

# TEACHING FOREIGN LANGUAGES IN THE AGE OF GLOBALIZATION

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## Abstract

*This article offers a proposal for rethinking language pedagogy due to the emergence of new technologies and globalization and to the digital native students. New teaching frameworks, methods and techniques are needed such as blending learning, storytelling, cooperative learning, personalized learning, competency-based learning, gamification, design learning, self learning etc. The article aims at providing some effective teaching methods that a teacher can use in the class in order to meet the students' needs and interests in the age of globalization and Internet.*

**Keywords:** *globalization, multilingualism, learning outcomes, effective teaching methods, digital natives*

## Introduction

The ease of global communication, travel, and even easy access to English have changed the conditions under which foreign languages are taught, learned and used. People migration, communication technology, the increased connectivity and mobile technology require fostering a new understanding of language education. A focus on intercultural communication, content and language integrated learning, should be given equal importance than only teaching language form and function. Student centered teaching allows a more inclusive learning environment that can work best for students of any ethnicity, gender identity and ability.

New teaching frameworks, methods and techniques are needed, like blending learning, storytelling, games, cooperative learning, personalized learning, competency-based learning, gamification, design learning, self learning etc.

It is no longer sufficient to teach the L2 of some national monolingual native speaker attached to a homogenous national C2 culture. The target has now become the multilingual multicultural speaker who knows how to "operate between languages" (MLA, 2007) and navigate between various cultures.<sup>1</sup>

The new generation of students, labeled *digital natives*, who were born in an age of omnipresent digital media, requires different skills than the previous generation of students. The world is changing fast and the ability to thrive in this new and rapidly changing environment is grounded in a globally focused curriculum. Jingbo Sun<sup>2</sup> considers that language, which is not only a part of culture, but also an important conveyor of the other cultural elements, will be changed or influenced by other agents of globalization and further reflects changes on other social domains like economic, social and political.

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<sup>1</sup> Kramsch, Claire, *Electronic Journal of Foreign Language Teaching*. Dec 2014, Vol. 11 Issue 2, pp 249-254.

<sup>2</sup>Jingbo Sun, *GLOBALIZATION AND LANGUAGE TEACHING AND LEARNING IN CHINA*, *International Journal on Integrating Technology in Education (IJITE)* Vol.2, No.4, December 2013

### **Effective methods to use in class**

Students need a simulation of the ‘real worlds’ outside the classroom in order to put into practice the knowledge they get so that is why teachers need to link their lessons to real world learning. Traditional teaching techniques, which are based on taking notes, are no more effective because students do not need a passive knowledge-consuming process anymore. Nowadays, they are expected to be more autonomous and more self-regulated in their learning. There is very limited or even no opportunity for creative and innovative learning in lectures (Hermens & Clarke, 2009) which contribute very little to real learning. But, if they are used, teacher needs to pause and assess students’ understanding or initiate short discussions. Education today revolves more around **encouraging students** to awaken their curiosity and desire to learn.

Language teaching methodologies have evolved from the most traditional ones like the *Grammar Translation* method (19<sup>th</sup> century), the Audio-lingual method (20<sup>th</sup> century), the Communicative Language Teaching method (20<sup>th</sup> century) to the newest ones like Social media, Flipped classroom, Gamification, Blending learning etc.

In what it follows, we will present some methods for making the class more effective and encourage students’ participation.

### **Blended learning**

When we design a blended model we have to **start with the learning objectives**. The key criteria for a successful blended learning are to identify the learning objectives, to identify the core learning needs, to recognize the different learning styles, to use different forms of teaching techniques and methods, to offer follow-up support and to evaluate the effectiveness of the teaching process.

The tools that an instructor uses when designing blended learning are: various authentic texts, such as news articles, multimedia, BBC video news, interactive whiteboards (a combination of a computer, electronic projector, and whiteboard), portable devices, such as mobile phones, MP3 players, digital cameras and camcorders.

I think the everyday use of the portable devices, their familiarity and accessibility to students and teachers makes them practical and user-friendly in the language learning classroom.

Other tools that most people are now familiar with are: chat rooms, email, online forums, bulletin boards, audio and video conferencing and virtual learning environments, such as Blackboard and Moodle, blogs, podcasts, email newsletters etc.

