IMPLEMENTING 4CS INTO STUDENT CENTERED CLASSROOM

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Abstract
This article deals with the peculiarities of implementing 21st century skills into language classroom. It encourages students to think outside the box and think about ways to give directions using a computer, a mobile phone, a television, or a YouTube video. While there may be some L1 use in the classroom, the goal is for the final product to be in English.

Keywords: skills, teaching, collaboration, communication, creativity, critical thinking.

The language classroom of the 21st century goes beyond teaching and learning language skills and language areas, such as grammar and vocabulary. To satisfy the needs and overcome the challenges of the new age, one needs to master not only language skills, but also additional necessary skills which are believed to be crucial competences in the new century, otherwise known as 21st century skills, which mainly include critical thinking, collaboration, communication, and creativity.

As language teachers, it's a matter of blending the 4Cs more thoughtfully into a student-centered classroom where learners can engage in high-interest content that is relevant, useful, and promotes innovation.

Take your average prepositions lesson as an example. Even in the best communicative classroom, a teacher may still spend time explaining the rules, setting up the activity and delivering instruction. By applying the 4Cs we can turn this lesson a bit more on its head, making a typical ELL grammar lesson magical.

For example:

Collaborate: Start by handing out magazines or picture books. Have the students work together and choose a picture.

Communication, critical thinking, and creativity: Ask your students to work together to create two ways to give directions. One set of directions for a student who is blind. Another set of directions for a student who is deaf.

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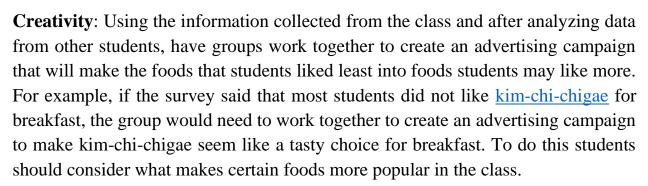
Encourage students to think outside the box and think about ways to give directions using a computer, a mobile phone, a television, or a YouTube video. While there may be some L1 use in the classroom, the goal is for the final product to be in English. Stand back and watch your learners go.

Another way to engage with 21st-century skills using a typical ELL lesson: the "What's your favorite food lesson?" At some point, we have all experienced it.

Collaborate: In groups, have students create a survey to assess classroom interest in 10 different foods representing different types of meals (breakfast, lunch, dinner, dessert).

Communication: Once finished, have learners use the information to create a pie or bar graph to communicate the results and determine which meals are the favorite.

Critical thinking: Have the students compare their answers with answers from other groups. How many differences are there in the reporting? Is the information consistent with the same foods or does it change drastically? Have students compare their results with other teams. Then ask the groups to create a short written or spoken piece to explain how their results differed from other students.

Creativity: Using the information collected from the class and after analyzing data from other students, have groups work together to create an advertising campaign that will make the foods that students liked least into foods students may like more. For example, if the survey said that most students did not like kim-chi-chigae for breakfast, the group would need to work together to create an advertising campaign to make kim-chi-chigae seem like a tasty choice for breakfast. To do this students should consider what makes certain foods more popular in the class.

This may require further follow-up interviewing to find out why students like one thing and not another; this information can then be used in the campaign. This lesson may play out over a few days, but in the end, everyone involved will have gotten much more out of the lesson than they had anticipated.

Both of these examples represent the use of skills in the ELL classroom. Each lesson also embeds, in one way or another, critical STEM skills.

In the preposition lesson, the students may use engineering and technology to find a better way to give directions. In our favorite foods lesson, students engage with science (and a bit of sociology) and mathematics. Altogether it becomes a rounded

classroom experience where teachers have an active role as facilitators and students become inspired, self-guided learners who still manage to work inside of the confines of the curriculum.

In the end, 21st-century skills, and using them in the classroom is not really about teaching at all. These skills are truly ones that will spell success for our learners in the future, leading them to be capable, Independent and curious individuals.

Our real challenge as educators is to model a desire to embrace the known, the unknown, and the just plain unknowable. As Alwin Toffler, writer and futurist, put it: "The illiterate of the 21st century will not be those who cannot read and write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn, and relearn."

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