including preparatory tasks such as reading articles or completing activities that involve research back in the classroom. Groups are encouraged to allow more time for discussion when possible.

If you are taking the workshop for credit, be sure to save a copy of all of your assignments to include in a portfolio that you will submit. If you choose to complete the interactive activities on the Web site, be sure to print the screen or copy and paste the text you have written into a word processing file while the activity window is open on your screen. Your work will be lost once you have closed the activity window. You may choose to complete a noninteractive version of the activity in this guide instead.

You will also be required to complete one action research project to receive credit. If you choose to do a project that will take more than one semester to complete, register for credit in the semester in which the project will be completed.

# Using the Materials

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## Using the Guide

Whether you are completing the workshop for credit or exploring it for personal enrichment, you can work on your own or with a group. Use the following suggestions to help you get the most out of your experience.

If you are working alone:

- Identify your goals as you prepare for the session.
- Use the questions to generate self-reflection.
- Write responses to questions in a journal to review later.

If you are working in a group:

- Prepare for the session before meeting with the group.
- Use the questions to stimulate discussion.
- Compare experiences to better understand foreign language instruction in different grades or languages.
- Collaborate in planning activities and developing resources.

If you are planning to facilitate a group, refer to the Facilitator Tips on page 13.

## Viewing the Videos

Watch the video programs on the Annenberg/CPB Channel, tape them from the channel to view at a more convenient time, or purchase the videos at **www.learner.org** or by calling **1-800-LEARNER**. If you have access to a high-speed Internet connection, you can also view the broadband online broadcast of the video programs. You will need the software described under Technical Notes to do so.

Classrooms shown in the workshop are from the companion video library, *Teaching Foreign Languages K–12: A Library of Classroom Practices*, which you can access online at **www.learner.org/channel/libraries/tfl/**.

# Using the Materials, cont'd.

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## Using the Web Site

Go to the workshop Web site at [www.learner.org/channel/workshops/tfl/](http://www.learner.org/channel/workshops/tfl/) for interactive activities; downloadable PDFs of this guide, workshop readings, and handouts; and Channel-Talk.

### Channel-Talk

Use Channel-Talk, an email discussion list, to communicate with other workshop participants online and continue exploration of workshop ideas.

### Technical Notes

To fully experience the content, interactivity, and design of the *Teaching Foreign Languages K–12 Workshop* Web site, we recommend you access the site with the following tools. Links to sites where you can download these programs for free are provided on the site.

#### Web Browser

Any current Web browser such as IE 5.0 (or higher), Netscape 7.0 (or higher), or an equivalent.

Note: Fonts, colors, and layout may not display properly on older browsers.

JavaScript should be enabled on all browsers.

#### Browser Plug-ins

To access and print forms, readings, and a hard-copy version of this guide, you will need the free Adobe Reader plug-in.

To access the interactive activities within the workshop sessions, you will need the free Macromedia Flash Player version 6.0 or higher. Please note that Flash may already be installed on certain browsers.

Also, you may want to save your work on certain interactive activities to include in your portfolio. Use your computer's select and copy functions to highlight and copy your text while you have the interactive activity window open. Then paste and save the text into a word processing or notes file on your computer.

To access the Video on Demand (VoD) clips, you will need the free Windows Media Player version 6.0 or higher. Please note that the Windows Media Player is also available for Macintosh.

#### Connection Speed

A minimum connection speed of 56 kbps is recommended.

In order to view the VoD clips, you will need a broadband connection, such as a DSL connection, a cable modem, or a LAN connection to a T1 line (or greater). For more information, go to the Annenberg/CPB Channel Broadband Streaming FAQ at [www.learner.org](http://www.learner.org).

# About Action Research

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Teachers look for professional development opportunities that can make a difference in their practice, connect to their lives as teachers, and ultimately improve learning and instruction in their own classroom. But how can they do this, particularly given the time pressures and other demands of teaching?

One answer is to conduct action research. The goal of action research is to investigate a self-selected issue in your own classroom to effect positive changes in your teaching and in your students' learning. In this way, you have the opportunity to extend existing professional development experiences to meet your individual needs and the needs of your students.

