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**A “MAKEUP” OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE ACQUISITION   
IN ХХІ CENTURY**

**«МОДЕЛЬ» ЯЗЫВОГО ОБРАЗОВАНИЯ В 21 ВЕКЕ**

**«МОДЕЛЬ» ІНШОМОВНОЇ ОСВІТИ У ХХІ СТ.**

*Annotation*

This article attempts to focus on a set of the 21st century basic building blocks needed for education process in regard to the second language acquisition which have been measured, supported by quality research, that illustrate a broad range of assessment approaches done by leading scientists in the field of education in the last years and subject to improvement through teacher actions.

The article is intended to acquaint all those who are engaged in the field of education with the current state of 21st century competencies assessment, and offer some guidance to help educators compare measures and implement an assessment system. It discusses the issues of language policy that take place nowadays.

*Keywords:* “postmodern” society, second language acquisition, competencies, list of core subjects and 21st century themes, “program design”.

Анотація

У статті здійснено спробу стисло, однак максимально аргументовано дослідити базові складові сучасного процесу навчання у вищій школі, зокрема його ланки іншомовної освіти. Проаналізовано кожну окрему складову та запропоновано певні аспекти, які є сьогодні вкрай важливими для позитивної динаміки означеного процесу; проілюстровано широкий спектр способів та підходів евалуації, досліджених провідними вченими у галузі іншомовної освіти в останні роки.

Стаття має на меті ознайомити усіх, хто є безпосередніми учасниками навчального процесу, з поточним станом розвитку ланки іншомовної освіти на початку третього тисячоліття; пропонує певні рекомендації педагогам з метою порівняння способів системи оцінювання. Стаття обговорює питання мовної політики, які мають місце нині.

*Ключові слова:* сучасне постмодерне суспільство, іншомовна політика, компетенції, перелік ключових предметів та тем навчання у 21 столітті, «програмний макет (розробка, каркас).

Аннотация

В статье сделана попытка кратко, однако наиболее аргументировано исследовать основные составляющие современного учебного процесса в системе высшего образования, включая его составляющую – языковую отрасль. Проанализировано каждый отдельный компонент и предложено некоторые аспекты, которые особенно важны для положительной динамики процесса обучения; проиллюстрировано широкий спектр способов и подходов оценивания, разработанных ведущими учеными в области иностранного языка в последние годы.

Статья призвана ознакомить непосредственных участников образовательного процесса с текущим состоянием управления образования иностранных языков в начале третьего тысячелетия; предлагает конкретные рекомендации для учителей с целью сравнения способов системы рейтингования. В статье рассматривается вопросы о языковой политике, имеющие место в настоящее время.

*Ключевые слова:* современное постмодерное общество, образование в сфере иностранного языка, компетенции, ключевые вопросы и темы в XXI веке, «программный макет (разработка, каркас).

***Stating a problem***

Today as never before, the society needs educational excellence. This strong necessity is caused by the globalization of the economy, increasingly diverse and interconnected populations, and rapid technological change that are posing new and demanding challenges on the individuals and societies alike. The educators are wrestling and rethinking what knowledge and skills students will need for their success and the educational strategies required for all children to achieve them. And there is also widespread consensus, however, that the education systems are failing to adequately prepare all students with the essential 21st century knowledge and skills necessary to succeed in life, career and citizenship.

***The rationale of the article***

With this philosophy in mind we see the strong necessity to analyse the current state of affairs regarding to education, more precisely to the learning and teaching of foreign languages in the 21st century: what should all the participants of educational process either a student, or a lecturer, or the university administration keep in mind nowadays. This article is going to discuss separately all the essential points of the entire educational process.

