



## TEACHING GERMAN WITH DIGITAL MEDIA

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### Abstract:

Digital media is spreading in all areas of our lives, and education is no exception. Nowadays, there are many ways to use digital media in GFL lessons. Neither teachers nor students have the necessary digital skills. This article examines the specific characteristics of generation Z that affect the structure of the educational process, and against this background, criteria for the rational use of digital media in GFL lessons are determined.

**Keywords:** digital media, DaF lessons, Generation Z, evaluation criteria, applications and tools

Digital media are now increasingly used in all areas of human life. The ongoing digitization has also had a very strong impact on learning. The use of educational platforms and Internet applications in classes has now become an integral part of the educational process. At this point, the question arises as to how teachers can integrate digital media into the educational process and how to improve the quality of teaching. Therefore, it is a matter of the skills of teachers and students to work with such information media and their rational use in teaching a foreign language. Unfortunately, we can observe a lack of such skills and a lack of didactic approaches. Therefore, it is important to determine the criteria for the thoughtful use of digital media.

Often referred to as digital natives, Generation Z is unique in that it is a generation called millennials within the generational theory of William Strauss and Neil Howe. A generation is a community of people who share, combine certain values, age and socio-cultural characteristics. Time limits are defined differently, with the average being 1995-2010 or 2000-2020. There are also synonyms to describe this generation, such as the Internet generation/IGen, Digital Natives, Homelands, and Screensters (those who receive information through screens). The following are typical of Generation Z people.

- they have good technical knowledge and are always in contact with other people 24/7, always on social networks;
- they need technologies that are easy to use and solve their problems, technologies that help coordinate their activities, or technologies that provide them with relevant information or people;
- they search for answers on Google and YouTube, but often do not have the critical thinking skills developed enough to evaluate information sources. They would rather watch a summary video than read an article;
- they strive for individualization in all spheres of life;

- high level of pragmatism;
- DIY principle - do it yourself; Growing up on YouTube videos, they are convinced that they can do almost anything on their own;
- Lost advantage syndrome (FOMO - fear of missing out). Generation Z is constantly afraid of missing out on something important and not moving forward fast enough.

In addition, students of this generation have the ability to quickly switch from one activity to another, but they have difficulty concentrating and maintaining voluntary attention. This is also closely related to their age. Some studies have shown that the brains of Generation Z are structurally different from those of other generations and process complex visual forms more efficiently. Therefore, it is appropriate to use short videos in classes as educational material (presentation, listening, motivation for discussion, as an example for collecting dialogues, etc.).

Students are very pragmatic and strongly focused on hands-on experience. Therefore, project work and problem-oriented forms of education (for example, the case method) are suitable for them. Reflection plays a special role here. Students see the teacher not as a source of knowledge, but as a person who evaluates their experience. A teacher acts as a leader or coach/supervisor. The information society always requires students to communicate not only face-to-face, but also virtual. Digital media has become a means of understanding the world.

So, unfortunately, asking people to put down all their cell phones and gadgets does not lead to good knowledge. Incorporating gadgets into the learning process, including finding additional current information here and now, will be more effective because it has sparked interest. In our opinion, there is a contradiction between the use of mobile phones and gadgets in everyday life and the use of them in the educational



process. Compared to other fields, digital media is less used in learning. Teachers are often very closed to digital media. This indicates a lack of digital competence among students and teachers. With this report, we primarily want to encourage teachers to make more use of digital media in their GFL lessons, to develop their own digital skills, and to encourage students to navigate independently through the wide range of educational applications on offer. DaF lessons are characterized by the development of communicative skills. Interaction plays an especially important role here. This can be easily achieved through targeted use of digital media. Students can not only create and edit texts through multimedia, especially visual language approaches and listening, but they can also engage in direct linguistic interaction with each other. Communication and interaction are inevitable, allowing for the creation of group work products called effective applications.

There are many digital solutions for teaching and the choice of apps and tools that can be used in GFL lessons is vast. But the question always arises, which applications are suitable for developing which skills and competencies in language acquisition. Reasonable and reflective selection of digital media plays a crucial role. In didactic literature, you can find interdisciplinary assessment criteria. In particular, three dimensions are taken into account, i.e. didactic, technical and technological dimensions.

Didactic dimensions include aspects such as action orientation, interaction orientation, learning autonomy, and reflection. Action orientation in GFL teaching refers to a form of teaching that allows students to communicate in a foreign language to achieve specific goals. Interaction orientation is associated with the term "social learning". Hence, cooperation, collaboration and communicative forms of work are supported. Through reflection, students are able to identify their strengths and weaknesses and think about how to improve the situation. This is learning autonomy when students engage with their learning consciously and reflexively and design their own learning paths in a very purposeful way.

Today, as part of the information society, we have many opportunities to use digital media in the classroom. But this does not mean that digital media should be used without restrictions. Everything that is possible has no methodological and didactic meaning. A large number of applications and tools can only supplement the learning process. Digital media allows students to repeat learning material at their own pace multiple times at any time. Students can also download texts, presentations, audio and video files, which in turn

support training opportunities. Digital media promotes self-learning, peer learning and peer assessment, provides instant feedback and visualization, and promotes a competitive spirit that plays a special role for ZGeneration will do. Digital media have advantages that we can use and can enrich our lessons, but we as teachers must always remember to ask the questions of why, how and when and which digital media we use in the classroom. becoming a knowledge society in the future.

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