

# Student engagement

## KEY IDEA

- In planning student learning experiences, it is important to consider: 'How does this matter to the learner?'

The orientation towards intercultural language learning brings further considerations in the development of tasks or interactions for language learning. The focus is on students interacting in the target language and culture in ways that develop their understanding of themselves as located in their particular language and culture (and the same for others with whom they interact). For both the student and the others with whom they interact, their frames of reference for interpreting their worlds, themselves and others have been constructed over time through interactions in their distinctive enculturation. These frames of reference influence how they see themselves and others moving across languages and cultures. This focus shifts the lens away from the task(s) per se and foregrounds people and human communication, specifically the role of the student as a participant in acts of communication with others. The focus is on learning to become ever mindful of the interpretations that they make and why, and how, in turn, they themselves are being interpreted by others. For each experience in and beyond the classroom teachers need to consider 'How does this interaction position the learner?' and 'How does this matter to the learners?'. It is through addressing these questions from the perspective of the learners themselves that teachers address student engagement.

### Questions for reflection

- 1 Take a task or unit from your program or textbook and consider how it might matter to your students. What do you notice about, for example, the nature of the task itself, its orientation, its participants?
- 2 How can you enhance student engagement in your program? Ask your students and compare their responses.