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How to Transform Language Education for Next Generation Learners: A Path to Follow in Higher Education in the 21st Century

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Abstract

With the changing face of education, technology is a powerful asset for the 21st century teachers and students if pedagogy is considered as the major concern rather than technology itself. Technology seems very attractive to teachers and students, but it is good to keep in mind that it is not just games and applications. We must see not only it as fun, but also its functional power on learning, teaching and assessing. As teachers change the way they teach due to new technologies, the traditional pedagogy is replaced by student-centered and project-based learning and teaching. This can provide a deeper understanding and learning, and greater student success. Therefore, an effective next generation teaching needs to meet the 21st century expectations. Schools and teachers must be well-equipped with new genres and resources so that they can enhance the necessary skills and attitudes of students; creative and critical thinking, team work and collaboration, digital literacy and others. In order to do this, schools and teachers must change the way they regard teaching in many ways, individually or along with professional aid and development. This paper is a descriptive one which aims to raise awareness in the changing face of education. Its purpose is to assist schools of foreign language administrators and teachers whose target audience is Next Generation Learners (NGL). It highlights some of their generalized characteristics and interests so that schools and teachers regard this paper as a reference guide. Also, the paper provides some specific strategies and models as examples for schools and teachers to enhance effective teaching and learning environments for Next Generation Learners.

Keywords: technology, next generation learners (NGL), interactive, teaching and learning strategies, collaboration

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Dil Eğitimi Yeni Nesil Öğrenciler için Nasıl Düzenlenmeli: 21. Yüzyılda Yüksek Öğrenimde İzlenmesi Gereken Yol

Öz

Değişmekte olan eğitim programı içerisinde pedagoji ön planda tutulduğu takdirde, teknoloji 21. yüzyıl öğretmenleri ve öğrencileri için büyük bir değerdir. Teknolojinin sadece oyunlar ve uygulamalardan ibaret olmadığı göz önünde bulundurulmalıdır. Bizler teknolojinin sadece eğlendirici yönünü değil, eğitim, öğretim ve değerlendirme alanlarındaki etkin varlığının da farkına varmalıyız. Öğretmenler, öğretim metodlarını teknoloji doğrultusunda değiştirebilirlerse, o zaman geleneksel pedagoji; öğrenci odaklı, proje bazlı bir öğrenme ve öğretim ile yer değişterecektir. Bu değişim daha derin bir anlama ve öğrenme ile birlikte daha çok başarı getirecektir. İşte bu sebepten dolayı, etkin yeni eğitim ve öğretim 21. yüzyıl beklentilerini yerine getirmek durumundadır. Okullar ve öğretmenlerin, öğrenciler için gerekli olan yaratıcılık ve eleştirel düşünme, takım çalışması ve yardımlaşma, dijital okur-yazarlık gibi beceri ve davranışları ortaya çıkartmak için gerekli donanım ve kaynaklara sahip olmaları gerekmektedir. Bunu gerçekleştirebilmek için ise okulların ve öğretmenlerin kişisel ya da profesyonel destek almalarına ihtiyaç duyulmaktadır. Kurumlar ve öğretmenlerin, gerekli dijital donanım ve becerileri kazanmak için diğer meslektaşlarından veya eğitmenlerden yardım almaları gerekmektedir. Bu makale, eğitimin değişen yüzünün gerçeklerine farkındalık sağlamak ve hedef kitlesi yeni nesil öğrenciler olan yabancı dil yöneticileri ve öğretmenlerine yol göstermek amacıyla yazılmıştır. Bu yazı aynı zamanda, yeni nesil öğrencilerinin bazı genel özelliklerine değinmiş olup, okullar ve öğretmenlerin yeni nesil öğrencilerine daha etkin eğitim ve öğretim olanakları sağlamaları için bir takım strateji ve model örnekleri de sunmuştur.

Anahtar Sözcükler: teknoloji, yeni nesil öğrenciler, etkileşim, eğitim ve öğrenme stratejileri, 21.yüzyıl

Introduction

"Don't let school get in the way of your education." Mark Twain

Education is considered one of the most important aspects of life. Today not only college education but also language teaching is challenged by the development and implementation of digital learning for the past two decades as an alternative to traditional learning. Institutions, schools and colleges around the world are trying to provide high-quality and professional staff that leads in successful student outcomes, and manage their schools in efficient and effective ways. Even in the 19th century Mark Twain stated that schooling and education did not mean the same. Kwote (2013) interprets his quotation and explains; "You take notes, study for exams, read text books, all that fun and exciting stuff that everyone loves to do. But, if you limit your education to schooling alone, you're missing one of the most informational and practical educational mechanisms of all. If you only learn from what you're teachers or professors lecture about in class, and then you're ignoring the most effective educational tool that we have at our finger." Taking Twain's suggestion into consideration, today's education should carry learning outside the classroom and not limit it within school boundaries. The availability of portable devices, including mobile phones, laptops, tablets, and multimedia players has changed foreign language teaching methods and learning strategies with today's students (Abdous, Camarena, & Facer, 2009), and gives opportunity to carry learning outside the classroom.

