Technology for Teachers
Technology Enables Authentic and Original Expression
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Today's students are growing up as digital citizens. Yet so much instruction and independent practice remains old school. We need to allow them to express themselves with familiar tools in authentic ways. Let's build on ACTFL's three Modes of Communication: Interpretative, Interpersonal, and Presentational.

The **Interpretative** *mode encompasses activities where the student appropriately cultural interprets the meanings that occur in written and spoken form (ACTFL).*
A great, free, and current resource for newspaper articles is Google News. If you have a Google email account, you also have access to Google News under the Apps in gmail or through this direct link. With numerous topics to choose from, students can compare and contrast articles about the same story from the viewpoint of citizens of different countries who speak the same language. Let the students choose articles based on their own interests to improve the level of relevance.

The **Interpersonal** *mode involves more active "negotiation of meaning" between the individuals.*
A fantastic way to encourage students to speak in the target language is to find a native speaker with whom to communicate. Google Connected Classrooms, Skype in the Classroom, and Global SchoolNet provide opportunities for whole class communication and virtual field trips. Epals and Google Hangouts enable one-to-one conversation. Both will build skills for authentic, original expression in the target language.

Another common way today's students communicate is by texting. It's immediate and quick, which helps increase students' confidence and desire to converse in the target language. Use Edmodo with small groups based on interest or comfort level. If your school permits Twitter, it is an ideal tool. Just have students include your assigned hash tag in their conversations. Blogging is another manner of communication that comes naturally for today's learners. Edmodo will work for this type of assignment or you can use Edublogs, made just for education. In those small groups, alternate who creates the blog for that week and the other members must comment or add to the discussion.

The **Presentational** *mode provides students the opportunity to create messages for members of the other cultures with no negotiation of meaning (ACTFL).*
Presentations are one of the most obvious ways we have traditionally assessed students. However, if you tell the students "what" you want them to demonstrate but leave the "how" to them, they will create a better, more original product than you expected. Some technology to support engaging, entertaining, but authentic presentations include Prezi, WeVideo, PuppetPals 2, iMovie, PowToon, MakeBelieveComix, Quicktime, EduCreations and Google Slides.
Excellent ideas to showcase learning are original poems, songs, public service announcements, advertisements, commercials, comic strips, videos, and student newspapers.

Naturally, none of these modes exists in isolation. When students present in class, the rest of the class is in the interpretative mode. If students are creating public service announcements, of course, they will need to research the topic. Depending on the ability level, the research may be entirely in the target language incorporating the interpretative mode. If the students collaborate on a presentation in the target language, they are practicing interpersonal skills.

Including technology the students are familiar with in your assignments will increase their engagement and enjoyment of learning the target language.