***Overviewing the material***

The first component of the entire complex system we are to examine firstly is society. Social scientists working in the field of education have identified a number of aspects which they suggest will typify “postmodern” society. These characteristics with the advent of the era of globalization are relevant everywhere and these are to be accounted while elaborating the educational process in the 21 century. To the most significant aspects of a “postmodern” society we refer [1; 3; 5]: *1) a fragmented society:* a society divided into smaller “communities” which extend across national borders (The notion of a “culture” will be replaced by “cultures” – in which meanings, customs, habits, and references will vary considerably, even within the same geographical area.); *2) decline of national government:* globalization as a dominant feature, limits the power and relevance of national governments. Supranational governments and businesses will exercise greater influence; *3) rapid (dis)appearance of jobs:* technology causes the disappearance of many types of jobs, but also the emergence of new ones; and here, making choices, decisions and adapting will be essential; *4) spread of “the market”:* the force of the market is evident in all spheres of life: education, health care, religion, the family, etc. Globalization will also lead to standardization in the market; *5) influence of electronic media.* Electronic media dominate as the principal means by which people receive information and spend their leisure time. Electronic media far outweigh.

If to speak about the second component and that is, in our case, the so called “portray of the 21st century student”. It is not simply a wish or purely personal will to try to understand the modern youth, but it is viewed at present as a “duty” of a teacher that is – to be aware of the process that take place within the educational process one of the main “hero” of which is a :modern” student. Thus, the findings revealed via countless scientific researches show that “the portray of the 21st century student” has the following characteristics [3; 4; 5]:

* Students do not want to be bound by traditional schedules; they do not necessarily want to sit in a classroom to learn or in an office to work. Instead, they prefer to use technology to study at any time of the day or night, telecommute from anywhere in the world and define “balance” in their own individual ways.
* Students like choice. In project-based environments, they use technology to complete tasks in new and creative ways. Their need for alternative methods to complete tasks presents challenges when using traditional measurements to define productivity.
* Students are group-oriented, social and inclusive. They have been taught to be tolerant of all races, religions and sexual orientations. Relentlessly exposed to the world via the media, they constantly network socially. They use the Internet to search for information worldwide and use hypertext links to divert from original searches and learn about new subjects. They are highly collaborative; sharing what they learn with others.
* Students think differently and they are practiced users of digital technology. ICT is the part of their lives; technology itself is not amazing to modern students. Former generations first try to understand how a new technology works, this generation of the young does not marvel at it; they simply accept technology, adapt to it and use it.
* Students are more likely to take risks. They share a common mentality: “If this doesn’t work out, I’ll try again.” Some found wealth as a result; others tried and tried again. Their parents do not think this way and are not as likely to take repeated and similar risks.

In this context, as well, we see the apparent need to give a brief analysis of the “the 21st century teacher” characteristics as they initially substitute the key integrals in the complex system. First of all, the findings have stated that today’s teachers are more educated and experienced than teachers of the past; more than half hold advanced degrees, and have fifteen years or more of experience and today’s educators share the following characteristics [1; 4; 3]:

* They are taken out of their comfort zones by new technology meaning that it forces and requires teachers to play more of a facilitator role − rather than a more directive or authoritative one. This new role conflicts with traditional teaching methods and requires teachers to step back and allow learning to happen without their hands-on direction.
* They work in environments where professional development is underemphasized and undervalued by their employers.
* They need support and planning time. The number one reason teachers experience dissatisfaction with their jobs, causing them to either leave their profession or transfer to other fields of employment, is lack of planning time.

Speaking of the foreign language teacher or educator, it is important to highlight the competencies that ensure positive learning outcomes for students in this field. These include: 1) successfully aligning technologies with content and pedagogy and developing the ability to creatively use technologies to meet specific learning needs; 2) aligning instruction with standards, particularly those standards that embody 21st century knowledge and skills; 3) balancing direct instruction strategically with project-oriented teaching methods; 4) applying child and adolescent development knowledge to educator preparation and education policy; 5) using a range of assessment strategies to evaluate student performance and differentiate instruction (including but not limited to formative, portfolio-based, curriculum-embedded and summative); 6) participating actively in learning communities; tapping the expertise within a school or school district through coaching, mentoring, knowledge-sharing, and team teaching; 7) acting as mentors and peer coaches with fellow educators; 8) using a range of strategies (such as formative assessments) to reach diverse students and to create environments that support differentiated teaching and learning; and 9) pursuing continuous learning opportunities and embracing career-long learning as a professional ethic.

