The Process of Teaching and Learning English to "Digital Natives" in Junior-High School

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Abstract

This paper seeks to examine the aspect of teaching Digital Natives in junior-high school. It introduces the elements of the Digital Natives generation and studies the list of their needs. It ends with proposition of two lessons that can fulfil the needs of DN and with conclusions brought by the research.

Keywords: Digital Natives, Digital Immigrants, Junior-high school, technology, teaching

Abstrakt

Poniższy artykuł poświęcony jest problemowi nauczania pokolenia Digital Natives w Gimnazjum. Praca rozpoczyna się charakterystyką pokolenia i analizą jego potrzeb. Kończy się propozycją dwóch lekcji, które mają zaspokoić potrzeby uczniów oraz wnioskami wypływającymi z badań przeprowadzonych podczas lekcji.

Słowa klucze: Cyfrowi tubylcy, cyfrowi imigranci, gimnazjum, technologia, nauczanie

1. 'Digital Natives' – who are they really?

A new generation has emerged in education. This generation, sometimes denoted by alternative terminologies such as 'Net Generation' (Oblinger 2003), 'Digital Generation', 'Technological Generation' (Monereo 2004), 'Millenials' (Howe and Strauss 2000), is usually called 'Digital Natives' (DNs), as opposed to the older generation called 'Digital Immigrants' (DIs) (Prensky 2001). Although this division into two generations is often questioned (Bayne and Ross 2007; Selwyn 2009), it will be used in the present thesis as a dominant criterion for studies concerning the problem. The critics of this division state that the digital world that we are living in now has been created by Digital Immigrants (Selwyn 2009). Research shows that DNs' ability for technology use remains often limited by social and financial status; while DIs' presence on the Internet and their technology skills are at a high level (Crook and Harrison 2008, Luckin et al. 2009, Lenhart et al. 2007 after Selwyn 2009, 8). This work, however, tries to expand the meaning of 'Digital Natives' beyond the use of technology: even proficient technology users have a different approach to it (Small and Vorgan 2011). In this paper the concepts of Digital Natives and Digital Immigrants are not simply groups that are skilled or otherwise in technology but rather two different generations that have different perceptions of the world.

1.1. Born in the digital world

Since the first computer was built, all digital devices have changed radically. What is more, the cost of electronic components has dramatically decreased with technical progress (Winston 1998). All those factors bring about changes in our lifestyle. The omnipresence of digital gadgets has a huge influence over the way we live. All digital devices are tools that make our life easier and entertain us, and technology changes our brains. According to studies featuring in the book *iBrain* (Small and Vorgan 2011) the mature brain can switch its working model into being more 'digital' after five days with just one hour session with a computer and an Internet browser taken every day. In this study the authors pose a question about the influence of modern technology on young brains. This impact can be dramatic and makes fundamental changes. We should remember that young brains are far more flexible than the older ones (Small and Vorgan 2011). It means that they change quicker and in more complex ways while staying in contact with digital

technologies. What is more, the amount of time spent on working with a digital device can strengthen the changes. This 'time' needs to be considered in two ways – the time of a single exposure and the time in which those 'digital sessions' occur consecutively. Research shows that the young can receive 7 hours and 38 minutes of exposure to multimedia technologies across a typical day. And because they spend so much of that time 'media multitasking' they actually manage to pack a total of 10 hours and 45 minutes worth of media content into those 7 ½ hours (Kaiser Family Foundation 2010). It seems that youths are exposed to digital stimuli in almost all their free time. Such a strong and long-lasting impulse inevitably affects young brains. What is more, children are exposed to technology almost since their birth. In contrast to adults, DNs have no different base of possible behaviours. An opportunity to take a more balanced view – so natural to DIs – could be unreachable for Digital Natives.

