There are many—almost too many—engaging software tools and websites to share with our students to enhance learning. The real excitement comes when students use all three modes of communication by blending available technology in authentic ways. Designing motivational and proficiency-based lessons to promote critical thinking becomes easier when the technology moves from teacher-centered to learner-centered. This shift allows an educator to become the facilitator and provider of feedback. In our district, classrooms have four desktop computers, a projector, and students with smartphones. Given these limitations and opportunities, stations have been embraced as a key component to classroom instruction. These stations are learner-centered, interactive, low- and high-tech experiences that increase proficiency while delving into the 5 Cs.

Learner-centered technology has opened a window for using language to interact with cultural competence. Previously, students were led through a teacher-centered activity looking at products or practices that teachers could share from their own experiences and travels. For example, in a unit about art, students would use books, prints, realia, postcards, and possibly a custom multimedia presentation compiled and delivered by the teacher. Now, students are not limited to the experiences of their teachers. The learner-centered shift in the classroom, made possible by technology, allows students to explore the relationship between products and perspectives of the cultures studied.

For example, in the first station, students learn about artists at New York’s Museum of Modern Art using their smartphones to access the museum website (moma.org). Each student chooses a work by one of the artists featured in the collection and writes a description of the work using as much elaboration as possible. Without showing the artwork to a peer, the student describes the masterpiece in detail while the peer uses markers and their interpretive listening skills to draw and ask clarifying questions. The peer guesses who the artist is before viewing artwork on the smartphone. Peers swap roles and repeat the activity with a new piece of art.

At the next station, students work in the Interpretive Mode using infographics found at Pinterest (pinterest.com) or self-created in Pikochart (pikochart.com). These are posted to the class website where they learn about the artist studied and then listen to a video about the life of the artist from YouTube (youtube.com). Using notes in a jigsaw activity supported with a graphic organizer, they teach peers about the artist in the Interpersonal Mode.

A gaming station allows students to synthesize learning and work collaboratively in Presentational Writing to design games based on the unit. They each create a variety of questions to help their peers understand the products studied and complete a peer-editing process to increase accuracy. Using Kahoot (kahoot.it), students make games to review in the target language. The site is user-friendly, fun, and provides the ability to share with the teacher.

As teachers, one of our shared goals is to help students blend low- and high-tech activities to promote intercultural competence through collaboration and communication. The final station is homework using Google Chat. Students share what they learned about perspectives with a peer and submit a final transcript of their Google Chat.

To move from a teacher-centered to a learner-centered approach to learning, we must embrace all appropriate technologies available to us in the classroom to help provide students better agency over their learning.
WEBSITES to Watch

STARTALK
tartalk.umd.edu.
Administered by the National Foreign Language Center at the University of Maryland, STARTALK was launched in 2006 by the Office of the Director of National Intelligence. STARTALK’s mission is to increase the number of U.S. citizens learning, speaking, and teaching critically needed foreign languages, including Arabic, Chinese, Dari, Hindi, Korean, Persian, Portuguese, Russian, Swahili, Turkish, and Urdu. The program offers world language students and teachers “creative and engaging” summer experiences that strive to exemplify best practices in language education and in language teacher development.

Each year, STARTALK solicits proposals from schools, postsecondary institutions, school districts, state and regional educational agencies, language associations, and community-based organizations to participate in the STARTALK project, and awards grants to programs that are selected for participation. The website features resources such as information for curriculum development and lesson planning.

LyricsTraining
lyricstraining.com
This fun, free website helps students practice their target language by watching—and singing along with—Karaoke-style music videos and then participating in one of four levels of word fill-in games based on the song’s lyrics. Videos are available in English, Spanish, Portuguese, French, Italian, German, Dutch, Japanese, Turkish, and Catalan. You can also select videos from over 30 different music genres, including pop, rock, reggae, children’s, heavy metal, and hip hop.