There are increasing demands for curriculum revisions to meet the changing needs of learners to create modern classrooms by implementing today's technology. The expectation is that students should be prepared for greater achievement in an interactive learning environment. However, institutions, schools, and colleges are facing problems that require technology infrastructure to convert their current curriculum and teaching strategies into newer ones to equip group of digital learners; in other words "digital natives" (Pernsky, 2001) with the appropriate skills both inside and outside the classroom. As Pernsky defines them "raised in ubiquitous technology environment, this new generation is accustomed to the 'twitch-speed', multitasking, random access, graphics-first, active, connected, fun, fantasy, quick pay-off world of video games, and the Internet." , the change is inevitable.

Next Generation Learners (NGL), or Millennials (Howe & Strauss, 2000) or Net Generation Learner (Oblinger, 2005, p.10) and more similar terms refer to this specific group of learners whose common element is being digitally equipped. Oblinger (2005, p.10) highlighted that; "Whether the Net Generation is purely a generational phenomenon or whether it is associated with technology use, there are a number of implications for colleges and universities. Most of them stem from the dichotomy between NetGen mindset and that of most faculty, staff and administrators." Therefore; the impact of NGL is significant in all areas of learning and this leads to a growing demand to provide the necessary support for learners that schools and universities must cope with.

Changing the curriculum or teaching strategies are not enough to handle with this generation education. Students must be provided with the tools of technology such as tablets, tablet PCs or wireless laptops so that they can become more motivated and involved in their education by collaborating and connecting in the learning environment.

Since technology is regarded as a powerful asset for the 21st century teachers and students, pedagogy must be priority rather than technology itself. Technology seems very attractive to teachers and students, but it is not just the fun of playing games or being a frequent user of mobile devices. We must see its power on learning, teaching and assessing. As teachers change the way they teach due to new technologies, the traditional pedagogy is replaced by student-centered and project-based learning and teaching. This can provide a deeper understanding and learning, and greater student success. Therefore, an effective next generation teaching needs to meet the 21st century expectations. "Emergence into the 21st century features tools that are different, communication that is different, and work that is different. Given this shift, education must shift to incorporate computer-based, electronic technologies integrating learning with these technologies within the context of the academic subject areas" (Niess, 2005, p.509).

Schools and teachers must be well-equipped with new genres and resources so that they can enhance the necessary skills and attitudes of students; creative and critical thinking, team work and collaboration, digital literacy and others. In order to do this, teachers must change the way they teach, along with professional development. They need to be empowered with the right digital resources and pay attention to the benefits of integrated educational tools such as tablets or tablet PCs to provide efficient class management, student engagement and better success. Shortly, the integration of technology; Information and Communication Technology (ICT) into language learning has many positive effects in terms of attitude and engagement, whereas its drawbacks are inevitable due to how well technology is implemented (Munzur, 2013).

Next Generation Learners and Learning Strategies

The term "Next Generation Learners" according to the literature refers to children born between 1982 and 2003 with a standard error of 2 years plus or minus. However, they have been given several other names as Millennial, Generation Y, Trophy Kids, Net Generation, Digital Natives, and more. (Berk, 2009, p.78). So far a lot of books have been written on these learners and their characteristics. In one of his articles, Berk (2009b) lists 20 national and international characteristics.

1) Tech Savvy
2) Relies on Search Engines
3) Interested in Multimedia
4) Creates Internet Content
5) Operates at Twitch Speed

6) Experiential / Kinesthetic
7) Trial and Error
8) Multitask
9) Short Attention Span
10) Visually Literate
11) Face-to-face Interaction
12) Emotionally Open
13) Embraces Diversity
14) Prefers Teamwork
15) Lifestyle Fit
16) Pressure to Succeed
17) Seeks Feedback
18) Instant Gratification
19) Responds Quickly
20) Prefers Typing

To summarize the above characteristics, the first and most significant one is that NGL are technology savvy because they were born and have grown up with the technology. They are a Google generation and they search for everything they do not know. Also, they are interested in interactive media such as social sites or learning applications. They like to carry these media to their classrooms. NGL prefer to learn by doing rather than being told what to do. They are active participants engaged in the learning process. They want to learn everything by doing therefore they try and learn by themselves through multimedia. Unfortunately, they are a generation that gets easily bored with everything due to their short attention span. This causes them to lose their interest in the lesson and feel boredom. In addition, they are impatient and want to reach conclusion in a short time with the easiest way if possible. They are used to interact via technology but want a face-to-face interaction because relationships are important for them. Although they see teachers as authority figure, they want to have one-to-one interaction with them.