1.2. Not only digitalization

However, technology has a great influence on DNs and different phenomenon makes them as they are. One of them is the modern economy and the global market, and its influence affects different layers of human life (Hodgson 2007). Our reality is consumerism-oriented. The media model of life enhances our desire for possession. A happy and prosperous person is shown as one that owns all the 'new stuff' that is available on the market. These factors impress all, but the young are more affected. It makes them believe that money, possessions and physical comfort are more important than spiritual values, knowledge and relationships. Such orientation could provide problems to the motivation to learn. Students learn for a purpose as opposed to pleasure of learning itself, and if in a short period of time they have no results, they abandon their efforts (Sikorski 1999). Social psychological research has indicated that extrinsic rewards can lead to over-justification and a subsequent reduction in intrinsic motivation (Lepper et al. 1973).

Adults are also affected by this desire of having, rather than being. It has always been a problem as Erich Fromm notes, and it began to grow with the industrialization process and capitalism (Fromm 1995). This fact along with an unstable financial situation forces people to work longer. A typical Pole in 2010, for example, spent 2015 hours at work which is almost twice as long as a German (1288h/year). This amount makes us the second busiest nation in the world (just behind Korea – 2074h/year) (Internet source 1). Time

devoted to work and a job makes many absent from their children. Children often need to look for help and advice on the Web, Internet forums, and among their friends instead of long discussions with their parents. Research carried out by the YouthNet in six European countries shows that in five of them the Internet is the main source of information for teenagers (Di Antonio 2011). Youths sometimes have problems with simple relationships, face to face conversation or manners because they are not used to social situations.

As we can see DNs create a heterogeneous group strongly afflicted by the times they live in. They are locked in the trap – they need to be more 'digital' to keep up with their times, and being 'digital' moves their times forward. At the same time they experience a lack of old fashioned abilities that are still part of our life (and could possibly become more significant again). They often have impressive practical knowledge about digital reality, but those skills do not give them an ability to understand the world. They feel confident when they cope with digital devices but lose their self-assurance when made to work in a different way. They cannot replace all the possibilities that technology gives them with their skills and knowledge because they are insufficient.

1.3. Digital Natives` needs

DNs is a characteristic group living in particular times with defined needs. Those needs are affected by three main domains – their age, their brains changed by digital technologies and their surroundings that require specific skills and knowledge.

1.3.1. Specific DN` needs

Needs of the young in general have been well documented (Komorowska 2005, Zawadzka 2004, Korsak 1975, Curtain and Dalhberg 2010), which is why in this paper I will focus only on specific DN needs. Nowadays children must cope with the process of adaptation to the new exigency and this requires much effort. In fact, the situation is modified at such speed that already acquired knowledge becomes outdated by the time they are achieved. An antidote for this problem lies in forecasting the future. The teacher should provide knowledge that could be useful in the upcoming time (Prensky 2012).

Access to broadband Internet has opened the door to an incredible amount of information. While for DIs it was sometimes difficult to find any information, for DNs it is hard to find the proper content. The ability to filter information is one of the most important needs of this generation (Vorgan and Small 2011). Processing knowledge is also

a skill that should be taught. Summarization, transformation or interpretation of written text or recorded speech is not their strong point (Ibid.). Lack of dexterity here could be unexpected for DIs and can make schooling extremely difficult. The fact that DNs have easy access to information has changed their demands in the classroom in one more way, namely, they expect the same from the teacher – they suppose that s/he will respond to their desire for knowledge presented in quick and accessible ways. If they do not understand, they will blame the teacher. The teacher should not give them all the answers but develop their patience and show how to find and organize information.

Digital media arranges data in a characteristic manner – messages are short and topics change rapidly (Ibid.). DNs are used to this method of providing facts and require that in the classroom. It means that issues raised during one class unit should not only be interesting, but also should vary. We are accustomed to having one subject discussed during one class unit. With DNs in the classroom it must be reconsidered. Having different subjects, we should also use different techniques to banish the boredom from the classroom. The use of numerous forms will improve our lessons and boost our communication with DNs.

Another DN need lies in security (Vorgan and Small 2011). They are often too confident while playing with digital media and as a result they expose themselves to the attacks of e-criminals. Adults including teachers are responsible for their proper behaviour on the Internet.