In the light of our research we also will try to shed the light on the list of core subjects and 21st century themes. So, the list includes English, reading or language arts, world languages, arts, mathematics, economics, science, geography, history, government and civics. In addition to academic subject areas, 21st century interdisciplinary themesare equally important in promoting understanding of academic content at much higher levels. These themes include [3; 4; 5;]: *global awareness* **(**understanding global issues, other nations and other cultures); *financial, economic, business and entrepreneurial literacy* **(** knowing how to make economic choices, understanding the role of the economy in society); *civic literacy* **(**learning how to participate effectively in civic life; exercising the rights and obligations of citizenship); *health literacy* **(**obtaining, interpreting and understanding basic health information and services; understanding preventive physical and mental health measures*); environmental literacy* **(**demonstrating knowledge and understanding of the environment and the circumstances and conditions affecting it; taking individual and collective action towards addressing environmental challenges).

The entire “picture” on the discussed issue will not be complete if we don’t discuss the skills that are often cited when referring to 21st century skills. So, they include: *critical thinking and problem solving* **(**effectively analyse and evaluate evidence, arguments, claims and beliefs; solve different kinds of non-familiar problems in both conventional and innovative ways); *communication* **(**articulate thoughts and ideas effectively using oral and written communication skills in a variety of forms and contexts); *collaboration* (demonstrate ability to work effectively and respectfully with diverse teams); *creativity and innovation* **(**use a wide range of idea creation techniques to create new and worthwhile ideas); *information, media and technology skills; information literacy* **(**access and evaluate information critically and competently; manage the flow of information from a wide variety of sources); *media literacy* **(**understand both how and why media messages are constructed; create media products by understanding and utilizing the most appropriate media creation tools, characteristics and conventions); *ICT literacy* **(**use technology as a tool to research, organize, evaluate and communicate information); *life and career skills* **(**Today’s life and work environments require far more than thinking skills and content knowledge); *flexibility and adaptability; initiative and self-direction; social and cross-cultural skills; productivity and accountability; leadership and responsibility.*

And the last thing we are to analyse is correlated with “program design”. Program re-design is one of the most vital aspects of a 21st century educator preparation initiative. Accreditation requirements, state standards; and professional teaching standards add additional layers to the challenge of integrating skills more purposefully into a program and its curriculum, instructional models; and assessments. There is a growing consensus around and evidence to support common fundamentals of an effective educator preparation program. Thus, they include the following aspects [1; 2]: 1) *coherence:* the use of themes, topics, projects to bind lessons together and provide coherence and a deeper focus and understanding; 2) *significant content:* the selection of content that is worth learning and thinking about, which does not trivialize significant issues or make trivial things seem important; 3) *decision-making in the classroom:* a structured plan for actively involving students that aims in making decisions in the classroom; and taking on more responsibility for what happens in their lessons; 4)*. use of students’ intelligence*: the use of a particular set of exercises which require thinking, beyond memory retrieval or repetition, and involving students in hypothesizing, negotiating, planning, and evaluating; 5) *cultural understanding:* tasks and texts which require students to look through the eyes of others, to learn the relative nature of values, to understand why people in different contexts think and do different things; 6) *critical language awareness:*to view all language use critically, that is, to look beyond the surface meaning and ask questions like “Why are they saying that?” “What is not being said?” and “Who benefits from what is being said?” Certainly, the nature of the questions can be deeper than those stated or mentioned above.

Clearly this is just a tiny sampling of the types of thinking and writing that is being done on the issue of language teaching and learning in this era of globalization. But it is an important area of inquiry as so much of who we think we are is bound up in the languages we speak, the languages we choose to learn, and the languages we use to describe ourselves.

***Summary***

In order to cope with these impacts of globalization on education, alternative directions are needed. Education policies and reform designers need to pay closer attention to the issues that have been suggested by many of the leading thinkers of educational development. We all need to be prepared for new world realities such as sustainable ecologies or knowledge economies.

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