They are emotional and they can express their feelings easily. As a result of this, they want to have instant feedback from their teachers. They want to be recognized for their efforts in learning and want to be praised for their success because they have been grown up in a way that their parents have always imposed they do the best and they are winners. And they are rewarded for their success in the end. So they want to receive immediate feedback for their performance at school, too.

NGL are also multitasking and prefer to work in collaboration. They can do several tasks at the same time easily. While they are doing a task in class, they can socialize or chat with their friends who are online at that time. They do not like individual tasks but prefer to work in pairs or small groups because they like face-to-face interaction. They believe that interaction provides intelligence variety while working on a task in class. As a result of their collaboration, they can come up with diverse solutions from different minds. One final thing about NGL is they do not like

handwriting, they prefer to type instead. That's why writing tasks in class might seem a little boring for them because they are used to typing since they were born.

The list can go further but the aforementioned can be considered as major characteristics of NGL that schools and teachers keep in mind. These characteristics could be explained in detail; however, the paper will focus on a few significant characteristics of these learners which should be prioritized before the planning stage of a modern curriculum, teaching strategies and new learning methods, and assessments.

independent.

NGL are fond of their independence and autonomy in their learning styles, which have impacts on their educational choices and behaviors, as Carlson (2005, p.4) stated that their independence is everywhere from "what kind of education they buy" to "what, where, and how they learn." NGL prefer not to have "a loosely organized, unfocused curriculum with undefined outcomes, classes that emphasize passive listening, lectures that transmit low-level information and assessments of learning that demand only the recall of memorized material or low-level comprehension of concepts" (Gardiner, 1998). Therefore, teachers negotiate with learners in the beginning of their academic term to enable them to make conscious choices about what learning strategies work best for them such as interactive PowerPoint presentations or digital learning, project-based work or collaborative work. NGL are easily bored with traditional learning methods such as "knowledge through lectures or PowerPoint slides, memorization, repetition, and recall where the teacher was seen as master and commander" (Brown, 2005); therefore engaging them in various activities, self-directed learning, and interactive learning opportunities would enhance personalized and meaningful learning. "Next Generation learners focus on understanding, constructing knowledge using discovery methods, and active engagement; want tailored and option rich learning; and view the teacher as expert and mentor"(Brown et al., 2005). Tapscott (1998) states that "Their independent learning style has grown out of the ingrained habits of seeking and retrieving information from the Internet, which marks a striking contrast to previous generations of students, who tended to acquire information more passively from authority figures".

NGL want to have a close relationship with authority figures because this is what they have done with their parents. They want to feel special and want to be motivated by their teachers. They expect a collaborative learning with their teachers. They want themselves and their teacher to be involved in the decision making dialogues and goal setting. Since these students are reliant on the Internet, they also prefer to be selective which information is useful for them rather the teacher choosing it for them. This is because NGL do not want to have an authoritve model of education.

interactive and collaborative.

The traditional or conventional teaching methods are not valued anymore by the Next Generation Learners. Lecturing, reading from the books, PowerPoint slides or paper based tests are not welcomed by them. With this type of teaching and learning, usually the interaction is one way, and the students are passive in the process. Students complain that such type of learning is "'time-consuming' and 'short-efficiency'" Shu-Wen (2011, p39). Instead of working individually, they prefer to work in teams or in pairs because they like to share their ideas and interact during tasks. Because NGL is a digital generation and more social both digitally and verbally, they like to participate in activities that encourage interaction. During their interaction they will use their smart phones or tablets as well. "NetGen embraces collaborative learning in both face-to-face and virtual venues" (Skiba & Barton, 2006). In fact, interaction is the core of a learning process and new classes and teachers should provide opportunities for interactions, otherwise, NGL will lose their interest in the lesson and start messaging with friends via social sites or play games during class time which leads to an unsuccessful learning outcome.

praise.