2. Realization of Digital Natives` needs
in different areas of learning English

DNs force teachers to take a deep look at education. Although a communicative approach and Task Based Learning is a good base for teaching DNs, it needs to be slightly improved by additional tools and rules to be re-forged into a partnering pedagogy (Prensky 2010). The difficulty in teaching English to DNs lies not only in the requirements of technology usage that could be sometimes terrifying for teachers but also in the fact that teachers need to relinquish part of their power. The new idea of partnering pedagogy means sharing the responsibility of learning, and it seems to be the best way to struggle with the many obstacles that appear in the classroom full of DNs (Ibid.).

Fortunately, the fact that students are more responsible for their education does not mean we can get rid of teachers. Most of the base knowledge should stay unchanged.

We should alter the way we provide it or make a step further, letting students do it. The idea of "nouns and verbs" created by Prensky (2010) is a good example of how it could work.

2.1. 'Verbs and nouns' – the idea of sharing responsibility in the classroom

To understand better what "verbs and nouns" are in the context of DN pedagogy we should start from a short quotation from Prensky:

> I make the helpful distinction between "verbs" and "nouns", where "verbs" are the skills students should know (such as understanding and communicating), which change little or not at all, and "nouns" are the tools we use to learn, practice and use these skills (such as PowerPoint, e-mail, Wikipedia, YouTube, etc.), which change with increasingly rapidity. I encourage teachers to think of verbs as the part that is fundamental and nouns as something that will continue to evolve continually in our lifetimes (Prensky 2010, 25).

As we can see, we can divide the lesson into two main parts – "verbs", which means what is taught, and "nouns" which means how it is taught. Those two parts are in the "possession" of two different groups that create a classroom (verbs = teachers; nouns = students). This division brings mutual benefits to both sides. Teachers teach what they want (or need to teach in terms of curriculum) and students possess knowledge and skills that are valuable (filtering information, summarization, etc.). Having a great influence on the lesson, students feel more comfortable. The responsibility put on their shoulders increases their self-esteem. They can use technology that is interesting to them. The teacher can learn more about technology and its possible usage observing the children. He creates a digital lesson without the need for providing technology to children because all digital devices are in their hands.

This change could influence students` attitudes toward the lesson. In many cases we do not need to change their approach to knowledge in general. Young people, bored at school, work really hard outside the school walls. They teach themselves and each other all kinds of useful things about their reality. But there they learn to pursue their interests and passions, often becoming experts in this field. Therefore, we can observe an educational paradox – the place where the biggest educational changes have appeared is not the school; it is everywhere *but* the school (Prensky 2010). And this is the reason

for introducing a wider usage of technology into our educational institutions and for letting students have a greater impact on educational process.

2.2. Use of multimedia

Digital technology is ubiquitous and it has changed our life. Our goal as a teacher is now to introduce a greater use of multimedia into our classroom. This is a great tool for education – if we abandoned it, we would waste a lot of possibilities. However, we must learn how to use it correctly otherwise it could bring more problems than profits.

2.2.1. The role of the teacher; the role of the student

All multimedia devices present in the classroom are tools for students to improve their achievements in learning. Consequently, whenever the possibility of its usage comes, it should be the student who does it. Technology introduced into classroom cannot be another tool for a teacher to simply give a lecture. For today's students, the teacher that gives his lectures even with the use of technology is still only a boring, talking old guy (Prensky 2008). A change of tools without the accompanying change in thinking can thwart all efforts. However, teachers often look at technology in the classroom as a thing that disturbs students (especially when they think about cell-phones used by children under their desks).

The more digital media in the classroom, the better for children. We can organize work in many ways letting students use different types of technology. We can divide them into groups and pairs. We can let them work as individuals. Sometimes we can let them change groups during the lesson and make many things at the same time. We should not be really restrict but let the students be creative. Collective use of technology is very profitable because children that are proficient in some skills could teach others (including the teacher). We can let groups compete with each other and work with the same technology. We can also try to organize work in such a way that every next group adds something to collective work or improves the previous version. The list of possible combinations is almost endless and is still growing with every new technology that appears (Prensky 2010).

