**Brave New Digital Classroom**  
**TECHNOLOGY AND FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING**  
ROBERT J. BLAKE, FOREWORD BY DOROTHY M. CHUN

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A pioneering force in the field of CALL, Robert J. Blake’s book *Brave New Digital Classroom: Technology and Foreign Language Learning* contributes a valuable perspective on technology’s relationship to SLA and its ultimate goal of facilitating bilingualism in students. The book, intended for professors and graduate or advanced undergraduate students, presents an overview of the history of technology and its role in foreign language (FL) teaching and learning. Blake also addresses basic to advanced programs that are available to teachers and students, their benefits, and the outlook on the future growth of technology’s role in foreign language learning.

This 189-page book is comprised of six chapters, each of approximately 30 pages, which focus on particular branches of technology and their role in SLA. Chapter 1 provides a somewhat dense crash course on SLA theory (especially cognitive and interactionist approaches), which will serve as a relevant introduction for novices to SLA and a review for more seasoned instructors and students. This is followed by chapters that address more specific fields of technology, their backgrounds, applications, benefits to teachers and students, as well as their pedagogical implications. All chapters are followed by a group of discussion questions that could work equally well in a traditional classroom setting as in an online forum, like a discussion board, or even in a text or video chat. A glossary at the back of the book will be helpful to those that may need some support with the common SLA terms used throughout the book.

Of particular interest in Chapter 1 is Blake’s presentation of “Four myths about technology and SLA” (p. 8) in which he discusses four misconceptions about the internet, technology and its role in the classroom. Students and teachers alike will be able to relate well to Blake’s discussion of these myths and they will foster lively class conversation as they shape “the scope of a methodology” (p.9) of foreign language teaching and set the tone for the remaining chapters of the book. In Chapter 2, Blake addresses the largest source of technology available to language instructors and students: the internet. He highlights the recent and exponential
growth of web pages in languages other than English and how these can serve as valuable cultural and linguistic resources for the foreign language (FL) classroom. Chapter 2 also presents a thorough how-to of building and publishing a web page so instructors can create more resources and learning opportunities for students.

After covering many of the basics related to technology and foreign language instruction and establishing his theoretical stance in Chapters 1 and 2, Blake picks up the pace in Chapters 3 through 5 and focuses his attention on more specific technologies in FL education. Chapter 3 addresses CALL, its history as a field within SLA and applied linguistics, and its evolution from a set of tools for the L2 classroom to a more crucial and integrated component in the S/FL teaching and learning, moving toward the goal of creating agency and autonomy in L2 linguistic and cultural acquisition. An especially compelling part of Chapter 3 is Blake’s discussion of feedback, iCALL, and Automatic Speech Recognition.

Readers will easily grasp contextualized concepts as Blake follows his overall deductive progression from background information to refined and more specific ideas in Chapter 4. He first outlines the background of Asynchronous Computer-Mediated Communication (ACMC) and Synchronous CMC (SCMC) before launching into a discussion comparing notions of intracultural communication (interactionist approach) and intercultural communication (sociocultural approach). This comparison is supported with intriguing and motivating samples of bi-modal SCMC and samples from the MIT Cultura project, which Blake includes in this chapter in order to illustrate some of the benefits (and occasional drawbacks) of implementing these types of communication in FL learning. Chapter 5 focuses on distance learning, students’ perceptions of it, and how it has evolved over the years from simple teleconferencing or drill-and-kill activities to hybrid programs or those that are taught completely online. Chapter 5 has more lengthy discussions of empirical studies than in the others chapters, which will be especially engaging to the more experienced readers and a helpful introduction for novice students. He devotes a large amount of the chapter to an empirical study of “Oral proficiency and E-learning: The case of Spanish without Walls” (p.115). Blake uses Chapter 6 to bring readers full circle, addressing “not what technology but how it is used” (p.132) to demonstrate how all types of technology discussed in previous chapters can be fully utilized to develop a productive and student-centered curriculum that embraces technology, its continuous developments, and to give a final motivational word on our goal of cultivating bilingualism among students.

Professors and graduate or advanced undergraduate students in S/FL methods, CALL, or even Second Language Acquisition will benefit from this book. Blake’s clear and tangible writing makes Brave New Digital Classroom accessible to a varied audience of FL educators and students. Despite the minor drawback of the somewhat slower pace of the beginning chapters, the book serves as an excellent source for classroom and online discussions. Both students and instructors will benefit from the valuable insights it offers in illustrating computer technology’s connection with and influence on SLA.