Zambombazo
zachary-jones.com/zambombazo
Edited and curated by a Spanish teacher, Zachary Jones, this is a well-populated blog with musical, language, and cultural resources to help support Spanish language learning. Site sections include art, music and movies, advertising, and interviews. There is also an eBook section where the site sells publications based on the content published on the blog. Zambombazo’s content is almost exclusively in Spanish.

CLASSRoad
www.classroad.com
The Center for Languages, Arts and Societies of the Silk Road (CLASSRoad) is a non-profit organization that began in 2007 to enhance the quality of teaching and promoting the learning of Silk Road languages, such as Arabic, in the United States. The organization develops and implements educational and professional development programs for Arabic instructors and teachers of other languages, including intensive online workshops using a custom-built Learning Management System (LMS).

LangCred
langcred.org
In 2014, researchers at CLASSRoad secured funding from STARTALK and the National Foreign Language Center to create a searchable website clearinghouse of state requirements for world language teacher certification. The LangCred team, made up of experts in teaching, credentialing and program and website/data management, researched state requirements and procedures, simplified the information, and presented it in a searchable format on this website. Listings are continuously updated to maintain accuracy. LangCred users can create an account, search, save, and even compare credential routes in different states. Resources, such as the list of transcript evaluation agencies, are informative for those seeking a degree evaluation, or especially international students with foreign degrees. Teachers of less commonly taught languages can participate and learn from peers on the LangCred community forum.

Intel Teach Elements
Teach Elements is a free professional development platform for K–12 educators offered by Intel. It provides a series of courses for educators to help them incorporate technology effectively into the classroom. Topics covered include digital content, Web 2.0, social networking, mobile learning, online tools and resources, and blended learning. Courses help teachers focus on increasing their students’ problem solving, critical thinking, and collaboration skills.
LISTEN UP! Language-Related Podcasts

The World in Words
From Public Radio International (PRI), The World in Words podcast with Patrick Cox is about languages and the people who speak them. What happens to the brain on bilingualism? Does it matter that so many languages are dying out? Should we fear the rise of global English? Why are Chinese words so inventive? and more.
www.npr.org/podcasts/381444329/pri-s-the-world-the-world-in-words

Radio Lingua
Radio Lingua offers high-quality, comprehensive, professionally produced podcasts in French, Spanish, and German. They also offer shorter “one-minute” podcasts in 20 different languages.
radiolingua.com

Slow German
Annik at Slow German speaks at a moderate speed, so that she still sounds natural, with a great speaking voice. The podcasts are helpful in building German vocabulary.
slowgerman.com

Fluent Language
Regular language news, tips, and discussions with inspiring guests. This monthly podcast helps learners and educators stay inspired and learn something new about how language learning really works.
fluentlanguage.co.uk/podcast

GADGET Guide

wePresent Wireless Presentation System
wePresent is a professional wireless presentation system that allows up to 64 users to collaborate and give wireless interactive presentations. Compatible with both Windows and Apple operating systems, the wePresent comes in three models: the WiPG-1000, the WiPG-1500, or the WiPG-2000.

Features of wePresent include:

• 1080p Resolution—With both an onboard VGA and HDMI video output, you can let classroom users wirelessly project in resolutions up to full 1080p.
• 64-User Queue—Up to 64 users can connect to the wePresent gateway.
• Quad Screen Quadrant Display—Allow users to project up to four devices onscreen at the same time, and wirelessly interact and collaborate in real time.
• Conference Control—Allow a designated moderator to select and control which device in queue will be displayed on screen.
• Enterprise-Level IT Security—wePresent offers enterprise level encryption, gatekeeper settings, and individualized control over the IP settings.

To learn more, visit www.wepresentwifi.com.

Powerstick+
Many educators—particularly at the postsecondary level—are not in one classroom all day, but instead they move from room to room over the course of the day. This can make keeping different devices fully charged a challenge. This pocket-sized portable charger first must be charged by plugging it into a laptop via USB. Once charged, it holds its charge well until called into use to charge mobile devices. For a cost upgrade, the Powerstick+ can also double as a storage device.

To learn more, visit powerstick.com/main/powerstickplus.