Even though the use of multimedia is profitable, it raises several issues connected with class discipline. With children using many different electronic devices at the same time, changing their groups and talking to each other, the class will look chaotic to people

not familiar with it. This is the reason why school management and other teachers should be part of the process. Teachers that introduce this type of learning could meet the resistance of management or even be accused of not keeping discipline in the classroom. Students that start being treated equally by one teacher that lets them use all the technology will demand it from other teachers, which could be problematic.

It appears that introducing new pedagogy should be evolutionary and involve the whole school (Prensky 2010). Generally speaking, we must also reconsider our image of the disciplined classroom. In teaching DNs, a disciplined classroom is the place where the process of creative learning takes place. We must forget about silence, equal rows of benches and students sitting and listening without movement. Group or pair work, and the use of different devices at the same time, requires movement in the class. It is impossible also to keep silence while different groups listen to different podcasts at the same time, change their ideas and opinions between groups. Nevertheless, it does not mean that this situation should always take place and there is no requirement to provide rules of good behaviour. The general idea of the functional class is still the same – do not disturb others. Behaving in such a way that annoys other learners should be stopped by the teacher. Moreover, teachers should remember that kids, especially DNs who are used to multitasking, loud music and general chaos of information, have a higher resistance level; what for teachers could look like too much, for them is not a problem but fun (Prensky 2010).

Some teachers are resistant to using technology. Thankfully, it is not necessary for teachers to know how to use all technology – it is not their domain. The greatest role of the teacher is to let students do their best. Of course, it does not mean that the teacher can be totally ignorant in these terms. He should know what can be the role of a particular device or program, be aware of its dangerous and possible cons, and predict possible problems that can appear when certain technology is used. Teachers should be also conscious enough about technology so as to be able to assess students. Teachers need to know if all possible applications of technology have been used. If not – they should push students to find them (Hacker and Engstrom 2011).

2.2.2. What if technology is unavailable at school?

The Polish education is still far away from its counterparts all over the world, for example in terms of technological equipment in rural areas. Fortunately, the situation in schools is still being improved. There are, however, schools without technology at all or with insufficient equipment. Nonetheless, this situation does not remove the responsibility

of teachers for the preparation of lessons for them as DNs. As it was said before, more important than the use of technology is alternative thinking.

If it is impossible to have any digital media in the classroom, we still have opportunity to prepare lessons that will fulfill the DNs' needs. Traditional aids can be used in different ways. The most important is to let students work and create. Modern students should be treated like researchers. A very interesting lesson prepared in a modern way without use of multimedia is introduced in the 91st issue of *The Teacher*. Anna Musielak presents and comments on her lesson for teenagers about social networking and dangerous situations on the Web. The subject is well known to students and really interesting for them as a big part of their life. Exercises without multimedia, are interesting and attract attention (Musielak 2011).

2.2.3. Coping with digital division

As it was said before, the use of digital devices is not only what distinguishes DNs from other groups. In fact, you can be a digital native and have problems with technology. This is the so-called digital division (Prensky 2010) and it could be one of the biggest problems of the future. Children have unequal access to the digital technology and those familiarized with it will have a better start every time a new possibility of technology use comes. That is why coping with digital division is one of the most important of modern school`s goals. As research shows (Small and Vorgan 2011) we do not need to be digitally-connected all the time to gain digital skills and easiness with technology. We must only remember that every child needs to have some access to technology during the lesson and be careful while creating groups – we should mix skilled and unskilled children to create the possibility of peer teaching. When children observe their peers and practice new skills, they will learn more and will not stand out as much in terms of technology.

2.3. Lesson content

I would like to examine the content of lessons prepared for DNs. To make this debate easier I would like to introduce two parts – background and coverage of lesson content. By background I mean our lesson aims and goals, real knowledge and skills that we want to teach. By coverage I mean the processes and artifacts that bring us to the background – the texts and exercises we use to teach the background. This division seems to be helpful since background is the domain of the teacher and coverage is more student-oriented.

