
Student Engagement and Modern Language Learning

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CENTER FOR
INNOVATIVE
TEACHING & LEARNING

“A vision of students today”

A message from our students

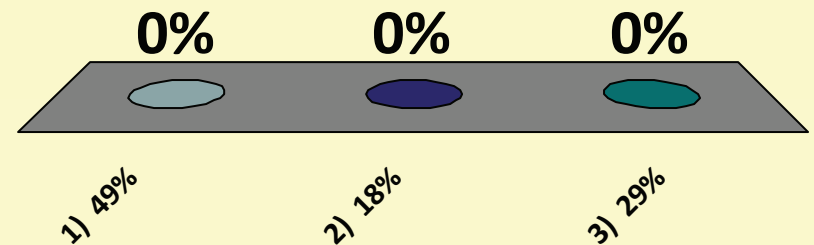
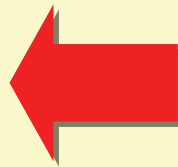
*Created by Michael Wesch
in collaboration with
200 Anthropology students
at Kansas State University, 2007*

Percentage of teachers who know student names ...

1) 49%

2) 18%

3) 29%



What is *student engagement*?

Degrees of engagement

“Participating in the activities offered as part of the school program” (*Natriello, 2004*)

“Exercising metacognitive strategies, which range from ‘**surface**’ to ‘**deep**’ processing. (*Pintrich & DeGroot, 1990; Pintrich & Schrauben, 1992*)



High-impact activities (*NSSE, 2007*)

Deep processing

Student-professor interaction

Cross-cultural experiences

Big picture of own learning

What is *student engagement*?

Metro DC Learning Community on Teaching,
June 20, 2008

Curiosity
Discipline
Authentic
learning
Active participation
Open communication
Life-long learning

“[A]ctive participation
between an instructor with
passion for teaching and an
attentive group of students
with a willingness to learn.”

Students on *student engagement*

What does *engagement* mean to students?

Attending class

Completing assignments

Relevant material

Involvement in projects

Interaction with others

In-depth, active participation

Dedication

Student-professor interaction

**Whose
responsibility?**

(Heller, 2008; Learning Community, 2008)

The “Net Gen”^{*} learner

“Traditional” US college/university student

18 to 22 years old

“Tech-savvy”

Wants to connect with others

Wants information immediately

Undergraduate studies

Compulsory courses include L2

Goals: Pass the L2 course; move on to core courses for major/minor disciplines



How to engage these students?

^{*} Oblinger, D.G., & Oblinger, J.L., (Eds.). (2005). *Educating the Net Generation*. 2.7. Available on <http://net.educause.edu/ir/library/pdf/pub7101b.pdf>

L2 teaching methods & ICT

Grammar Translation Method

Approximately 16th to 19th centuries

Intellectual exercise; translate texts (*Richards & Rodgers, 2001*)

Reform Movement

19th century

European commerce, interaction

Spoken over written language

Situational/contextual (*Richards & Rodgers, 2001*)

L2 teaching methods & ICT (cont'd)

Audio Lingual Method

Post-WWII era

Language drills

“Learners play a reactive role” (*Richards & Rodgers, 2001*)

Technology

Computers = unidirectional “mechanical tutors”

Language learning in isolation (*Fitzpatrick & Davies, 2003*)

L2 teaching methods & ICT (cont'd)

Communicative Language Teaching

1960s

Communicative proficiency vs. mastering structures

Language for group problem-solving (*Richards & Rodgers, 2001*)

Technology

“Communicative CALL”

Implicit vs. explicit teaching

Group work emphasized (*Fitzpatrick & Davies, 2003*)

L2 teaching methods & ICT (cont'd)

Competency-Based Language Teaching

1970s

“Expected outcomes” (*Richards & Rodgers, 2001, p. 142*)

Standards movement, 1990s (E.g., ACTFL) (*Richards & Rodgers, 2001,*

Technology

“Integrative CALL”

Various skills + various technologies (*Fitzpatrick & Davies, 2003*)

“Re-create language for themselves, using own organizing schemes” (*Fitzpatrick & Davies, 2003, p. 28*)

ACTFL standards: “The Five C’s”*

Communication

Communicate in Languages Other Than English

Cultures

Gain Knowledge and Understanding of Other Cultures

Connections

Connect with Other Disciplines and Acquire Information

Comparisons

Develop Insight into the Nature of Language and Culture

Communities

Participate in Multilingual Communities at Home & Around the World

* http://actfl.org/files/public/StandardsforFLLEXecsumm_rev.pdf

Student Response System (SRS)

Survey tool

Wireless keypads

Data aggregated, reported

“Assess students’ comprehension of complex material”

“Has the potential to promote greater student engagement” (Radosevich *et al.* , 2008)