During the course of this workshop, you will have the opportunity to design one action research project of your choosing across any of the workshop session topics. If you are taking this workshop for credit, you may be required to complete an action research project. Check with your facilitator or credit-granting institution for more information.

## The Benefits of Action Research

Although conducting research is not something that most teachers feel prepared to do, teaching is, in actuality, a research activity. This is because research is already a part of what teachers do on a daily basis as they plan, deliver, and monitor instruction and learning. Teachers are well positioned to conduct research in their own classrooms because they continually ask questions about their teaching and seek answers to instructional issues through various forms of evidence (for example, student work samples, formative assessments, observations, etc.). The benefit of action research is that it provides a framework for systematic inquiry into your own practice.

Action research is local and focuses directly on issues surrounding a teacher's school, classroom, and students. In this way, the questions posed by an action research project and the findings it reveals are anchored in the specific circumstances of one teacher's class or one school's foreign language program. The personalized nature of action research means that it is not appropriate to generalize research findings to larger populations of students, as would be the case with formal experimental studies in laboratory settings.

## The Process of Action Research

So what does an action research project look like? It begins with you selecting any issue that you would like to investigate in your classroom. You might begin by observing an existing aspect of your teaching or of your students' learning. For example, you could look at the kinds of strategies that your students use to interpret authentic texts. Action research can also be used to investigate how a change in your practice might affect students' learning, participation, and motivation. For example, you could look at how a change in your feedback techniques affects student performance and which feedback techniques work best for particular communication goals.

Once you have selected what you would like to investigate, you will pose a research question. In action research, the goal is to describe a situation so as to improve upon it. Therefore, research questions should be framed using question words like "How," "What," and "What if." Once the research question has been established, you will design a plan for carrying out your investigation, determine how you will organize the data that you gather, and then use the information you gathered to reflect on and improve your teaching practice.

# About Action Research, cont'd.

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## An Example of Action Research

The following is a sample action research project conducted by Sherri Blose, who prepared it while earning her Master of Arts degree in teaching from the University of Pittsburgh:

This action research project investigated the issue of language creativity. Language creativity, or the ability to combine and recombine learned material in novel ways, is an important goal of foreign language education because it is the hallmark of an intermediate-level speaker as specified by the ACTFL proficiency guidelines. In this study, the teacher wanted to discover whether her French II students attempted to use language creatively or merely parroted memorized utterances she had taught them.

To answer her question, the teacher tape-recorded a conversation between each of her nine students and a native French speaker, then transcribed the conversations for analysis. Her analysis revealed that the conversations consisted of 74 student utterances made up of either memorized utterances that the students routinely used in class or creative utterances that they had never heard before. These creative utterances consisted of language already learned but applied in new ways. To insure the reliability of her own ratings, she also allowed the class to judge whether the utterances she had analyzed were creative or memorized chunks of language. She found that she and her class agreed 60 out of 74 times, or 80 percent of the time, on whether an utterance was previously memorized or creatively constructed.

She then tried to identify which students used creative utterances during their conversations with the native speaker and was pleased to learn that all nine students used creative utterances, with the high-achieving students using the greatest number of creative utterances and the low-achieving students using the fewest. Although the quantity of the utterances varied across nine students, the interesting finding was that all students used some creative utterances during the conversations.

Finally, she compared the number of creative utterances that students used to the number of memorized chunks of language and found that 60 percent of the time, students were relying on what they had previously learned in class for conversing with the native speaker. The other 40 percent of the time, their utterances were novel combinations of learned material. Another important finding was that when students attempted to be creative with the language, they often made errors. The teacher thus appropriately entitled her project, "To Err Is To Be Creative."

In rethinking her practice, the teacher stated that the project made her more aware of when her students were being creative with the language and the importance of documenting and pointing out these creative productions to the class. Additionally, she informed her students that error in language learning is not necessarily bad, but a necessary part of the language learning process. Finally, she decided that her classroom assessments needed to give credit to students who went beyond the comfort of memorized language and made efforts to use the language in new and creative ways to express their personal ideas.

