

Marquette University
e-Publications@Marquette

Spanish Languages and Literatures Research and
Publications

Languages, Literatures and Culture Faculty
Research and Publications

1-1-2011

Review of *Second Language Teaching and Learning in
the Net Generation* by R. Oxford and J. Oxford

Todd A. Hernandez

Marquette University, todd.hernandez@marquette.edu

Published version. *NECTFL Review*, Vol. 67 (January 2011): 132-134. [Publisher link](#). © 2011 The
Northeast Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (NECTFL). Used with permission.

Oxford, R., and J. Oxford, eds. *Second Language Teaching and Learning in the Net Generation*. Manoa, HI: National Foreign Language Resource Center at the University of Hawai'i at Manoa, 2009. ISBN: 978-0-9800459-2-5.

Second Language Teaching and Learning in the Net Generation focuses on the impact of new technologies on foreign language instruction for “digital natives”—those students who have grown up immersed in a digital- and Internet-driven environment. The editors of this volume have compiled a diverse collection of essays on a range of interesting topics: online and hybrid courses, Second Life, podcasts, computer-assisted writing programs, real-time chat communication, blogs and film, electronic portfolios, and video-based Web-conferencing. The result is an excellent resource for K-16 foreign language instructors who wish to use these technologies to enhance language teaching and learning. Methods instructors might also find the text useful as a supplement to their courses because of the valuable contributions and insights offered.

The book consists of 14 chapters. In Chapter 1, van Compernelle and Williams provide a good historical overview of computer-assisted language learning (CALL) research and practice. The authors describe how CALL has evolved from “computer-as-tutor” (students are provided with positive or negative feedback to structural activities) to “computer-as-pupil” (students interact with the computer) and then to “computer-

as-tool” (students use the computer to gain access to authentic and varied discourse communities). The potential role of CALL in fostering interaction with native speakers of the target language, sociolinguistic and pragmatic competence, and attention to linguistic form is then discussed. In Chapter 2, Niño discusses the advantages and disadvantages of the most recent online technologies for foreign language instruction: Google, wikis and blogs, Skype (<http://www.skype.com>) and videoconferencing, YouTube (<http://www.youtube.com>), podcasting, automatic speech recognition, social networking sites (<http://www.facebook.com>), and Second Life. The author offers helpful suggestions for using these technologies to enhance foreign language instruction. For example, Skype and video conferencing are great tools for providing students with opportunities to communicate with native speakers. Students can upload, view, and share video clips on YouTube. The Cervantes Institute has created an online virtual world to promote language and culture of Spanish-speaking countries (<http://secondlife.cervantes.es/>). Websites and references are provided to assist the reader interested in further exploring the use of these and other online tools to foster collaborative learning with native speakers and other language learners. Fuchs reports on the use of digital technologies in German secondary schools in Chapter 3. Results of her research suggest the need to better integrate CALL into teaching and into teacher education programs.

The authors of Chapters 4 and 5 discuss hybrid learning in the foreign language classroom. In Chapter 4, Goertler reviews the research on hybrid foreign language instruction and then describes the results of a survey on student attitudes and opinions regarding hybrid learning. Results suggest that college students might not be prepared for hybrid instructional formats. For successful implementation to occur, foreign language programs must invest more time in training both students and teachers about hybrid instruction. Rosen describes a hybrid model for delivering foreign language instruction to students at distinct campuses with classroom-based videoconferencing in Chapter 5. The author discusses the successful creation of a collaborative learning environment for students through the use of a course management system that was combined with Wimba voice chat, discussion boards, and other online tools.

In Chapter 6, R. Oxford investigates the effect of computer-based writing programs (*Atajo 3.0* and *Spanish Partner*) on the development of composition skills in Spanish. Student improvement on composition scores and positive attitudes regarding the program support the integration of computer writing-assistant programs in the foreign language curriculum. Results also suggest the importance of providing students with explicit instruction in how to best use these tools to enhance language learning. Bird-Soto and Rengel describe their experiences with implementing podcasts in intermediate college Spanish classrooms in Chapter 7. Their project, *Personalidades de la Cultura Hispánica*, is a series of podcast interviews of authors, artists, and other Spanish-speaking personalities designed to provide students with access to authentic listening materials. In a second project, students produced their own podcasts on topics ranging from music to artists and politics. The authors found that podcasting created a more engaging and creative learning environment. Both projects could be adapted for K-12 use.

The authors of Chapter 8, Ducate and Lomicka, discuss a podcasting project for French and German language learners. The first three podcasting assignments: “Life in your home state,” “Study abroad,” and “French news” each required students to practice speaking the target language through authentic, real-world tasks. Students perceived their speaking, listening, and pronunciation skills to have improved as a direct result of their work with these podcast assignments. The fourth podcast, “Target language podcasts,” was designed for future foreign language teachers in a methods course. The goal here was to provide pre-service teacher candidates with ideas and examples of how to incorporate podcasts into their future foreign language classes. Loza-Wilson and Lozano Espejo describe their use of blogs in intermediate and advanced Spanish courses to foster crosscultural awareness and enhance motivation in Chapter 9.

In Chapter 10, McCourt explores student use of the French second-person pronouns *tu* and *vous* during real-time chat sessions. The chat environment was not sufficient to promote accurate use of second-person address forms, suggesting the importance of developing an approach to teaching pragmatic variation that incorporates explicit instruction, observation, examination, and critical reflection on appropriate language use.

The authors of Chapter 11 and Chapter 12 describe the use of Second Life (<http://www.secondlife.com>)—an interactive virtual-world learning environment. In Chapter 11, Clark describes the use of Second Life to create an immersion experience for students in basic Spanish. In addition, the author shows how traditional Spanish 1 lessons might be adapted for use with Second Life. Cooke-Plagwitz discusses how the characteristics of Second Life’s 3D virtual environment meet the needs and interests of Net Generation students in Chapter 12.

In Chapter 13, Warren describes the advantages and disadvantages of using standards-driven, Web-based portfolios to assess the learning of culture in the foreign language curriculum. The author offers a series of recommendations for incorporating portfolio work into the foreign language classroom. Charbonneau-Gowdy discusses the role of digital technologies in contributing to greater investment in second language learning in Chapter 14.

In conclusion, Oxford and Oxford’s *Second Language Teaching and Learning in the Net Generation* is an outstanding resource for K-16 foreign language instructors who seek to meet the needs and interests of digital natives. The different studies represented in the 14 chapters offer invaluable suggestions for integrating state-of-the-art technologies into the foreign language classroom to create a more authentic, engaging, and interactive language learning environment. The editors and the contributors to this volume are careful to note, however, that the successful integration of new technologies into the classroom must depend on a systematic and planned approach to language instruction based on curricular goals and current instructional models.

Todd A. Hernández, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor of Spanish
Marquette University
Milwaukee, Wisconsin