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Media literacy for millennial generation

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Abstract

These are times of rapid technological change that challenge all educators. The children currently in school—often referred to as the “Millennial Generation”—have always been immersed in Information Communication Technology. Millennials bring to school a rich set of literacy skills that allows them instant communication and access to a wealth of information. However, Millennials lack the basic academic skills, as well as the media literacy skills, to cope with the barrage of messages they confront every day. This article gives a description of the defining characteristics of the Millennial Generation and discusses the need for systematic instruction in media literacy, concluding with specific suggestions for instruction.

Keywords: Media literacy, generation

Introduction

The expansive nature of technology has created a new, global youth culture and the impact of this culture can be seen in students’ interaction both inside and outside of school. Teachers have to begin with an in-depth look at the culture of the millennial generation, highlighting the trends of media usage among today’s teenagers with special emphasis on the digital tools that might serve as pathways into more meaningful instructional time. Teachers both new and experienced within the profession; explore the possibilities for implementing critical literacy through new media in their classrooms. As technologies advance increase exponentially, “It is feared that a digital divide will create a deep social and economic inequality in which those who are not digitally literate will be seriously disadvantaged (Lankshier and Knobel 21). Teachers are talking whispering under their breath during faculty meeting, wringing their hands in parent-teacher conferences, teachers are talking. What are they talking about, all of these teachers? They are talking about their students, of course, and although their concerns and complaints are as varied as the zip codes they speak then in, one question echoes again and again amidst the cacophony of their voices. How do I get through to them? By “them”, of course they mean those distanced, distracted students, and the intensity of the challenge presented by said students is in direct correlation with perceptible frustration, anger or desperation that accompanies the question.

For many teachers sadly, this question has become rhetorical. Teaching is Sisyphean task, someone will posit. One tenderhearted soul might speak up to direct attention to the horrible home conditions of some of the students, but this will spark only a short detour into parent slandering before the teachers slide comfortably back into verbal battery of the real enemy, the millennial student places where both teachers and students are motivated to succeed at that centuries old goal; organic learning that stems from genuine interest in an engagement with the subject matter. The expansive nature of technology has created a new, global youth culture and the impact of this culture can be seen in student’s interactions both inside and outside of school. Teachers should begin with an in-depth look at the culture of the millennial generation, highlighting the trends of media usage among today’s teenagers with

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Teacher and the Millennial Generation

- Teachers should begin with an in-depth look at the culture of the millennial generation, highlighting the trends of media usage among today's teenagers with special emphasis on the digital tools that might serve as pathways into more meaningful instructional time.
- Teacher's both new and experienced within the profession; explore the possibilities for implementing critical literacy through new media in their classrooms. As technologies advances increase exponentially, "It is feared that a digital divide will create a deep social and economic inequality in which those who are not digitally literate will be seriously disadvantaged (Lankshiear and Knobel 21). As educator's we must give voice to these concerns and advocate for our students, we must reorganize a need for and give attention to our collective requirements for digital literacy as educator's within the profession.
- Successful teachers of millennial students must be clear about the learning objectives and students'

expectations, and must be ready to guide students as they navigate their own learning experiences.

- Teachers should be encouraged to make use of the new literacy's resources made available to teachers online at the centre for media literacy as well as the website for NCTE.
- To millennial students we must teach them in the context of the 21st Century forms that they will take. Though many of these technologies challenge our traditional models of instruction, though using student gadgets might place us in a position of knowing less than our students' we must privilege their development as readers and composers in the digital age more than our comforts. As we must give them room to explore, to learn as they go, and to surprise us with their findings, we must push them forward into new challenges through new media and new multi-model literacy.
- The modern day students, strike an observant posture that would prove useful to those who teach this strange millennial creatures. If we truly desire to meet our students where they are, we must first oat where that is. This requires close look into the world of millennial student. Too often teachers dismiss youth media choices as mere noise incapable of conveying any worthwhile messages.
- As technologies advances increase exponentially, "It is feared that a digital divide will create a deep social and economic inequality in which those who are not digitally literate will be seriously disadvantaged (Lankshiear and Knobel 21). As educator's we must give voice to these concerns and advocate for our students, we must reorganize a need for and give attention to our collective requirements for digital literacy as educator's within the profession.
- Even if the tools of new media so not yet reach every child, even if students interest in and usage of media do not always precisely follow textbook statistics, the data suggest that the best course is to move forward, engaging the students who currently fill our seats with the best resources currently available to us. We do this in hopes that as more teachers begin to see the advantages to use new literacies and new millennial are special, confident, pressured, achieving, team-oriented and conventional.