2.3.1. Lesson background

Lesson background, as Prensky`s "Verbs", is in the hands of the teacher. Of course, the whole of modern education is student-oriented and lesson aims are prepared to make students' future easier. Nonetheless, it is the teacher that decides what will be taught. Lesson background should emerge from DNs' needs. The communicative approach states that goals should concentrate on skills rather than knowledge. It is not the newest truth but never before has it been as accurate as in the case of teaching English to DNs. To understand better this need, Prensky introduces a comparison of Digital Children to rockets. Like rockets, young learners must be prepared for an unknown future. Considering our changing world it is becoming harder and harder to predict what knowledge will be useful in the future. What is more children`s knowledge could be upgraded during the flight (of life) thanks to many information sources. But like we cannot add new tools into rocket after launch, it is hard (but not impossible) to teach new skills. Those skills that are desired by DNs could be grouped into two categories – informational/educational and cultural/social, both with equal importance and familiar to DIs (Prensky 2009).

In the first category we can find skills that are important during the whole process of learning despite the age and level. Among others these are logical thinking, organizing information and the critical approach to it. Access to the Internet gives us so many sources of information that collecting proper information seems to be the easiest task we can imagine. However, we are bombarded by a large amount of sources that are misleading. Children are used to copying and collecting information without looking critically at them. Many times when teachers ask for research, they receive work that is a result of ctrl +c and ctrl +v activity. We must teach children how to filter information to protect them from getting lost in an overloaded Web. They need to be able to distinguish proper sources from those insufficiently academic. This ability is remarkably important for all students. Another skill worth teaching is summarization. DNs have many problems with drawing the essence from text (Small and Vorgan 2011). Without this ability they often collide with difficulties resulting from an influx of information. Summarization is also an integral part of the process of organizing and sharing information. All those skills are profitable during the whole process of teaching and learning and attractive for future employers (Internet source 2).

A second set of skills is connected with cultural and social issues. DNs often have problems with face to face conversation. Children that spend most of their free time connected to the Web have problems with recognizing facial expressions (Small and Vorgan

2011). They suffer from those inabilities and move more and more into their digital world. The role of teacher and education system is to socialize children and teach them how to behave in real life situations. In previous eras this knowledge had been passed from generation to generation. Presently, parents have often less time for children and do not introduce them into life. If possible, teachers should fill this gap. English language lessons are good occasions to introduce such situations, especially because new curriculum contains subjects like culture, family and social life. Exercises used in lessons like dialogue and short plays give great opportunity to practice etiquette and interpersonal practices.

An important issue is also to teach skills that will be used in a student's future life. So far writing an e-mail, making a PowerPoint presentation and writing a blog have replaced writing a letter, report and essay. Those skills should be taught in our schools as "today`s stuff" (Prensky 2012). But we must remember that our students will start their adult life in the future and they need "tomorrow`s stuff". Every teacher should try to foresee on the bases of actual evidence what skills would be desirable in the imminent and prepare their students for the forthcoming.

Prensky (2012) has conducted a trial and concluded that three new skills are worth acquiring: working in a virtual community, making a video, and writing computer programs and apps. All the required skills of the future cannot be enclosed in a tripartite list; but this agenda seems to be worth considering. Companies often decide to let their employee work at home via Internet using virtual communities. As long as it could give huge savings, it could be the future of many industries. The Internet websites, including digital versions of newspapers, inject films into (or instead of) articles. This fact, supported by the rising popularity of websites like TED.com, seems to indicate that an ability to make films will be required in many fields. Film could be a very interesting learning tool and as such could be easily incorporated into the classroom. Students can create films and stand on both sites of the camera – be actors, directors and video editors. Last skill from the list – computer programming – gives the impression of both the most difficult and most important. With wide spread of digital devices words of Doug Rushkoff "Program or be programmed" (Rushkoff 2010) receive new, frightening meaning. Computer programs are our future and every job of the future could be more or less connected with programming (Internet source 3).

2.3.2. Lesson coverage

With DNs in the classroom, the lesson should be covered by considerable use of multimedia. Extensive choice of texts and exercises should be the result of students` passions and hobbies. Our students` activity after school, for example work in virtual communities concern-

ing games and favourite films, is an evidence of their potential. If we catch their attention properly, we will see the same excitement and liveliness in our classroom (Prensky 2010). It could look like a Sisyphean task – preparing a lesson that will fulfill needs of every student in the classroom. However, we must remember that a big part of the responsibility lies in students' hands. Our job is to create a proper group and to divide tasks to the right students.