NGL believe that they are privileged and special. They "tend to think that short-term achievement equals long-term success; therefore they focus on grades and not on the processes by which grades are achieved." (Kaplan & Darvil, 2011) they do not want to bother themselves to think but prefer to apply the rules. Whatever they do, they know that they will be rewarded for it because they were imposed that they are 'winners'. Although they are aware of the fact that having a good career requires education and obtaining degree, they prefer to spend a little time on tasks and achieve success effortlessly, but to be praised in the end.

tech savvy: multi-tasking.

NGL were born and grew up in a digital world. Undoubtedly they are competent and comfortable with different uses of media in diverse formats. They are 'digital natives' (Pernsky, 2001) who are digitally literate, have access to information, social networking communities for exploring, sharing, and connecting with friends, family, teachers or classmates. In language education, as many research indicated, learning English or another foreign language only through PowerPoint slides accompanied with a lecture, is not understood by students. Suddenly they discover that they can learn more about a topic. So instead of following the teacher and her slides, NGL prefer to Google the topic and seek for better information that they can understand better. Next Generation Learners prefer learning by hands-on experiences or discovering new things rather than being told or reading from the class materials. They like to Google because they like touching their tablets or smartphones. They enjoy learning self-discovery and taking the initiative to learn.

NGL are considered as 'multitasking' in the literature, and a result of a survey conducted by Keiser Family Foundation shows that between 8 and 18 of NGL report

using multiple media simultaneously, using computers and the Internet at the same time as video games, print media, music, and the phone (Kaiser Family Foundation, 2005). They know they are technologically savvy so this makes them efficient users of technology in different areas and doing more than one task at once. Therefore, they see themselves as multitaskers. While they are googling for information for a task in class, they can handle interacting with friends online. However, they do not understand why their multitasking is seen as a distractor by teachers or schools in most of the time. It is clear that being tech savvy have redesigned their perspective of information, learning, and collaboration in education which should not be disregarded by the authorities.

As mentioned above, NGL prefer to learn through interactivity most of the time by being self-directed. Their interactive learning environments have choices of assignments or tasks so that they can use variety of tools to create their own learning environment, and instant feedback of multiple ways. They "want more hands on, inquiry-based approaches to learning and are less willing simply to absorb what is put before them" (Yuva, 2011). That's why; they want more multi-media based lessons so that they think they will feel more engaged in the lesson because it will become more entertaining and exciting for them. They prefer to learn through interaction with their friends because this provides an opportunity to teach each other, too. The figure in a research conducted by the World Bank and the National Training (2012) clearly shows that NGL learn through interactivity mostly. The Learning Pyramid below shows the result of student learning choices and rates. It is clearly seen that they like to learn through interaction. Technology enables interactivity in diverse ways in and outside the classroom, and students want to be active and dynamic in learning.

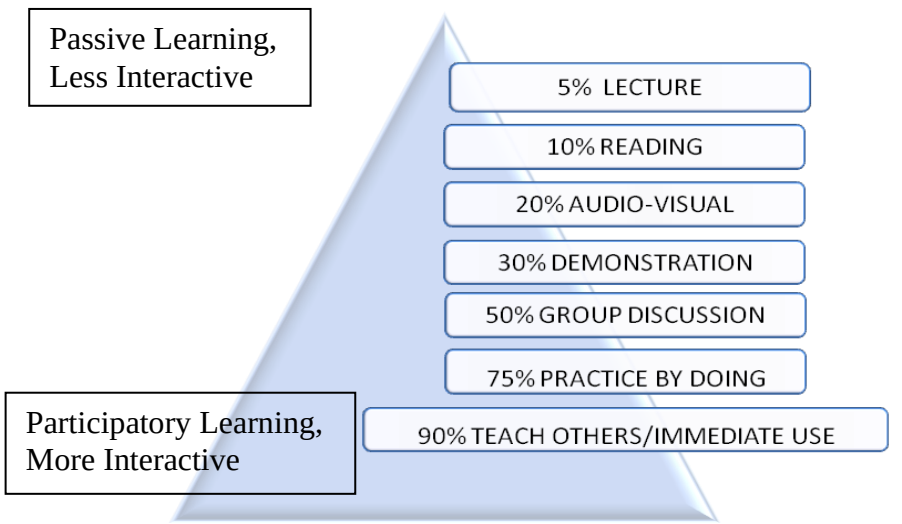

Figure 1

The Learning Pyramid

(Adapted from the World Bank and the National Training Laboratories, Bethel, Maine)

