

**CREATING AND IMPLEMENTING AN
ENVIRONMENT THAT ENGAGES
ALL LEARNERS:**

STARTALK SPRING CONFERENCE 2017
ANN TOLLEFSON
PEGGY BOYLES
ANTONIA SCHIFICHER

The Purpose of This Session

- To Examine how to effectively
- Design
- Model
- Manage
- Assess
- Activities that actively engage students, with an emphasis on pair and small group interaction.

Facilitating a Learner-Centered Classroom

- The teacher acts as a partner with students in the learning process.
- The teacher provides multiple opportunities for learners to collaborate in pair and small group activities while interpreting and expressing ideas about topics of interest to them.
- There is frequent student-to-student interaction.

Session Can-Do Statements

- I know where to find ideas for learner-centered tasks and activities that will engage *every* student *all the time*.
- I know where to find strategies that allow me to model those learner-centered tasks and activities.
- I know where to find and evaluate strategies that involve students in collaboration and student-to-student interaction: in pair and small-group activities.

TELL Criteria for this Focus Session

- LE 5a: My students are active participants in a variety of language learning opportunities throughout the lesson.
- LE 5d: My students engage daily in pair and/or small group activities.

Why this Focus Session?

- *Impetus: February survey indicating a need for strategies to engage all students all the time while remaining in the target language.*
- *Response: an opportunity to find and choose highly effective strategies to do that in your programs!*



Observations...

- “The more we observe excellent teachers teach, the more convinced we become that the common thread in their teaching is that these teachers ensure that students become actively, cognitively, and emotionally engaged in the content being taught. “
- Himmele and Himmele, Total Participation Techniques, 2011.

Gallup 2016 Student Poll

Number of students polled: 847,000

Results of questions related to engagement and student enthusiasm for school:

Engaged- 49%

Not Engaged- 29%

Actively disengaged- 22%

Implications for STARTALK Programs

Student programs: *STARTALK* summer students are probably among the 49% so we have a head start with them. How can we take advantage of that?

Teacher Programs: How can we help our teachers learn to assure a high level of engagement in their classrooms?

Some questions to ask yourself
as you look for strategies to
engage all students all the time:

First Question to Ask yourself....

- If I never speak a word of English, how will I know that my students understand and are learning???

I will give you four answers
to this question.

Hold up the number of
fingers that indicate your
answer.

- 1) I will ask them if they understand.
- 2) I will wait until they ask a question.
- 3) I will give them a test at the end of the unit.
- 4) I will involve them in a variety of activities that will show me what they are learning throughout the lesson.

Talk at your table about why
you chose your answer.

What are the problems with 1, 2, and 3?

- 1) I will ask them if they understand.
- 2) I will wait until they ask a question.
- 3) I will give them a test at the end of the unit.

Second Question to Ask yourself...

- How can strategies that engage all learners all the time help me design curriculum and learning plans for STARTALK?

Checks for Understanding!

Third Question to Ask Yourself: What does a student-centered classroom look like?

- **Think-** You are a site-team leader observing a STARTALK class session. *What would you expect to see in a learner-centered class? What would you NOT expect to see?* Silently, jot down your thoughts.
- **PAIR-** Turn to one person near you and compare your ideas.
- **SHARE-** Thoughts?

Observations from outside observers...

- “In general, it is not uncommon to find a classroom where a few highly motivated students monopolize classroom discussions. To ensure learning for all students, opportunities to actively engage everyone in meaningful ways must be provided.” Dyer-, 2015

Observations from STARTALK Observers...

- Too often, we see teacher-centered classrooms:
 - Lots of teacher talk.
 - Students are often passive receivers a significant portion of the time.
 - “Student engagement” is often rote repetition.

Research Findings About Student-centered Learning.

- “Research has historically indicated strong correlations between student engagement (typically defined as attention to the area of focus, active participation in learning, and time on task) and student achievement. These correlations remain strong for all levels of instruction, across all subject areas, and for varying instructional activities.”
- Research Proof Points- Better Student Engagement Improves Student Learning (Dyer, 2015)

What are some strategies that we can use to engage **all students all the time** in our STARTALK program?

Some Sources for Ideas and Strategies

Starter Sources

- 1) Total Participation Techniques: Making Every Student an Active Learner
Himmele and Himmele
- 2) Cooperative Learning with Interactive Partner and Small Group Language Tasks
Helena Curtain
- Building Toward Proficiency with Interactive Tasks
Helena Curtain

Great Places to Find Other Resources

- ASCD.org
- TELLproject.org/STARTALK
 - (INFOGRAPHICS)

Helena Curtain's Materials

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/zsr38f5n9uefft8/%20Partner%20Activities%20Helena%20Curtain%202017.docx?dl=0>

edutopia.org

- Student Engagement: Resource Roundup
Cronin, 2016
- “Keeping students captivated and ready to learn is no small task. This list of articles, videos, and other resources offers strategies and advice that can help.”

Topics included

- Tips and strategies for Keeping Students Engaged.
- Engagement Through Projects
- Engagement Through Technology
- Engagement Through Social and Emotional Learning
- Examples From Schools That Work

Edutopia's Core Strategies

- Comprehensive Assessment
- Differentiated Instruction
- Game-Based Learning
- Student Engagement

Idea from Session I

Howard County Maryland
Schools:

Pinterest: Leslie Grahn
Infographics for World
Languages

Tips for Designing a Student-Centered Classroom

- ... Tip 1- Considering your proficiency targets, look for strategies that allow students to use what they are learning in cognitively engaging ways.
- ... Tip 2- Look for strategies that will give you a good idea of how well students are learning, that will serve as formative assessments.
- ...Tip 3- Look for strategies that will elicit longer student utterances rather than one-word responses.

Avoiding Potential Pitfalls

- ... Be careful NOT to confuse busy with engaged....
- ... Think about what you are asking of students in each strategy you choose:
 - Are you stretching and building their use of the language?
 - Are you planning for constant student-to-student interactions?
 - Are you changing types of activities constantly?
 - Are you allowing some student choice?



Other?

How to use information from this session:

- **Think Application:** How much of this topic already applies? How much do you want to implement this year?
- **Think Growth:** What topics relate to your problem of practice or continuous improvement goal?
- **Think Collaboration:** What experiences can you share? or What additional questions can you pose?

Also think about the gradual release of responsibility for your learners-

• I do



• We do



• You do

Tollefson.ann@gmail.com