As it was mentioned above, students during the lesson should often use technology to find many pieces of information; searching proper sources is one of skills that should be taught. To "cover" that skill we can use lessons based on Wikipedia. This controversial website is for our students first and unfortunately sometimes the only one source of information (Prensky 2007). In spite of the fact that some articles in Wikipedia have really poor quality, some are written in a proper language, in formal academic style with lots of references and further readings. What we should do is to teach our students to distinguish one from another and teach them that this "re-" in research means using more than one source during searching. In my opinion, the best idea is to engage our students into the Wiki community and to let them create new articles and to improve those already existing. This will force them to use different sources than Wikipedia. They will know that articles may contain mistakes because anyone can make them but still they will work with their favourite site. The main role of the teacher is to assure quality and not to accept articles below the academic standard. Creating a Wikipedia article can be easily incorporated into any lesson based on research and will fulfil number of DNs' needs at the same time – it teaches them skills like searching information and summarization, they work in a virtual community, they have feeling that acquired knowledge is used in real life, they create something that exists after each lesson.

No matter what techniques and technologies will be used during the lesson, the most important skill to cover is the ability to pose the right questions. If we really want our students to conduct research, we must interrogate them. In the era of tests, often computer-checked, teachers concentrate on closed questions. If we really want our students to think logically and critically about reality we must teach them how to pose open questions. We should return to the source and recall the skill of posing Socratic questions that are designed to get people to reflect and reconsider their point of view. With this ability and with the access to information thanks to the Internet we can pose the question and let our students think and create instead of talking and dictating (Prensky 2007). We can say: "There are three main causes of … You have 5 minutes to find them" instead saying "Note three main causes of …". The role of the teacher changes to a guide that gives direction and assures that the student goes there in his own way.

The last rule is to let students interact. DNs like to cooperate, that is why we should often use group and pair work. An innovation in working with DNs is that we do not have to demand equal group size. Students often get different tasks or work with different technology and when in one group it will be welcome to have more participants, while in others it could be a complication. Another modernization is that our students can (and sometimes should) interact not only with other students in the classroom, but also with different peers all over the world by means of Facebook and other social networks. Especially when cultural issues are discussed we can use such mediums to communicate with different cultures' representatives instead of merely imagining their opinion. DNs also like to compete. We can let them work on the same project and together choose the best one. Yet, competition cannot be present at every lesson. We, as teachers, should rather find a compromise between competition and cooperation to teach students how to win, to loose and to help each other.

3. Research

Theory without practice is not worth our attention – each theory should be a contribution to practical application. I decided to prepare two lessons exactly for the DNs and examine them in the classroom reality. I have chosen the type of research that seems the most proper for me. I decided to prepare a set of 2 lessons developed specifically for DNs to meet as many of their needs as possible. One lesson assumes the use of computers and multimedia by students and a second is created to conduct it without any electronic devices. The second lesson still tries to be Digital and create the feeling that computers and technology are used.

An exhaustive description of the lessons – all the exercises with classroom language and the used materials – is available in the 3rd chapter of my BA thesis at http://www.academia.edu/4196313/The_process_of_teaching_and_learning_English_to_Digital_Natives_in_junior-high_school

The lesson plans for those lessons are in appendices 1 and 2.

3.1. Findings

The research conducted during the lessons brought, at the same time, both answers and new questions. However, the group that was the object of the research without any doubts belongs to the DN generation. But I cannot say that all the findings will coincide for the whole

generation. I can suppose that some of them will be common to all, but some specific character-istics that are appropriate for this particular group may influence the results of the research.[1]

Preparing and conducting the lessons for the DNs was an adventure and pleasure. Both lessons were appreciated by the students. They were generally interested and active. I assume that the selection of exercises and subjects fulfilled its motivational function. However, while I found that my lessons were successful, I must admit that I also discovered some difficulties and aspects that could be changed.