Strategies and Models for Next Generation Language Education

Since Next Generation Learners grew up with technology and all other digital tools of the 21st century, this does not necessarily mean that they will automatically become successful learners or teaching will be effective. It is not only about educating them but also engaging them through "next gen" (Calkins and Vogt, 2013, p.1); teaching and learning designs that would enable a higher achievement for learners than the use of traditional strategies or methods. It is about understanding the use of technology and how to apply it systematically in the classroom. According to a study conducted by Next Generation Learning Challenges (NGLC) which is a United States initiative, recognized that there is a need for "innovative solutions to improve the quality of learning experiences" (Calkins and Vogt et al., 2013). Although some schools or institutions promote new forms of development and delivery methods to improve the quality of teaching, some prefer to stay the same or think that it is unnecessary to make changes or spend on these new demands. In fact, it is not easy to transform the whole education system and teachers at once. It could be gradual and cautious. There are also barriers that might prevent schools and administrators from making the necessary changes because such a big change requires huge investments to provide a technologically enhanced learning environment and infrastructure.

It is important that we recognize the change in students; they are becoming more diverse and tech savvy. Their expectations have changed; they prefer to have class material online or softcopy and they want their teachers to manage technology at proficient level and use learning management systems and apply them effectively. Clearly, the gap between teachers and students are getting bigger each day. In order to meet their expectations and needs, and not to fall behind the innovations of the 21st century education, it is good that schools and teachers adapt themselves with maximum effort.

According to the literature, various ideas about transforming the education have been proposed by many researchers or educationalists. In this paper, the author proposes three major components during the planning of 21st century education and teaching which are considered practical and serve as a reference for the school administrators and teachers. These three components are linked to each other and one cannot exist without another. First thing is to modernize the curriculum by making it flexible, transparent, accountable, and including new learning models. Then technology planning and infrastructure must be reconsidered and revised. Finally, the outcome part of this new plan is assessment and accountability. Transparency is vital and needed to sustain accountability not only in assessment but also in all areas of education.

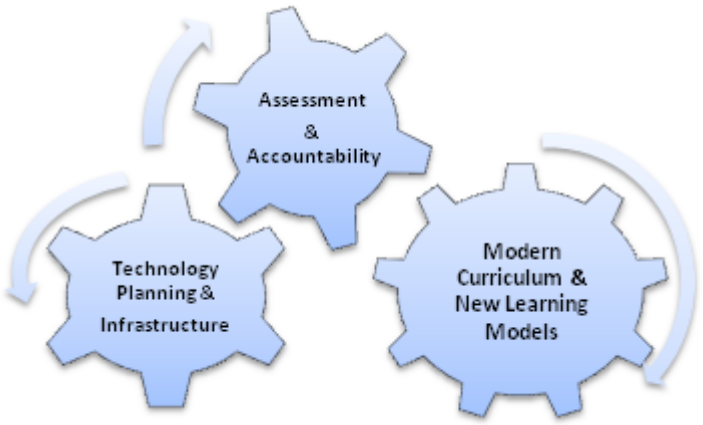

Figure 2

Basic Components of Planning Stage of 21st Century Education

Modernized Curriculum and New Learning Models

curriculum.

Designing a new and modern curriculum is essential during educational transformation. A modern curriculum can meet the requirements and expectations of the 21st century learners because "The analytical-thinking, team-building, multitasking and problem-solving skills" (Brown, 2005) are core elements of 21st century curriculum. Therefore, the curriculum must be well-defined, well-written, flexible, and accountable to meet the demands of education in this century.

While modernizing the traditional curriculum, clear objectives that describe student learning and progress must be prioritized. These goals and objectives must be transparent to the students and parents so that they can see their achievement at the end of each academic year. Student and parent expectations must be discussed and clarified before the establishment of a new curriculum. The requirements of a modern curriculum must be fulfilled in such ways that student learning, style, interests and academic goals must be enhanced with the implementation of right tools and resources. The classroom content must include real-life issues or abstract knowledge which can be visualized by students. This enables students to visualize the learning. A modern curriculum must take leaning outside the classroom. It can be a mixture of conventional and modern learning such as blended-learning. "The ideal blended learning model is one that integrates a wide range of functions that empowers learners with more control to participate in several formal and informal learning activities. This notion of design is based upon building a fully ''learner-centered'' environment to allow learners to navigate from informational to instructional content,

from skills assessment to supportive tools, and from coaching to collaborative environments" (Baldwin-Evans, 2006).

Clearly, a new curriculum and its goals are not achievable if only a curriculum department and administrators put effort in that. The establishment of this modern curriculum requires team work where teachers are involved in every stage of planning. Pedagogic strategies must be analyzed and reconsidered for a new framework which can be developed with the use of ICT resources. Learning objectives and pedagogic strategies should also match with the new assessment standards. So, administrators, teachers and even IT or ICT staff can work collaboratively to supplement the new curriculum with high quality resources such as flipped or inverted classrooms as mentioned in the previous section.

new learning models.