Student Response System (cont'd)

Benefits

- Appeal to “Net Gen”
- Participation
- Collaboration
- Attentiveness
- Immediate feedback
- Improved learning
- Responsibility for learning

Pitfalls

- Keypad cost
- Learning curve
- Technology problems
- Discreet-point answers
- Policies & procedures
- Cheating

(Freeman Herreid, 2006; Guthrie & Carlin, 2004; Radosevich, *et al.*, 2008)

Student Response System (cont'd)

Radosevich, *et al.* (2008) study

SRS group:

More interested (M=4.13 vs. M=3.51)

Scored higher (M=82.72 vs. M=78.83)

“I could focus on the lecture instead of daydreaming...I was better prepared for the test because the clickers constantly had me in the study-mindset”

Student Response System (cont'd)

Guthrie & Carlin (2004) study

SRS usage

Participation = 95%

Higher than in non-SRS class

Reasons

Anonymity

Immediate feedback

Part of overall grade

Student Response System @ GW

Russian “master class” (spring 2008)*

40 students

Weekly grammar overview

Discreet answers

Results

More effective than calling on individuals

Students initially wary

Wanted to continue with SRS

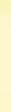
CAVEAT: Do not use in small language classes

* R. Robin, personal communication, June, 2008)

SRS can increase participation due to:



0%



1. “No one knows I was wrong”
2. “I like the small keypads”
3. “the instructor is so tech-savvy”

“No one knows I w... “I like the small...
 “the instructor i...

Podcasting

Podcast

User subscribes to and downloads free audio/video files for playback on a computer or MP3 player
(Apple Computer Inc., 2008)

iTunes

Application for downloading podcasts
(Apple Computer Inc., 2008)



Podcasting (cont'd)

Benefits

Appeal to “Net Gen”
Collaboration
Authentic materials
Self-assessment
Responsibility for learning
Portability

Pitfalls

Potential cost to students
Learning curve for related software
Technology problems
Policies & procedures

(de la Fuente, 2008; Frydenberg, 2006; O'Bryan & Hegelheimer, 2008)

Podcasting (cont'd)

iTunes U from Apple*

Professors are able to:

- Record live course lectures from the classroom
- Post recordings as review
- Record and post weekly language course pronunciation guides

Student are able to:

- Review a lecture and other course-related files after class for greater comprehension
- Create their own virtual review sessions (on or off campus; at computer or walking)

Podcasting (cont'd)

Freydenburg (2006)

Student-created podcasts

Self-assessment → improvement

Engagement

Students are engaged not only in their own learning, but in participating in that of the entire class. The use of podcasting in this way further reinforces the idea that podcasting is about creating and sustaining a community (p. 5-6).

“It is good the world can see and appreciate the impact of what we are doing” (p. 9) (*Student participant*)

Podcasting (cont'd)

O'Bryan & Hegelheimer (2007)

A “goal of such integration is for language learners to subscribe to course podcasts so that they become part of learners’ daily listening routines” (p. 163).

Multiple input modes

Authentic language

Learner control/responsibility

Podcasts = “Integration”, not “add-on”

Engagement through relevancy

Podcasting @ GW

Intermediate Spanish courses (spring 2008)

Goals

- Enhance class discussion
- Increase student contact with authentic language and culture
- Increasing opportunities for oral production and assessment
- Improve proficiency and confidence speaking the language (*de la Fuente, 2008*)

Activities

- Listen to / watch weekly podcasts
- Student-created podcasts (individuals/groups)
- Uploaded to iTunes U for assessment (*de la Fuente, 2008*)

Podcasting @ GW (cont'd)

Feedback

“Music [songs and videos] helped me to get in touch with Spanish cultures;”

“These [video activities] made me listen to authentic Spanish and read Spanish subtitles quickly, which helped me quicken my listening and reading skills;”

“This [process of recording L2 output] allows me to see patterns and difficulties in my own speech” (*de la Fuente, 2008*)

Engagement through authenticity and self-assessment

“Podcasting is about creating and sustaining [X]”

1. The Net Gen
2. A way of life
3. A community
4. The MP3 business

0%



Technology and learning outcomes

Technology can be an asset...

...if used properly

Potential detriment:

If the manner in which the technology is implemented in class is [neither] meaningful nor interesting to the student, participation lapses. Ultimately, what the studies demonstrate is that *student participation* is key to positive learning outcomes (West, 2005, ¶ 8).

Conclusions

Ultimate goal = learning outcomes

Generally positive impact

Technology is not the activity

Activities are supported by technology

Responsibility for engagement

“Collaboration and communication between an enthusiastic, well-prepared instructor and students willing to rise to the challenge” (*Learning Community, 2008*)

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