Blended learning combines face-to-face and online activities, for example, in the flipped classroom, online activity is introduced before a face-to-face class so that students can conduct further online research, engage in and demonstrate their learning. In other words, teachers CREATE a dynamic environment WHERE students who got a basic level of knowledge and understanding before class can answer the questions about the topic and deepen their cognitive skills.

### **The Desire Method**

The reason why it is so hard for teachers to grab their students’ attention is because most teachers make the classic “About a Topic” mistake. We need to teach for the students, meaning that students need to immediately feel the benefit of the content we are teaching. When we show

a benefit, we create desire and for this, class should start with a newspaper headline, a picture, a brainstorming etc. We have to create anticipation not to start the course with: *“Today, you’re going to learn all about....”* It should be like when a movie is released: we see ‘Coming Soon’, then we watch the trailer on you tube and then we go to the cinema because we got interested in it.

### Design Thinking

This technique is based on resolving real-life cases through **group analysis, brainstorming, innovation and creative ideas**. Design thinking is used to promote creative thinking, teamwork, and student responsibility for learning.

### Self-learning

Self-directed learning (SDL) is an instructional strategy where students, with guidance from the teacher, decide what and how they will learn. Students take ownership of their learning exploring an area which interests them and are not force to memorize texts that they will not recall or forget. It is better to use the mind-map technique and **allow students the freedom to expand and develop ideas**.

### Gamification

This is a method to keep students motivated at any age. Educational games serve the primary purpose of being a game, and a secondary goal of teaching something (Goehle, 2013). Games have clear goals or objectives which are divided into “short term achievable goals that give a seamless progression to players by providing frequent rewards that act as external motivators” (de-Marcos, Dominguez, Saenz-de-Navarrete & Pages, 2014: 82).

### Social media

Social media is embedded into the students’ lives and helps create a collaborative learning environment and engage students in a discussion and provide feedback. Possible social media tools can be Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube, Instagram etc.

The different social media platforms can be used wisely to make the course more interesting and engaging. For instance, students can be asked to follow scientists on Twitter and share his/her new thoughts and findings or to use YouTube to listen to documentaries or Pinterest account for sharing images for some projects or writing prompts.

### What should students need to achieve?

Students need to learn vocabulary, at least a few thousand lexical items in 1 or 2 years of university level instruction, they also need to develop basic or even more advanced knowledge of grammatical structures and norms of language usage. They must be able to take part in simple or even more sophisticated verbal interaction contexts. They have to obtain knowledge about the history, life, and cultural products of English speaking countries and to successfully demonstrate their language acquisition in a globalized, super-complex world.

### Can vocabulary be taught?

Wilga Rivers wrote: “*Vocabulary cannot be taught*. It can be presented, explained, included in all kinds of activities, and experienced in all manner of associations...but ultimately it is learned by the individual. As language teachers, *we must arouse interest in words* and a certain excitement in personal development in this area...We can help our students by giving them ideas on how to learn, but each will finally learn a very personal selection of items, organized into relationships in an individual way. (*Communicating Naturally in a Second Language*, CUP).

When learning vocabulary, students label the words then they categorize them and finally they construct a network of words. If they have gaps in vocabulary knowledge, they can use the L1 word, gesture and mime, synonyms, description or paraphrasing.

Here is a summary of what can be relevant to the subject of word learning given by Scott Thornbury (2002):

- repetition (words are remembered if they have been met several times)
- retrieval practice effect (the act of retrieving a word from the memory makes it more likely that the learner will be able to recall it again later)
- spacing (it is better to distribute memory work across a period of time than to mass it together in a single block)
- pacing (learners have different styles of learning and process data at different rates that is why teachers need to allow time to students to do “memory work”)
- use (putting words to use they are added to long-term memory)
- cognitive depth (the more decisions the learner makes about a word and the more cognitively demanding these decisions, the better the word is remembered)
- imaging (mental vision to go with a word)
- mnemonics (tricks to retrieve items stored in the memory)
- motivation (spend more time on rehearsal and practice)
- attention (consciousness attention is required).

### Conclusions

Innovation of didactic and learning strategies is one of the basic demands in teacher training.

We emphasized on using effective teaching methods for improving learning but on the other hand, one must also understand that students’ learning depends on their native cognitive abilities and as well as their prior preparation.

From a pedagogical standpoint, the many new technologies make possible a variety of activities that support the learning process. There appears to be a need for pedagogical design models that would assist both teachers and students.

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