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**STRATEGIES FOR CREATING A NETWORK BASED
ENVIRONMENT FOR LEARNING A FOREIGN LANGUAGE
OF MEDIA COMMUNICATION**

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***“Every person is a change agent:
Change is too important to leave it to the experts.”
(Fullan M.1993, 399)***

Reasons - technological and pedagogical

- **role of language instruction**
 - enable individuals to function in the networked society
- **new models of communication**
 - new culture of teaching
- **learning environment**
 - traditional - knowledge transmitted,
 - new - in a practice community, knowledge shared in interaction and collaboration within authentic learning contexts
- **pilot project**
 - collaborative network-based learning environment
 - to promote the process of language learning - positive responses in motivation, critical thinking, competencies...

Language education and ICTs

- Foreign language
 - no more instrumental but a skill subject, a knowledge subject and a cultural subject (about the language or with the language !?)
- Process of teaching a foreign language
 - doesn't transmit knowledge, but create language proficiency and competencies in the use of a foreign language
- ICTs
 - create new contexts for teaching, studying and communication in foreign language
 - transform the knowledge from implicit in explicit and generative – produces identity and culture, promote the creation of thinking and practice communities

Methodological orientations

■ Present situation	■ Future perspective - pilot project(s)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Misconception: <i>virtual</i> as substitute for <i>realistic</i>, technology added to learning and teaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Collaborative network-based environments - ICTs and face-to-face sessions
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● traditional face to face classes, students and teachers at their beginning of application of ICTs,	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Communicative approach: content-based media communication context
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Call for renewed pedagogical thinking and educational innovation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Collaborative action research: building of a sense of community in a multimodal learning environment
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Institutional commitment: training and technology access	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Object of the research: Network based teaching● Context of the research: language of media communication

SCOPE OF THE PROJECT

questions and answers

1. Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) as an Educational Innovation – issues and problems
3. Affordances of Educational ICTs and multiple media use
5. Pedagogical Aspects related to Network-based Learning Environments – social presence (its manifestation, can it be fostered, sense of community) and roles of learners and teachers

Foreign languages and media communication

- Multiculturalism and media education
 - anchored within the foreign language curriculum in terms of both content and competencies
- Context:
 - teaching media communication through a foreign language to provide media literacy to cope with the information of the mass media
- Foreign language proficiency
 - related to multiculturalism...the foreign language classroom is a place in which we can witness a cross-cultural dialogue (Kramsch, 1993)
- Media competence
 - should be integrated into the language learner's/user's competences under the concept of communicative language proficiency

New technologies (new media) and learning

- more independence on the part of the learner
- encourage interactive work
- facilitate direct feedback
- change in the role distribution of teacher / learner
- enable contents to be continually updated
- faster access to teaching materials
- greater opportunities for individual forms of learning
- but also demand more social learning in group and team work

However

“The context for human development is always a culture, never an isolated technology” (Papert 1990).

- New teaching and learning media do not automatically lead to a new culture of learning but offer the opportunity for change.
- New media are not a replacement for present models of language learning - their adoption should contribute to an evolution towards the concept of a new culture of learning.

Connection between technologies and foreign language learning

- behavioristic and cognitivist period
 - reality was represented and knowledge was transmitted
 - a computer was a teacher substitute (CALL)
- constructivist period
 - Emergence of educational telecommunications
 - NBLT – Network based language teaching a new mode of language teaching (Kern & Warschauer, 2000) that integrate classroom teaching and technology-mediated modes



CONSTRUCTIVISM and language learning

- In 1980s reaction against the objectivist epistemology of behaviorism in which learning was highly structured, product oriented, teacher-centered
- *Vygotsky - zone of proximal development*
 - Learning is both reproductive and productive social interactional process
 - learners construct knowledge through internal mental structures upon prior knowledge and experience and through social interaction
- *Constructivist thinking of human mind :*
 - not a passive recipient of sensory perceptions, but an active constructor of knowledge - meaningful learning happens in authentic collaborative and cooperative contexts
 - basis for analysing education as communication
- emergence of the *communicative language teaching* movement

Constructivism and language learning action research

- “... knowledge is an active process of construction... learning take place embedded in the contexts to which it is most relevant in everyday life and with which the students are personally involved.” (Knuth & Cunningham 1993)
- pedagogical implications relevant from the viewpoint of the action research project:
 - include one’s own construction of interpretations
 - appreciation of multiple perspectives
 - embedding learning in relevant contexts
 - personal meaningfulness and involvement
- provide the basis for creating a collaborative network-based learning environment for foreign language and media communication teaching

Collaborative learning environment

- **Workspace** - teaching-studying-learning process emphasizes interaction with other learners
- **participants work together** on all phases of a project - building shared meanings and mutual understanding through social interaction
 - existing knowledge is mediated
 - new knowledge is created
- **integrated, multimodal collaborative model** - develops through networked participation in:
 - discussions and activities
 - working on assignments together
 - evaluating and sharing learning resources
 - content of the course is constructed and developed by the participants

Communicative competence

- Communication is authentic, genuine, real-time, dialogic and technology-facilitated
- Hymes (1972) - what a speaker needs to know in order to be communicatively competent in a speech community - shift in linguistic research from a structural approach to a functional approach
- importance of pragmatic, communicative and cross-cultural proficiency - what one does with language rather than how one creates a language system
- focus on intercultural communicative competence and intercultural learning developing a capacity to encounter foreignness and otherness in intercultural communication

Content based language teaching

- Foreign language is a skill subject, no longer only an instrumental subject; it is a knowledge subject and a cultural subject.
- Integration of language learning and content learning
 - based on a subject-matter core
 - uses authentic language and texts
 - appropriate to the needs of specific groups of students
- Course content from the perspective of the learners
 - learner's task: autonomy, collaboration, initiative-taking, responsibility-assuming, distributed expertise, shared cognition
 - the content is not a static issue but consists of fluid course elements.
- Shift from linear course model towards using multiple sources for learning.

Communities of learning and practice

- Learning involves participation in a community of practice
Lave and Wenger
- A typical traditional classroom:
 - students passive receivers
 - everyone is taught the same thing at the same time
 - all students are expected to learn more or less the same things
- In learning communities:
 - opportunities to plan and organize research and problem solving together with opportunities to work collaboratively to achieve important goals
- In network based communities:
 - learners feel socially present in a mediated situation
 - feel part of the larger social context contributing to interaction - collaborative learning
 - learner satisfaction affects motivation, attitudes and social cohesion
- Importance of distributed expertise
 - students are allowed to specialize in particular areas so that the community can capitalize on diversity

Teacher and Learner Roles in Communicative Language Teaching

- emphasis on the process of communication rather than mastery of language forms
- learner as negotiator:
 - joint negotiator within the group and within the classroom procedures and activities which the group undertakes
- Teacher roles:
 - teacher, course designer and materials provider, collaborator, researcher, and evaluator.
 - may not be in the position of being the 'primary knower'
 - consultant who has knowledge of communication practices but who needs to 'negotiate' with the students on how best to exploit these practices to meet the objectives they have
- relationship is much more one of partnership

Conclusion

- pilot project – result of a call for renewed pedagogical thinking in this educational area
- create a new powerful learning environment
- with or without technologies – find the best conditions to create a learning community that will learn in the best possible way
- role of information and communication technologies in foreign language pedagogy
- what is the role of foreign language education in a modern digital society...



Thank you for your attention!