TIPS FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THINK, PAIR, SHARE

1. Provide the questions and instructions for the activity. First, go over the instructions, expectations, and timing, then do a quick comprehension check to make sure students all know what it takes to be on task.
2. As students discuss in pairs, walk around and listen to their ideas. This will help you identify the themes and decide which pairs you might call upon if no one volunteers. If you notice U.S. students dominating exchanges with an international student, sit with that pair to encourage more proportional discussion.
3. During the whole-class share phase, you can “cold call” students without too much concern over scaring them because they have been “warmed up.” At this point, you can foster contributions from international students by calling on those pairs and the international students by name.

HELPING STUDENTS JOIN THE DISCUSSION

Participating in class can be difficult for some students. Share these participation tips with your students:

How to join:
- Don’t wait to be called on; use your breath and body language to join the conversation.

Types of comments:
- Link two people’s contributions (e.g., “It’s interesting that Ming and Lea both seem to…”)
- Explain why you found another person’s ideas interesting or useful and describe why (e.g., “I agree with David’s point about… because in my experience…”)
- Build on another’s comment (e.g., “Building on what Sara was saying, I think…”)
- Disagree in a respectful and constructive way, noting what is interesting or compelling before countering (e.g., “I think James brings up an important point. And at the same time…”)

CLARIFYING STUDENT CONTRIBUTIONS

Many instructors dread the moment when they do not understand a student’s speech. Some have even admitted to pretending to understand what a student said, simply to avoid an awkward moment (AKA the “smile and nod” technique). However, it is to the student’s benefit, as well as to the benefit of his or her classmates, to be honest about your lack of understanding. Here are some effective tips for doing so:

Use “I” statements: e.g., “I’m sorry – could you repeat that? I couldn’t hear you very well.”

Ask for explanation: Ask the student to explain more about what he or she is trying to say.

Have him or her write it down: If needed, ask the student to write down a word or phrase, if pronunciation of just one word or phrase is hindering your comprehension.

Encourage peer assistance: Encourage the student to rely on his/her peers to help clarify (particularly if they are from a similar language background).

Be aware of your facial expression or body language: Try to avoid expressing frustration or displeasure at the situation, as this might hinder students from making another attempt to communicate.
Once you do understand, be sure to rephrase the comment/question, both for the student and for the rest of the class. You may highlight the word or phrase that was most challenging – often it is one that does not follow phonetic spelling rules.

INTERACTING WITH NONNATIVE SPEAKERS: CORRECTING MYTHS

When interacting with nonnative speakers of English (or any language), it is important to keep in mind the following:

1. A “heavy” accent does not equal low language proficiency.
2. Speaking loudly does not make your message clearer to a nonnative speaker. In contrast, speaking a bit more slowly, using visual and written cues, and checking for understanding do help.
3. Many gestures (e.g., shrugging, making the “okay” sign, motioning to “come here”) are not universal. Hence, they may complicate, rather than simplify, communication.
4. Most language learners want to know if what they are saying is unclear. Don’t pretend to understand (e.g., by smiling and nodding).
5. Many language learners appreciate corrective feedback on pronunciation, grammar, and other language aspects. (However, it is a good idea to ask whether an individual wants this feedback before you provide it).

GUIDELINES FOR CREATING RUBRICS

Include a variety of criteria. Include criteria such as content, organization, tone/word choice, formatting, and clarity/use of language, and weight them according to your learning priorities.

Think critically about the ratings. Consider weighing the content criteria more heavily than mechanics, grammar, or speech clarity, to avoid penalizing international students too heavily.

Explain what each criterion means. For example, “content” might involve responding to the prompt, having an arguable thesis, and/or using evidence.

Model use of the rubric. Show samples of student work and ask students to rate them using the rubric.

Don’t “reinvent the wheel.” There are a variety of discipline-specific (and/or genre-specific) rubrics that can be found online (also see samples in Appendix B). However, be sure to adapt each rubric to the specific goals of your assignments.

DECREASING INSTANCES OF PLAGIARISM

Discuss plagiarism explicitly. Discuss it in your syllabus and early in the semester – define it, give examples, and discuss the consequences. Be aware that your definition might differ from what students have been taught in the past.

Frame plagiarism within the discussion of academic culture. Ideas and words are “owned” by the person who published them, and therefore can only be used when referenced appropriately (i.e., “textual borrowing”).

Teach students what they can do in the research/writing process to avoid plagiarizing. This should include not only citation formats, but broader questions about how to find and evaluate sources, as well as
when and how to integrate sources into one’s own writing (see Appendix F for online research and writing guides).

**Design assignments that are difficult to find online.** Make them “local” to your particular class. This often results in more interesting work as well as less temptation to plagiarize.

**Provide early feedback.** It is easier to catch issues that might lead to plagiarism if students are required to submit proposals, outlines, drafts, and so forth for feedback.

**Encourage students to use “detection” tools.** These tools allow students to see where they may improve their source use in order to avoid potential accusations of plagiarism.