

Five rules of thumb to support language development in vocational education, by Tiba Bolle and Inge van Meelis

<i>Rule</i>	<i>Questions to ask yourself</i>	<i>Suggestions for you</i>
1. Work purposefully on language and subject: set meaningful, concrete and clear teaching and learning objectives.	How do you formulate meaningful teaching and learning objectives?	Use meaningful learning objectives. Set language proficiency requirements.
	How do you make teaching and learning objectives concrete?	Make teaching and learning objectives visible. Show good examples.
	How do you make the assessment method clear?	Decide in advance how you will check whether the goals have been achieved.
2. Deliver your instruction in a way that supports language learning: convey teaching material in a comprehensible, challenging and interesting way.	How do you ensure that lesson material and assignments are understandable?	Provide support focused on content. Provide support focused on language forms and use. Offer support focused on the approach.
	How do you ensure sufficient challenge?	Provide sufficient new information. Let learners support each other. Accompany explanations, reading or listening texts with an active task.
	How do you engage learners?	Vary media, text and work formats. Address learners personally. Give learners a choice.
3. Work on vocabulary: pay systematic attention to learning vocabulary (i.e. words and phrases, technical terms, etc.).	What vocabulary do you focus on ('target' vocabulary)?	Choose a limited amount of target vocabulary.
	How do learners find out the meaning of unfamiliar vocabulary?	Explain vocabulary from several different perspectives. Actively involve learners in finding the meaning.
	Where do learners write down the vocabulary they have learnt?	Work with a word list. [LfW tips: Tell learners to note and review all new vocabulary. Keep a list yourself of all vocabulary learners find difficult.]
	How do you encourage learners to actively use the target vocabulary?	Have learners use the vocabulary directly. Have them repeat vocabulary and concepts orally and in writing.

<i>Rule</i>	<i>Questions to ask yourself</i>	<i>Suggestions for you</i>
3. Work on vocabulary (<i>cont.</i>)	How do you check whether learners understand, remember and use the vocabulary correctly?	Check words and concepts in a fun way. Test vocabulary.
4. Encourage interaction: have learners read, listen write and speak in response to the lesson material.	How do you encourage learners to <u>read</u> more about the subject matter?	Encourage learners to collect and process written information themselves.
	How do you encourage learners to <u>listen and watch</u> more about the subject matter?	Encourage learners to (collect and) process visual material.
	How do you encourage learners to <u>speak and have conversations</u> about the subject matter?	Ask open and personalised questions. Encourage collaboration and use activating working methods.
	How do you encourage learners to <u>write</u> about the subject matter?	Let learners talk about the subject matter before writing. Use structured writing assignments to organize knowledge.
5. Give feedback: provide feedback on content, language and approach.	What do you give feedback on?	Be selective and specific. Reflect on content, language and approach.
	How do you give developmental feedback to learners?	Use different ways to provide feedback. Structure your feedback well.
	How can you assess learners correctly?	Allow a reflection phase to precede the final assessment. Be precise in your assessment.

Source: *Taalbewust beroepsonderwijs, Vijf vuistregels voor effectieve didactiek* [Language-aware vocational education, Five rules of thumb for effective didactics] by Tiba Bolle en Inge van Meelis. Available from: <https://www.coutinho.nl/nl/taalbewust-beroepsonderwijs-9789046905890>

See also: <https://www.itta.uva.nl/publicaties/taalbewust-beroepsonderwijs-150>