

**Proficiency-Level Targeted**  
**Student Engagement Strategies in the Language Classroom**

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NRCAL April 2015

**Student engagement**

- Is the degree of attention, curiosity, interest, optimism, and passion that students show.
- includes motivation to learn. (The Glossary of Education Reform)

**All language-learning outcomes** must be considered when selecting or developing student engagement strategies. The outcomes include:

- Content (topics)
- Communicative Modes
  - Interpersonal (person-to-person)
  - Presentational (speaking and writing)
  - Interpretive (listening and reading)
- Cultures (of the language users)
- Structures (grammar)
- Settings (situations for language use) (from World Language Content Standards for California Public Schools, 2009, and NCSSFL-ACTFL Can-Do Statements, 2013)

**Student engagement strategies should employ a proficiency-oriented perspective.** They should:

- Match students' proficiency levels and ages.
- Use topics and settings that interesting for students.
- Provide opportunities for students to work with every other person in class (eventually).
- Give opportunities for students to use the language frequently and repeatedly...and in different ways.

**Examples of Student Engagement Strategies that Can Be Tailored to the Specific Content, Modes, Cultures, Structures, and Settings of Language Students at Particular Proficiency Levels**

- Magnetic Art\*: Post artworks or other prompts around the room; have students circulate, make choices, and discuss prompts that are appropriate for their proficiency levels.
- Up and Out\*: Devise a structure to have students get up and out of their seats to discuss prompts with varied partners. Examples include:
  - Artist Trading Card sessions
  - Partner sign-ups
  - Stand up, hand up, pair up
  - Four corners
  - Note-checking pairs
  - Inside-outside circles
- Video Production\*: Structure tasks appropriate for students' proficiency levels and the target culture and content. Have students work in small groups to make brief (e.g., 2-minute) videos. Students can record on cell phone cameras or dedicated cameras such as Flip cameras.

**Summary**

- Student engagement = interest and motivation expended to learn
- It's in **our** hands!
- By choosing and using a variety of engagement strategies, we can:
  - Provide authentic contexts
  - Keep students in the target language at their proficiency level
  - Build community
  - Enhance interest, fun, and learning

\* Guillaume, A.M., Yopp, R. H., & Yopp, H.K. (2007). *Active Teaching: 50 Strategies for Engaging Students in the K-12 Classroom*. Upper Saddle River: Merrill Prentice-Hall.