DIGITAL IMMIGRANTS AND PARENTS COOPERATION WITH THE USE OF TECHNOLOGICAL RESOURCES: IMPLICATION FOR THE DIGITAL NATIVES

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Abstract

Digital natives speak a different language from the digital immigrants. Marc Prensky (2001) gave a perfect description of who digital natives and digital immigrants are. Several studies have shown that technology helps to improve the performance of learners but there is a gap between the natives and the immigrants which can be handled through training and capacity building of digital immigrants. This study itemizes the relevance and affordances of using technological resources for the digital natives, as well as the implications. Digital immigrant needs to cooperate with these natives on the language they speak which is technology in other to facilitate learning and improve their performance.

Introduction

The current generation of young children has been described as digital natives, having been born into a ubiquitous digital media environment. They are envisaged as educationally independent of the guided interaction provided by digital immigrants: parents and teachers.

The digital natives speak a different language from the digital immigrants. This language is known as technology, basically everything they do is with technology and this has a long way to also influence the way they learn.

The digital natives' engagement and motivation is sustained through technology, such as computers, games, mobile phones, internet etc. because they are native speakers of digital language. Unlike the digital immigrants who grew up in a world without personal computers or the internet (Prensky, 2001).

Marc Prensky (2001) argues that students today, digital natives, as he calls them, having grown up in the digital age learn differently from their predecessors or digital immigrants as he terms them; which has to led to a shift in the pedagogy of teaching and learning.

Digital immigrants which comprises of teachers and parents must cooperate with the natives in the digital language they speak in other to increase their performance on how they learn.

Purpose of the Study

There is a gap between the digital immigrants and the digital natives in the use of technology, this also surfaces even in the pedagogy. Most parents and teachers fail to co-operate with the natives in the use of technological resources which has an effect on them and their performance. the aim of this study is to:

1. Itemize the characteristics of digital natives and digital immigrants.
2. Examine the gap and draw digital immigrants' attention to the relevance of speaking the language of the natives.
3. Suggest ways digital immigrants can cooperate with the natives in performing better with technological resources.

Justification of Study

The world we live in today is an information age, where technology is the other of the day. The learners we have today are different from the 20th century learners. The language they speak is different from the 20th century this calls for serious attention on the part of the immigrants if they must flow well with the natives who use technologies to talk.

To most parents who are digital immigrants, technology is a distraction to the digital natives especially in teaching and learning, this has made most teachers not to engage their learners with it during teaching.

Most digital immigrants feel that exposure to this technological resources to the natives might cause harm to them, example is the danger of pornography, internet crime, etc. having this negative notion about the use of technology, they have also failed to recognize that the tool can be used to enhance the students' performance and also communicate effectively.

There is a saying that goes "for any advantage, there is also a disadvantage."

This paper intends to urge the digital immigrants to cooperate with the natives in speaking the language that best suits their generation and stop restricting them to it.

Who are the Digital Natives?

A person who has grown up in the information era is referred to as a digital native. Individuals who can ingest digital information and stimuli fast and comfortably through technology and platforms such as computers, mobile phones, and social media are referred to as millennials, Generation Z, and Generation Alpha. Because their attention spans are shorter than earlier generations, instant satisfaction and reward systems, such as games, are preferred. Because they were born before the Internet, digital natives differ from digital immigrants, who grew up in a society dominated by print and television. These two words are frequently used to represent the digital generation gap in terms of technological skill between persons born after 1980 and those born prior to 1980. The term "digital native" is a contentious word that many educators believe is based on myth rather than empirical evidence and many contend that comprehending the interaction between digital media, learning, and youth requires a more complex approach.

Conflict between digital natives and digital immigrant

Digital natives are distinct from digital immigrants, who grew up in a world dominated by print and television, because they were born before the Internet existed. These two words are widely used to describe the technological skill gap between people born after 1980 and those born before 1980 in the digital generation. According to Wang *et al.*(2013). The term "digital native" is divisive, with many educators believing it to be founded on myth rather than empirical evidence and many argue that grasping the relationship between digital media, learning, and youth necessitates a more nuanced approach. Similarly, parents of digital natives clash with their children at home over gaming, texting, YouTube, Facebook and other Internet technology issues. Much of the world's Millennials and Generation Z members are digital natives. According to law professor and educator John Palfrey, there may be substantial differences between digital natives and non-digital natives.

Prensky states that education is the single largest problem facing the digital world as digital immigrant instructors, who speak an outdated language (that of the pre-digital age), are struggling to teach a population that speaks an entirely new language. Digital natives have had an increased exposure to technology, which has changed the way they interact and respond to digital devices.Morgan (2014) in order to meet the unique learning needs of digital natives, teachers need to move away from traditional teaching methods that are disconnected with the way students now learn for the last 20 years. Technology Training for teachers has been at the forefront of policy (Lei, 2009). However, immigrants suffer complications in teaching natives how to understand an environment which is "native" to them and foreign to immigrants. Teachers not only struggle with proficiency levels and their abilities to integrate technology into the classroom, but also, display resistance towards the integration of digital tools. (Hicks, 2011) Since technology can be frustrating and complicated at times, some teachers worry about maintaining their level or professionalism within the classroom. Teachers worry about appearing "unprofessional" in front of their students. Although technology presents challenges in the classroom, it is still very important for teachers to understand how natural and useful these digital tools are for students.