Most Next Generation learning models "often are characterized by changes in traditional structures, organizational habits, and culture such as role unbundling and redefinition, use of time, allocation of funds, and investments in and use of curricula and instructional technology" (Calkins & Vogt, 2013, p.12). During the planning process of a new curriculum and integration of technology, it is a good idea that teachers wear their students' hats on how to teach and be more successful. In order to do such a thing, administrators and teachers should look at some national and international teaching strategies, characteristics and standards such as InTASC (www.ccsso.org/intasc) and consider the aforementioned characteristics of NGL as a reference to transform the conventional curriculum and teaching. It can be a mixture of learner-centered techniques (Cornelius-White, 2007) and technology. Mixing teaching models or methods with a variety of digital tools would enable the teacher and leaners more connected to each other and their friends. "The operative criteria for in-class and outside the class activities to be successful are digital, visual, speed, hands-on, multimedia, multitask, interactive, collaborative, feedback, and connected" (Berk, 2009, p.86).

There are a lot of learning models in the literature, but to name a few are; differentiated learning, project-based learning, personalized learning, game-based learning and learning through social media. To illustrate how to learn via social media; Corbell (2007) suggests that teachers can " make instructional content more portable", "can begin to convert their lectures to podcasts or streaming media files and post them on their course Web sites, or on free online resources such as IPod University, or YouTube, for convenient download" (p.57). By this way, lectures are available online and students can reach class materials anytime or anywhere because NGL are mobile and their learning should be mobile, too. Another model for modern teaching is flipped or inverted classrooms. It is a form of learning through digital media where the teacher introduces the topic in class. Students are asked to practice the lesson at home. Since the lecture is also available online, students can access it anytime they need. Moreover, students can access to other ways of digital media to expand the class content or explore more to have small group discussions in

class the next day. In class, students are encouraged to work in collaborative activities with their teacher's guidance. Furthermore, more subjects can be integrated into this model that provides an integrated study such as students' majors. Their majors can be science, engineering or literature. Therefore it is good to integrate these subjects and facilitate differentiated learning in class via digital tools. The more real-world are the tasks, the more learning occurs. Students can work in a more meaningful environment in collaboration. In the figure below, Berk (2011) has summarized and made a connection between InTASC standards (www.ccsso.org/intasc) and NGL characteristics, and modern teaching strategies. To facilitate learning, and gain specific learning outcomes, teaching in the 21st century needs to incorporate in such a way that students stay connected with their teachers and classmates to succeed and gain a memorable learning.

Table 1

Matching Learner Characteristics to InTASC Standards and Teaching Strategies

In TASC Standard	Learner Characteristics	Teaching Strategy
1) Link prior experiences and interests	Interests in media	Intercorporate you tube clips (tv, movies, etc.)
2) Learn, Diff. and styles	Diversity	Draw on 4-6 intelligences and learning styles.
3) Social Relationships	Use of social media	Plan activities with facebook/twitter
4) Work Collaboratively	Team-oriented	Create cooperative learning, games and improvisation.
5) Multimedia	Tech, savvy	Use music, videos and web 2.0-3.0 technology.

Technology Planning and Infrastructure

interactive classroom.

Today's students have been grown up with the Internet and have been growing up within an interactive world. They see learning through interactivity so school and classroom environment must adapt to the changes and needs of these students because their learning takes place in a digital environment usually with their peers. Technology enables this interactivity in and outside the classroom. Therefore, it is essential that schools and institutions must modernize traditional classrooms with innovative models with technology that meet learning needs of 21st century students.

Transforming the classrooms require hardware, software and infrastructure, ongoing technical support and maintenance. According to MEB (2012) statistics, most schools in Turkey are lack of teacher work station. The research shows that there is only a data projector and a pair of speakers in the classrooms with poor connection to Wi-Fi. The classrooms lack interactive whiteboards, and teachers have to take their laptops to the classroom every lesson, which are heavy and not practical to use. Also, students are given laptops at the beginning of the academic term by some schools, but they are not handy, so students prefer not to take their laptops to the classroom since they are heavy and not user friendly. Undoubtedly, schools in Turkey and many other schools around the world are still using pen-paper due to the lack of efficient equipment.

