

The President's Message
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The iGeneration: New Attitudes, New Concepts, New Ideas

This year's 2010 NYSAFLT Annual Conference theme certainly addresses a topic that's been on the minds and lips of many educators recently. As I looked to define the term of iGeneration, I encountered phrases such as: a group that sets precedents for the use of technology; is highly connected and is all about communication. Technology, connections and communication, it seems like the perfect combination for any language classroom.

As someone educated in the 60's and 70's though and having begun my teaching career in a world without personal computers, I pods, cell phones, DVD's etc., how do I relate to students who have not only grown up with these technologies but consider them essential? How can I bridge the gap between myself a "digital immigrant" and my students who are definitely "digital natives"? How can I tap into the strengths that today's students bring to my classroom? These are some of the issues that we can explore together this year at the 93rd NYSAFLT Annual Conference.

Another important question is, what are the implications of these differences in our student population for our classroom instruction? If you read Dr. Larry Rosen's book *Rewired* or *grown up digital* by Don Tapscott it becomes clear that we need to carefully examine our teaching practices. Today's students are different than the students from my generation. But we need to be careful. How many times have you told your language students that different doesn't mean worse – it just means different.

In order to become a better teacher in our new digital age, Don Tapscott suggests that you "reinvent yourself". While he warns that we need to "focus on change in pedagogy, not technology" he also recommends that we "use technology to create a student-focused, customized, collaborative learning environment". This year's conference is the perfect place to begin or to continue with the reexamination of our teaching strategies. Take advantage of this opportunity to find new ways to meet the needs of your students or to keep in touch with the technology that is an integral part of our students' everyday lives.

I hope that you enjoy this time for professional growth and are able to come away with your own new attitudes, new concepts, and new ideas. Have a productive and fruitful conference.