In Exercise 3 from lesson I confirmed the fact that the digital division is a big problem for this generation and there is a need to make technical knowledge more even. Thankfully, the students that are better at this field helped other students willingly. Unfortunately, that was the reason why they had less time for preparing their own presentation. This exercise also provided evidence that group work may contribute to reducing the digital division and that the teacher does not necessarily need to be a specialist in this field because students can easily replace him.

During the first lesson I had a feeling that the presence of technology sometimes distracted students` attention. I believe it is because the use of technology during the lesson is something unusual. Although the computers themselves are something they are used to, their presence in the classroom is still something new. I suppose that if the computer becomes something ordinary in the lessons, the problem will disappear.

The second lesson in my opinion was quite successful. Especially exercise II.2 which gave a lot of joy to the students (mainly to girls, but boys also were active during this exercise). I believe that lesson II is evidence for the statement that it is possible to conduct a lesson for DNs without the use of technology. I must admit that if this statement were not one of the theses that I would like to confirm during my research I would conduct exercises II.2 and II.3 with the use of multimedia. The solutions proposed in lesson II should be used only in cases when the use of technology is limited or impossible. I realize that exercise II.2 lost a lot of its potential due to the use of prepared printed materials. The prepared base of parts was very limited in comparison to the game that was the source of the avatar`s pieces. Use of the game would also have a great influence on the time required for the preparation of this exercise.

However students` reception of exercise II.3 was very good, I think that in different conditions I would use the real Facebook site instead of the model and the cardstock.

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[1] If any teacher that reads this paper would ever decide to conduct lessons prepared by me (with or without any changes) with different groups, I encourage them to share their findings and send them to me (p.grabowski.ang@gmail.com).

This would make the exercise more authentic and bring this exercise closer to the task-based methodology (Janowska 2011). What is more, the students would get the real skill of making an Internet profile in the English language. Due to the use of paper in cases where computers were available the whole situation was artificial.

Because students were not used to the computers in the English classes, the traditional exercises seemed to be for them easier (as something they now feel comfortable with). It convinced me that for the groups that must struggle with the digital division the combination of traditional and digital exercise seems to be reasonable. In this way both groups (skilled in technology and in traditional techniques) can teach one another and expand their knowledge.

If I had the possibility to prepare the lessons for this particular group once more, I would have prepared and organized them differently. Lesson II would be the first conducted lesson and the exercises II.2, II.3 and II.5 would be the exercises with the use of the computer. I would introduce technology into the classroom this way. Those exercises are partly reconstructive and do not require any advanced skills. They demand only simple activities like filling the questionnaire in for exercise II.3 and are in opposition to the exercises from lesson I that are more creative. Exercises II.6 and II.7 would stay as traditional exercises without the use of the computer. Between lessons I and II, I would introduce one more lesson. Its task would be decreasing the digital gap. The last lesson would be the lesson at the end of the set and test how the students deal with the Internet and technology. In this order, the possibilities given by the first lesson would be better used.

After the lessons students asked me when they could have more such lessons and it was the best evidence that all the efforts paid off. I hope that such lessons will appear in this school.

Conclusions

After my research about the DN generation, their needs and possible problems in teaching them, I came to the conclusion that:
1. The DNs are a heterogeneous group that has been brought up surrounding technology.
2. Being masters of technology is not their main characteristics but constitutes their need and aim.
3. Our schools are preparing better and better to teach the DNs. But there is still a lot to do in improving the process of teaching and learning for the DN.
4. The Digital Division could be one of the biggest problems in teaching DNs. Its reduction should be one of the most important goals for the teacher.

5. Another great need that should be constantly practiced with DNs is the ability of gathering, selecting and organizing information. These aptitudes are essential both in learning at school and during self-studying.

6. Group work with using computers is a really good method to struggle with Digital Division. During these exercises, the students easily acquire technological knowledge from their skilled friends.

7. During the lesson all available technology should be used by the students not by the teachers.

8. Technology should be used as an incentive for expanding the general declarative knowledge and acquaintance with literature.