According to the report by Institute of Corporate Directors (ICD, 2012), even some classrooms do not have access to Wi-Fi or have any laptops continue oral education. ICD reports that such classes are in their "sporadic phase" where students only have a limited time to access a PC or a laptop to do assignments or research. The teacher is also considered as sporadic because the teacher only presents the lesson by her computer via PowerPoint or else, has access to a learning management system. As a result, the interaction is one-way and not considered as an interactive classroom. The second phase is "teacher-centric" phase where the teacher can interact with everyone including the administrators via a learning management system such as Blackboard, MOOC, Moodle and others. The teacher uses this technology in her classroom but the interaction is still one-way in this situation because students are passive on using technology. The last phase is "student-centric" approach where students are actively involved in the learning process hands-on with technology. Students are provided with the necessary equipment so that they can have access to a lot of applications or sites that encourage collaborative work which enhance interaction with peers and teachers. With this approach an interactive classroom is achieved because the learning is two-way in such a class environment.

Technology is improving every day and newer versions of computers or tablets are replacing the earlier versions. Pen and paper or hardcopy books are becoming history since computers are smaller, lighter and portable. Tablet PCs or other tablets enable users a pen technology which is a predominant feature (Blickenstorfer, 2005). In other words, "digital ink" technology is replacing the pen-paper in the classrooms. The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) stated that new millennium schools should adapt Information and Communication Technologies (ICT). In the last decade ICT has become a powerful tool in the classrooms to improve teaching and learning process (Godfrey 2005). ICT is being supported by Mobile-assisted language learning (MALL) with the development of new mobile devices. Vavoula (2005, p.11) defined M-learning as "any sort of learning that happens when the learner is not fixed predetermined location, or learning that happens when the learner takes advantage of the learning opportunity offered by mobile technologies". Smart classrooms should be considered. Tablets or tablet PCs offer a lot of benefits and can be an alternative to heavy laptops. Students can either bring their own devices or schools can provide them for a minimum cost or free.

There are a lot of national and international projects and campaigns being promoted. It is not difficult to encourage governments to promote such campaigns for schools of limited sources. Fatih project that emerged in 2010 in Turkey is one good example for government investment and support in the 21st education. This project has provided 737.000 tablets and more than 2000 interactive whiteboards for state schools, and according to the statistics, learning has improved significantly (MEB, 2012b). The aim of the project is to transform schools into the 21st century education which provides equal educational opportunities for different parts of Turkey, and enhance productivity and memorable learning (MEB, 2012c).

In short, today, with regard to the developing technology, new interactive teaching methods must be incorporated into the classrooms because NGL prefer to benefit from this new form of education. Digital teaching can help students engage in higher level of thinking activities such as problem solving or critical thinking in academic tasks (Munzur, et al., 2013). Moreover, smarter and Interactive classrooms should balance digital and non-digital learning where students need to be able to communicate effectively in person and without technology; fundamental skills such as writing, reading or problem-solving could be practiced with or without computer. The table below shows the summary of the benefits of technology in education and there are some suggested teaching methods for enhancing an interactive classroom by the US Department of Education (2012).

Table 2

Suggestions for Interactive Classrooms

Methods	**Examples**
Broaden access to resources and experiences	• Enable students in rural areas and other underserved regions to access high-quality educational resources
Engage students in active learning	• Replace lectures with individual and group work such as online discussions and content that integrates formative assessment • Use digital simulations and visualizations to make abstract concepts easier to understand • Develop students' understanding of multiple perspective through educational games
Provide individualized, differentiated instruction	• Use adaptive learning environments and diverse resources to meet each students' needs • Use features such as hypertext and multimedia to make • Use online formative assessments to give students immediate feedback that increases learning and helps them move through a learning progression more thoroughly

Enable personalized learning	• Offer a "buffet" of resources that align with curriculum goals, enabling students to shape their learning paths to reflect their interests
Maximize teachers' and students' time	• Use learning management systems and other tools to more quickly create individualized, differentiated, and personalized educational experiences • Automate students' routine activities and use class time for activities that develop higher-order skills

(Summary from US Department of Education, Understanding the Implications of Online Learning for Educational Productivity, 2012)

digital literacy for teachers and students.

It is important not to underestimate the difficulty some teachers may have with changing their ways of teaching. Teachers can develop curriculum and relevant materials that are adaptable to new technologies like tablets or e-boards. If a teacher wants to be able to incorporate technology into her teaching and integrate it into her classroom, training is critical to success. All the equipment in the classroom can be meaningless unless the teacher knows what, how and when to use them. One of the best ways is to supplement the teacher with necessary qualifications. Moreover, some teachers might not be confident or familiar with new devices or new software. Therefore, digital literacy is vital for teachers and school administrators to provide necessary training and time to make them feel tech competent.