Implication of Technological Resources

Digital Natives vary in demographic based on their region's technological and media landscapes. Not everyone agrees with the language and underlying connotations of the digital native. The term, by definition, makes the assumption that all digital natives has the same familiarity with technology. Similarly, the term digital immigrants implies that this entire age group struggles with technological advancements. For instance, those on the disadvantaged side of the digital divide lack access to technology. In its application, the concept of the digital native preferences those who grow up with technology as having a special status, ignoring the significant difference between familiarity and creative application.

Digital Natives are determined based on their educational and cultural backgrounds as well as their access to technology (Askçayır*et al.,* 2016) the adoption of digital technology hasn't been a unified phenomenon worldwide, digital natives are not all in the same age group. Self-perception also plays a role: individuals who do not feel confident in their use of technology will not be considered a native regardless of the formally mentioned factors. The terminologies that can refer to certain generations like "Digital Natives" are made because these groups can create their own culture and characteristics.

 Here are some of the culture and characteristics of "Digital Natives":

1. They feel familiar with digital devices. 54% of them have a smartphone as a first personal mobile phone. These devices are used for entertainment and as a requirement in educational endeavors. (Thompson & Penny, 2015)

2. They tend to be individualistic.

3. They are able to multitask or focus on a single medium when needed.

4. They are realistic. They are usually raised in an affluent environment, but due to the prolonged economic recession and the Fourth Industrial Revolution, they think their future is not clear. This kind of thinking makes them focus more on their reality.

     i.   They prize freedom and freedom of choice.

     ii.   They love to customize things, make them their own.

     iii.   They're natural collaborators, who enjoy a conversation, not a lecture.

     iv.   They'll scrutinize you and your organization.

v.   They insist on integrity and openness.

vi.   They want to have fun, even at work and at school.

vii.   They have a need for speed and speed is normal for them.

viii.   They are innovators and for them innovation is part of life.

ix.   They instinctively turn first to the Net to communicate, understand, learn.

x.   They are constantly creating or changing online content.

xi.   They seem to feast on technology and have an appetite for all things digital that is sometimes mind-boggling.

xii.   They seem to lack long attention spans, at least when it comes to listening to lectures. xiii. They show signs of learning differently and the best of them make yesterday's cream of the crop look dull.

xiii.   Growing up digital has had an impact on how they think and even changed the way their brains are wired.

xiv.   Two of the smartest brain scientists, - Stanley Kutcher and Matthew Kutcher – conducted research which found that Net Geners' brains have indeed developed differently than those of their parents.

xv.   They are wired differently from those of the previous generations.

xvi.   The generation is smarter and quicker than their predecessors.

xvii.   In education, they are forcing a change in the model of pedagogy, from a teacher-focused approach based on instruction to a student-focused model based on collaboration. xviii. They use the programmable web to create their own content, collaborate with others, and build communities.

xviii.   They don't just take what they are given. They are the active initiators, collaborators, organizers, readers, writers.

xix.   They do not just observe, they participate.

xx.   They inquire, discuss, argue, critique, investigate, seek and inform.

xxi.   They search for, rather than simply look at information. This helps them to develop thinking and investigative skills.

xxii.   They care about their/, education: the vast majority thinks that having a college degree is more important today than it was for their parents.

xxiii.   For once in our civilization, children are educating older people. Adults are looking to children for information and help with computer related stuff.

xxiv.   In Finland, the government has chosen 5,000 Net Geners to train the country's teachers in how to use computers. For the first time ever, in one domain, the students will be the teachers and the teachers the students.

xxv.   They want to learn, but they want to learn only what they have to learn, and they want to learn it in a style that is best for them.

xxvi.   Sitting mutely in front of a teacher doesn't appeal to them.

Digital immigrants' groups:

Avoiders*:* They prefer a relatively minimal technology, or technology-free lifestyle. They do not have an email account and/or smartphones and tend to have deadlines. Social media is too much for them and they do not see the value in these activities.

Reluctant adopters*:* They accept technology and are trying to engage with it, but feel unintuitive and hard to use it. They have a cell phone but do not use texting, occasionally they use Google but do not have a Facebook account but they check their emails and use online banking.

Enthusiastic adopters*:* They are digital immigrants who have the potential to keep up with natives. They embrace technology and they may be high-tech executives, programmers and business people. This group sees the value of technology, they use Facebook and check emails regularly and technology makes them excited. If they are doing business, they have a website.

Digital natives grouping:

Avoiders*:* even though they were born in the digital world, some young people do not feel an affinity for digital technologies and Facebook. Mobile technologies do not enamor them. They have cell phones, but do not use email and social media accounts.

Minimalists*:* they use technology minimally and when they perceive it necessary. They search information on Google if they have to and purchase online if they cannot buy something at a local store. They check their Facebook account once a day or every couple of days.