## Applying Action Research

Although the principles of action research are applicable to many academic subjects, the *Teaching Foreign Languages K–12 Workshop* uses a four-step approach specifically designed for foreign language instruction. The four steps are as follows:

- 1. Thinking:** What issue do you want to describe, document, and investigate? Why is this issue important to you? What research question will help you investigate this issue to understand it better?
- 2. Acting:** What is your plan for carrying out your project? What information will you need to collect to answer your research question and assess your project? How much time will you allot for your action plan?

# About Action Research, cont'd.

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**3. Reflecting:** After you've collected your data, how will you organize and review it to help you answer your research question? How will you display the data so as to clearly reveal your results, both for your reference and so that you can share it with others?

**4. Rethinking:** How will you rethink your teaching practice based on your research data?

Each workshop session includes an Action Research Project section that provides questions and examples to help you frame your thinking and shape your project. Please remember to focus clearly on the issue or problem you are trying to address and to explain how your research project will provide new data regarding this issue.

Note: The four-step action research project model was developed by Professor Richard Donato of the University of Pittsburgh.

## Resources

For more information on action research, check out these additional Web and print resources.

### Web Resources

**Action Research: Reseeing Learning and Rethinking Practice in the LOTE Classroom**

[<http://www.sedl.org/loteced/communique/n08.html>]

This paper by Richard Donato reports on a professional development project for Texas teachers that was initiated by the Languages Other Than English Center for Educator Development (LOTE CED) at the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory in Austin, Texas, and includes summaries of several of the teachers' action research projects.

**Networks: An On-line Journal for Teacher Research**

[<http://www.education.ucsc.edu/faculty/gwells/networks>]

This site provides a forum for teachers from preschool to the university level to share their classroom research with one another.

**Research: Holding Up a Mirror**

[<http://www.edweek.com/ew/newstory.cfm?slug=40research.h21>]

This article from *Education Week* describes one teacher's introduction to educational research, and how she eventually changed professional development at her school with the concept of teacher research.

**Teacher Research: Action Research**

[<http://www.gse.gmu.edu/research/tr/TRaction.shtml>]

This site from the Graduate School of Education at George Mason University features a wealth of resources about the action research process, including links to relevant articles and other action research Web sites.

### Print Resources

Burnafor, G., J. Fischer, and D. Hobson, eds. *Teachers Doing Research: The Power of Action Through Inquiry*. 2nd ed. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2001.

Burns, A. *Collaborative Action Research for English Language Teachers*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

Cochran-Smith, M., and S. L. Lytle. *Inside/Outside: Teacher Research and Knowledge*. New York: Teachers College Press, 1993.

Freeman, D. *Doing Teacher Research: From Inquiry to Understanding*. Boston: Heinle & Heinle, 1998.

# About Action Research, cont'd.

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Hopkins, D. *A Teacher's Guide to Classroom Research*. 2nd ed. Buckingham, England: Open University Press, 1993.

Kemmis, S., and R. McTaggart. *The Action Research Planner*. Geelong, Victoria, Australia: Deakin University Press, 1988.

Mills, G. E. *Action Research: A Guide for the Teacher Researcher*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill/Prentice Hall, 2003.

Stringer, E. *Action Research: A Handbook for Practitioners*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1996.

Wallace, M. J. *Action Research for Language Teachers*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000.

## National Standards for Foreign Language Learning

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The following is a description of each of the Five Cs goal areas and its related standards. To learn more about the standards, refer to the "Standards and the Five Cs" video in the *Teaching Foreign Languages K–12* video library.

### Communication

#### Communicate in Languages Other Than English

Standard 1.1: Interpersonal Communication

Students engage in conversations, provide and obtain information, express feelings and emotions, and exchange opinions.

Standard 1.2: Interpretive Communication

Students understand and interpret written and spoken language on a variety of topics.

Standard 1.3: Presentational Communication

Students present information, concepts, and ideas to an audience of listeners or readers on a variety of topics.