Exploring the Millennial Generation

Children who have grown up since the emergence of the World Wide Web and the assortment of related digital technologies (e.g., cell phones, text messaging, video games, and instant messaging) are now being referred to as the Millennials.

- **Special:** Parents who delay having children until they are financially secure and children are "wanted".
- **Sheltered:** Having grownup underneath over protective parents.
- **Confident:** Millennial fostered "Confidence" as a result of their parents' strong belief in their potential.
- **Pressured:** Millennial feel "pressured" to attend college, excel in their studies, and choose high paying careers.
- **Achieving:** Millennial are thought by some to be the smartest generation, showing rising proficiencies in Maths, Science and standardized tests (Taylor and MacNeil).

- **Team Oriented:** They are comfortable working in groups and establish tight peer bond.

Millennial students do not simply check their generational nature at the classroom door. We can develop and enforce school rules to keep them; “unplugged” but we cannot undo the effects of their digital lives in the world outside of our classrooms. Raised on high-speed technology, they are impatient and have high expectations for media. A millennial will be playing a game more often than reading a book. We can lament the shift away from the traditional modern of literacy all that we want, but as the gaze of the millennial student shifts, we must check out ways to persevere in teaching the skills they need with multiple opportunities for them to demonstrate critical literacy.

Many teacher worry that accommodating millennial learning styles will require significant sacrifice—spending time, money and effort on technology classes and expensive equipment—the most pivotal move by teacher’s towards reaching millennials is a simple change of mindset.

Successful teachers of millennial students must be clear about the learning objectives and students’ expectations, and must be ready to guide students as they navigate their own learning experiences. Learning styles of millennial students aim at three criteria-

- Fluency in multiple media, valuing each of the types of communication activities, experiences and expressions it empowers.
- Learning based on collectively seeking sieving and synthesizing experiences rather than individually locating and absorbing information from a single best source.
- Active learning based on both real and simulated experiences that includes frequent opportunities for reflection.

Media Literacy and New Media in Classroom

Media literacy is a set of perspectives that we actively use to expose ourselves to the media to interpret the meaning of the messages we encounter, we build our perspectives from knowledge structure. To build our knowledge structures we need tools and new materials. These tools are our skills. The raw material is information from the media and from the real world.

Media literacy is about helping students become competent, critical and literate in all media forms so that they control the interpretation of what they see, hear or interact with rather than letting the interpretation control them. To become media literate is not to memorize facts about the media, but rather to learn to raise the right questions about what you are watching, reading, listening or contributing to. The facts that most media usage by students takes place outside of school means those parents will obviously play an important role in encouraging media literacy. Yet, as teachers, we must recognize the potential impact of our attention to media studies and media integration within the classroom. If we can teach our students to be critical consumers of media messages, we will have impacted their lives both inside and outside the classroom. Teachers should be encouraged to make use of the new literacy’s resources made available to teachers online at the centre for media literacy as well as the website for NCTE. By introducing multiple literacies and new media within our curriculum we can offer them tools to read those texts more effectively, all

while meeting our educational goals through student engagement and critical thinking.

Conclusion

To millennial students we must teach them in the context of the 21st Century forms that they will take. Though many of these technologies challenge our traditional models of instruction, though using student gadgets might place us in a position of knowing less than our students’ we must privilege their development as readers and composers in the digital age more than our comforts. As we must give them room to explore, to learn as they go, and to surprise us with their findings, we must push them forward into new challenges through new media and new multi-model literacy.

The idea therefore of making the young in the image of what we know today, which is itself a version of what has been handed down to us from yesterday, we no longer do curriculum now needs to be focused on the future. One urgent task is to try to understand what skills, aptitudes, knowledge, dispositions concerned with representation and communication. Young people will need in the world of next two decades or three. So, we begin by asking questions and in answering those questions, we open our minds to the possibilities that the answers may be found in nontraditional texts or through unconventional media tools. And this is how education moves forward.

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