

Implementing Education 4.0 Trends in Language Learning

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Abstract : The fourth industrial revolution is changing the role of education substantially and, therefore, the role of instructors and learners at all levels. Education 4.0 is an imminent response to the needs of a globalized world where humans and technology are being aligned to enable endless possibilities, among them the need for students, as digital natives, to communicate effectively in at least one language besides their mother tongue, and also the requirement of developing theirs. This is an exploratory study in which a control group (N = 21), all of the students of Spanish as a foreign language at the university level, after taking a Spanish class, responded to an online questionnaire about the engagement, atmosphere, and environment in which their course was delivered. These aspects considered in the survey were relative to the instructor's teaching style, including: (a) active, hands-on learning; (b) flexibility for in-class activities, easily switching between small group work, individual work, and whole-class discussion; and (c) integrating technology into the classroom. Strongly believing in these principles, the instructor deliberately taught the course in a SCALE-UP room, as it could facilitate such a positive and encouraging learning environment. These aspects are trends related to Education 4.0 and have become integral to the instructor's pedagogical stance that calls for a constructive-affective role, instead of a transmissive one. As expected, with a learning environment that (a) fosters student engagement and (b) improves student outcomes, the subjects were highly engaged, which was partially due to the learning environment. An overwhelming majority (all but one) of students agreed or strongly agreed that the atmosphere and the environment were ideal. Outcomes of this study are relevant and indicate that it is about time for teachers to build up a meaningful correlation between humans and technology. We should see the trends of Education 4.0 not as a threat but as practices that should be in the hands of critical and creative instructors whose pedagogical stance responds to the needs of the learners in the 21st century.

Keywords : active learning, education 4.0, higher education, pedagogical stance

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