### Cultures

#### Gain Knowledge and Understanding of Other Cultures

Standard 2.1: Practices of Culture

Students demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between the practices and perspectives of the culture studied.

Standard 2.2: Products of Culture

Students demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between the products and perspectives of the culture studied.

# National Standards, cont'd.

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## Connections

### Connect with Other Disciplines and Acquire Information

#### Standard 3.1: Making Connections

Students reinforce and further their knowledge of other disciplines through the foreign language.

#### Standard 3.2: Acquiring Information

Students acquire information and recognize the distinctive viewpoints that are only available through the foreign language and its cultures.

## Comparisons

### Develop Insight into the Nature of Language and Culture

#### Standard 4.1: Language Comparisons

Students demonstrate understanding of the nature of language through comparisons of the language studied and their own.

#### Standard 4.2: Cultural Comparisons

Students demonstrate understanding of the concept of culture through comparisons of the cultures studied and their own.

## Communities

### Participate in Multilingual Communities at Home and Around the World

#### Standard 5.1: School and Community

Students use the language both within and beyond the school setting.

#### Standard 5.2: Lifelong Learning

Students show evidence of becoming lifelong learners by using the language for personal enjoyment and enrichment.

*Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century* reprinted courtesy of the National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project, a program of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages. Copyright 1999. All rights reserved.



# Facilitator Tips

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You can use these workshop materials to provide professional development activities for teachers in a variety of settings and situations:

- in foreign language methodology courses
- for teachers broadening their range of instructional practices
- for individual teacher study of a specific topic or grade level
- in a district or school workshop
- in professional development mentoring programs

The following facilitator tips can enhance the professional development experience:

## **Before the Workshop**

- Register your group with the Annenberg/CPB Channel to receive certificates of completion.
- Make sure that each participant has the workshop guide prior to the first session so that he or she can prepare for each meeting. You can direct participants to this Web site, or print, photocopy, and distribute copies of the print version of the guide and any reading materials they will need prior to the session.

## **Before Each Session**

- Review the guide and preview the video for that session. Become familiar with the reflection questions, assignments, activities, readings, and printouts for each session.
- Print and duplicate any charts or forms ahead of time. These can be found at the end of each chapter.
- Gather any other supplies or materials you anticipate using, such as chart paper, an easel and markers, a VCR, or a tape recorder if you are going to record the session for teachers who are unable to attend.
- Be sure participants know what their pre-session reading and writing assignments are prior to each meeting, and that they have the materials so that they can prepare in advance. The readings can be found on the workshop Web site.

## **During Each Session**

- Consider having someone take notes during each discussion, or tape-record the discussions. The notes or audiotapes can serve as make-up materials in case anyone misses a workshop.
- Identify participants' skill levels and build from there.
- Begin with suggested questions from the guide and continue with other questions that interest you and your colleagues.
- Be an active moderator. Encourage debate and discussion to help trigger ideas and focus on important issues.
- Promote reflection as a means to improving teaching.
- Organize participants into different groups for different activities, to give everyone a chance to work together.
- Allow enough time for participants to respond.
- Conclude by reviewing strategies and action items that teachers can use in their practice.
- Ask everyone to complete the Reflect on Your Experience and Examine the Research sections, if possible, before arriving for the next workshop session.

# Facilitator Tips, cont'd.

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- Ask participants to begin working on the Put It Into Practice activities and/or an action research project before arriving for the next workshop session. Let them know what information they will need to bring with them. This can range from initial plans for developing an activity for their students, to preliminary or final results from completing an activity or short action research project in their classroom.

## After Each Session

- Encourage participants to continue their discussions on Channel-Talk with other teachers taking the workshop.
- Remind participants that they can access more information, including interactive activities and lists of additional resources, on the *Teaching Foreign Languages K–12 Workshop* Web site to supplement their work in the in-person workshop.

# Who's Who

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## Facilitator

Richard Donato  
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## Core Advisors

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# Who's Who, cont'd.

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## Participating Teachers

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