9. To prepare and conduct a proper lesson with technology the teacher does not need to be proficient in technology.

10. If technology is unavailable, it is possible to conduct an appropriate lesson for DNs using only traditional aids.

11. It is worth emphasizing that the subject of teaching DNs is really vast. Without any doubts, further and more detailed research on the subject should be conducted.

I hope that the solutions proposed in this thesis can be useful and constitute a source of inspiration for other teachers working with Digital Natives.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Lesson plan – lesson I

DESCRIPTION OF THE GROUP: junior-high students, belonging to the Digital Natives generation. Group knows names of clothes and can describe a person. Students can create a Mind Map. They are interested in computers and games.

    AIMS: Students can prepare short presentation, find proper materials on the Internet, organize them and present them. Students can work in the group. Students can assess other students' presentation.

Activities	Aids	Procedure	Interaction	Time
1a. Warm up. What is in the bag?	A bag with game-pad, cube, CD-ROM, chessman	Students put hands into the bag and try to find out what is inside. They choose one object and guess, then check if they were right.	T -> S	5
1b. A clue for the subject.	Interactive whiteboard	Students look for a clue on the interactive whiteboard to guess what the subject of the lesson is.	S; S; S	3
2. Creating groups.		Students try to make groups by asking what their favourite game or type of games is. A pair is considered to be a group.	S->S	4
3. Preparing presentation.	Computer with the access to the Internet	Students prepare short (up to 3 min) presentation about their favourite game. They are to present websites/films etc. about the game during the speech.	S->S (G)	10
4. Presenting materials.	Whiteboard	Students present their speeches and all the multimedia materials they find interesting.	G; G	12
5. Peer assessment.		Students assess their friend`s presentations, its pluses and minuses. They try to choose the best one.	S->G	5
6. Summarization and opinion sharing.		Students say what they can do after the lesson. They share opinions and pieces of advice about their work. They teach one another how to find information and work in group.	S->S	5

Extra activities

Further activities – lesson about an avatar and pros and cons of computer games.

Appendix 2. lesson plan – lesson II

DESCRIPTION OF THE GROUP: junior-high students, belonging to the Digital Natives generation. Group knows names of the clothes and can describe a person. Students can create a Mind Map. They are interested in computers and games.

   AIMS: Students can describe a person – his clothes and general look, can say something about person`s history, hobbies and interests. Can use structure "his favourite ... is ..." . Can name advantages and disadvantages of computer games.

Activities	Aids	Procedure	Interaction	Time
1. Worm up. What the avatar is.		Teacher poses simple questions about computer avatars, students respond.	T -> S	2
2a. Let`s make an avatar – preparation.	Pieces of avatar	Students name parts of an avatar – clothes, hairs etc.	S; S; S	4
2b. Making an avatar.	Pieces of avatar	In group prepares their avatar using parts prepared by the teacher. During preparation they speak English.	S->S (G->G)	10
3. Who are they? – creating a history of an avatar.	Facebook profile questionnaire	In group prepares a Facebook profile of the avatar created by other group. They write sentences on a piece of paper. They use a printed questionnaire as a model.	S->S (G->G)	10
4. Description of the avatar – his look, life and hobbies.	Avatar, facebook profile	Second group describes avatar`s look, first group describes avatars life and hobbies using Facebook profile.	G-G	5
5a. Posting a status on the Facebook wall.	Whiteboard	Students in pairs create statuses for their avatar then write them on the wall. Students vote for the best status (cannot vote for their own).	P -> G	6
5b. Commenting on the status.	Whiteboard	Students can comment on statuses like in Facebook.	S ->G	3
6. Pros and cons of computer games – discussion.		Students discuss pros and cons of computer games.	S->S, S->T	10
7. MM as a summary of the discussion.	Whiteboard	Students create MM "Computer games – pros and cons" as a summary of the discussion.	S; S; S	3
8. What can we do?		Students say what they can do after lesson.	S->T	2

Extra activities: creating an avatar with instruction of other student.
Further activities: writing the story of an avatar.

This paper is an edited version of the author's BA thesis written under the guidance of dr Zawadowska-Kittel in Lingwistyczna Szkoła Wyższa in Warsaw.