Although NGL are tech savvy, this does not necessarily mean that they are able to use all the computer skills. It must be ensured that students have the necessary and relevant skills to perform well in and outside the classroom. Students must know how to write an essay in word, or how to prepare an effective interactive PowerPoint presentation. They also need to know how to use learning management systems as Blackboard, the current learning management system in the school effectively. Clearly, students must demonstrate at least basic computing skills and experience in order to succeed in their tasks or assignments. As can be seen, not only the teacher but also the student must be equipped with the necessary computing skills to enhance an effective teaching and learning environment for the 21st century education.

Assessment and Accountability

As there is a transformation in education of the 21st century, assessments are changing, too. Assessments and grades are considered as learning outcomes which measure teaching and learning. However, with this changing feature of next generation education, traditional formal graded assessment is being replaced by formative assessment which is more meaningful, long-lasting and transparent. This type of assessment is "a process used by teachers and students during instruction that provides feedback to adjust ongoing teaching and learning to improve students' achievement of intended instructional outcomes" (Heritage, 2010, p.9). It enables students recognize their efforts and makes the learning process more meaningful.

NGL usually prefers to use their creativity and technology during their assessments because they will be able to receive immediate feedback and praise from their teacher. Bennett (1999, p.11) stated that impact of technology on assessment in second language is significant. "new technology will permit a transformation in assessment by allowing us to create that are more firmly grounded in conceptualizations of what one needs to know and be able to do to succeed in a domain; by making performance assessment practical and routine through the use of computer-based simulation, automatic item generation, automated essay scoring; by changing the ways in which we deliver, and the purposes for which we use, large-scale tests." On the other hand, summative assessments show only short-term goals are achieved because the student only studies the relevant parts for the tests. In other words, it is just a memorization of the knowledge prior to the test. NGL do not like this type of assessment and think that it is not transparent and does not provide powerful feedback for their learning.

Schools must improve their assessment and accountability practices. While they are applying new forms of assessment, they need to be able examine their language and academic progress and report on regular basis. Reporting must be standard, fair, and accurate for every student. By doing this, schools will be able to define their current and potential learners, and will be able to achieve long-term achievement by being transparent.

Schools and testers must think of different ways of assessing NGL that would match their characteristics and the demands of the 21st century education. "Testers and teachers must work in collaboration to develop new and accountable ways of assessing. Schools and teachers must use the best resources and methods to develop successful and meaningful ways of measuring the learning process." The Council of Chief State Officers (CCSSO, see www.ccsso.org) in the US offered an effective assessment system for NGL. Below is the summary of effective assessments.

- Are grounded in standard-based curriculum and managed as part of an integrated approach that links standards, curriculum, assessment, pedagogy, and professional development
- Use a variety of measures to evaluate student performance on challenging tasks where they apply knowledge and skills
- Involve teachers closely in developing the assessment system
- Evaluate students and schools, i.e., they provide meaningful data for improving learning outcomes and accountability
- Use ICT to provide immediate feedback, give students new ways to demonstrate their learning, and integrate information for analysis and increase accountability

Communication and Feedback

Next generation learners are open to feedback because they are grown up in that way. They were given positive and negative feedback by their parents. They want to know what they are doing right or wrong instantly. "Feedback should be immediate,

behaviorally based, and specific, and should be as clear and simple as possible. Use of 360-degree evaluations (including faculty, interdisciplinary staff, and peers) to offer feedback from multiple sources will be highly valued. Verbal and written feedback is useful tools. NGL are particularly concerned with what their teachers and peers think, so providing that objective information is useful" (Hunt & Tucciarone, 2011).

Conclusion

According to the literature, there is not much research to suggest what strategies would be best for Next Generation Learners. In this article, only a few suggestions were proposed to change traditional curriculum and teaching strategies to deal with the challenges of the 21st century education and meet the demands of NGL. As institutions, administrators and teachers we must consider the general characteristics of Next Generation Learner. To increase teacher effectiviness and engaging and motivating students will require changes in the current system, as well as new thinking and innovation. With the appropriate method of teaching and strategies, crucial effect on students' learning could be achievable.

Understanding the traits of NGL and their needs, the paper is providing humble solutions to make education better and longlasting in higher education in this century. The institutions and teachers should adopt educational strategies that will enable every student to follow a more personalized pathway to success in language learning, and their future education in colleges. In order to apply such strategies, schools should allocate a budget for the improvement of supplies like internet connection and efficient infrastructure, class environment, educational technology tools, and so on. If the infrastructure for effective teaching is provided, the second phase could be the administrators, teachers and students to work in collaboration to provide access to high-quality, relevant content in a variety of forms.

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