Enthusiastic participants are the most of the digital natives. They enjoy technology and gadgets. They use Facebook all day long and have other social media accounts, watching YouTube and movies online as much as possible. The first thing they do when they want to know something is: turn to Google. This group is easier to reach via social media rather than cell phones. They thrive on instant communication and own a smartphone for constant access to the Web.

So how can people from these two groups work together? How can digital immigrants teach digital natives and vice versa?

Some digital immigrants surpass digital natives in tech-savviness, but there is a belief that an early exposure to technology fundamentally changes the way people learn. The adoption of digital technology has not been a unified phenomenon worldwide. There are a lot of opportunities where they can learn from each other, and where the generations feed each other knowledge. Collaboration is they key because digital immigrants are those who invented technologies and systems that digital natives today use fluently. It is important then, to have a variety of people with a variety of abilities and experiences. Teachers must develop lessons on horizontal solutions. Embracing all technology leads to a broader understanding of the problem. As digital natives are driven by productivity, their working style may seem competitive, so incorporating more value in the process may be a good strategy.

Learning from the natives

From the natives, the immigrants can learn to be more open and willing to engage with learners of differing backgrounds. They can learn from the natives how to sift through and focus resources, which are aplenty and are not as overwhelming for the native. They can learn to scale the learning and create what is possible.

Learning from the immigrants

Digital immigrants can teach natives to achieve goals quickly. They can help the "techno-wizards" scale the learning and create what is possible. They can look at the existing institutions and re-purpose them or rethink

their vitality. A Native may be able to offer great ideas for layouts, image, design and labeling, while the immigrant would contribute their knowledge to storytelling and the value of including worthy artifacts.

The way to help them learn is to change the way we teach and what we teach.

In sum, Prensky (2001) suggests the following ten ways to achieve this:

➢ Teachers/educators should learn to communicate in the language and style of the Digital Natives.

➢ Educators should carefully examine the content of the "traditional" curriculum – (reading, writing, arithmetic, logical thinking, and history) and select only content that is essential to knowledge construction in the digital era.

➢ Educators should embed digital and technological content in their teaching. This does not mean just electronic hardware and software, but it also includes the ethics, politics, sociology, languages and other content related to these.

➢ Educators should learn new content and teach it using new technologies that Digital Natives are familiar with and that make sense to the Digital Natives. Computer games are a good way to achieve this.

➢ Educators should replace traditional pedagogical language with contemporary, computer-aided terminology, consistent with Digital Native methodology. This should be applied to all subjects and at all levels of learning.

➢ Educators should think deeply and research into how to use computers and electronic, digital tools in teaching in ways that help our learners to instill knowledge that needs to be internalized.

➢ Use the skills of our Digital Natives to guide our search for Digital Native methodologies that can help us improve our effectiveness in the teaching of all subjects and at all levels.

➢ Share and publicize the successes of leaders in the field of embedding technology in teaching and learning.

➢ Be imaginative about how you can embed "edutainment" in your pedagogy. The fact that to date such attempts have not been successful should not deter further attempts.

➢ Educators must realize that the Digital Immigration way is not the only way to teach; that in fact it is an ineffective way to teach; and change their methods and language to that of Digital Natives so as to reach their digital learners.

In sum, for educators to transition from the traditional approach to teaching to this new way of facilitating and enhancing learning for Digital Natives, Kelly, McCain and Jukes (2009) propose that we need to do the following:

➢ Catch up to the digital kids: This is imperative, not optional.

➢ Communicate directly with the digital kids by: o Email o Chatting with instant messaging o Surfing and searching the Internet o Reading and publishing blogs o Texting with cell phones o Taking and sending pictures with cell phones o Playing electronic and online games o Listening, watching and creating podcasts; and,

➢ Engage with a whole range of other activities kids take for granted.

➢ Develop a relationship with the digital world of our students so we can make school relevant to them.

➢ Explore the digital world so to discover powerful new digital tools with which to enhance the learning experiences of the children.

➢ Gain new digital life experiences and use then to guide our digital native students in their construction of knowledge.

Suggestions

There is a gap between digital immigrants and digital natives and this is as a result of technology. most of our immigrants are not comfortable when these natives make use of technological tools, most of them feel it's a distraction and also, that they can be exposed to havoc through the internet; they've also failed to recognize the aspect of using this technological tools in improving performance and facilitating learning. This study suggests the following ways to bridge this gap.

1. There have to be an awareness: Awareness in the sense that, technology is the in thing now and it's advantages and relevance cannot be over emphasized.

2. Training: Just in time training and on the job training should be carried out for them especially the teachers who are immigrants.

3. Capacity building of teachers should be carried out too.

4. The four levels of ICT development should be installed in the training process for the teachers.

5. The tools should be provided for the teachers after being trained and encouraged to use it in teaching and learning.

Conclusion

Digital natives cannot do without technology, because that is the language they speak, they perform better when they are engaged with technology.

Digital immigrants should cooperate with the natives in the use of this technology so they can communicate with them based on their level.

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