Explanatory synthesis essay examples

Charlaine Casiano

Post University

As society growsgrew more reliant on computers, the internet, video games, and cell phones, a serious social discourse has resulted. Some authors, such as Prensky (2001),) have argued that our society has a marked generational schism, referring. The author referred to those born after 1980, especially students, as " digital natives" -- especially students -- whereas he callsand those who were born before 1980 as " digital immigrants."". Other authors, such as Kuehn (2011), argue that the digital era that is upon us is less of a generational phenomenon, and states that everyone is affected by the digital revolution. Kuehn views participants in the digital world as being on a continuum of either " visitor" or " resident."". Palfrey ∧ Gasser (2008), like Prensky, also dichotomize generational differences and affinities for using computers as an extension of their social identity. That is, To elaborate, the younger people have a stronger, online presence and may not think that it is anything special, while the older generations have a singular identity that is based more or less exclusively in the physical, i. e. non-electronic world. Teachers and students alike will benefit from a synthesis of these unique perspectives.

Prensky (2001) argues that the new youth learn differently. They are, in his vernacular, digital natives. However, some teachers still teach, using the same old pedagogy their generation. He refers to these teachers as digital immigrants. As they did not grow up learning and immersed in the digital space, they are learning this language for the first time later in life. Prensky (2001) believes that it is important for teachers to speak to their students in

the new language,; embracing technological ways of teaching that are akin to video game playing. He argues that it has worked for the military in the context of pilot training, and other military exercises, but that teachers have been slow to adopt-- as well as too lazy and unimaginative -- to teach their classes using the video game model (Prensky, 2001).

However, Kuehn (2011) dismisses many of the differences in teaching and learning as not being due to age, but to other factors, including direct experience with electronics technology. Kuehn is a Canadian computer engineer who used keycard punches to enter data on huge keyboards with a large hardware equipment company during the 1960s. It was one of his first jobs, and since then, technology has evolved by leaps and bounds. He states: " So I was always uncomfortable identifying the differences solely on age" (Kuehn, 2011, p. 114). He does not go on to name which factors -- or personality traits -- may or may not contribute to being at ease with rapid technological change, but he differentiates between visitors and residents to the on-lineonline world. Visitors, Kuehn states, " place little value in belonging online" (Kuehn, 2011, p. 131). He describes residents as a " place" where people go, where they meet each other, converse, and establish new connections.

Palfrey ∧ Gasser (2008) adhere to Prensky's already-established division of generations into digital natives and digital immigrants. Like Prensky, Palfry ∧ Gasser (2008) believe that younger brains are wired differently because of their high-tech usage. This wiring and continual re-wiring goes on throughout life, and is called neuroplasticity. Moreover, like Prensky, Palfry ∧ Gasser (2008) believe that there is much that can be done in the classroom to

improve the learning of the digital natives, as well as the teaching efficacy of the digital immigrants. ":

For the time being, education is the best way to help Digital Natives manage the information-quality problem. Digital literacy is increasingly a critical skill for Digital Natives to learn. We are not yet doing what we can, or even what we need to do, to teach Digital Natives to be media literate in this new, more complex information environment". (Palfrey ∧ Gasser, 2008, p. 181).)

All three authors stress that the roles of teacher and student need to be re-addressed in terms of teaching what needs to be taught in a 21st-century classroom, as well as how to stimulate children to learn things they view as boring or non-stimulating. As computers are the primary way kids interact with the world, students should be encouraged to learn from and with computers in the classroom --. Prensky contends that such a basic strategy that has been overlooked, Prensky contends. Instead of demanding that children do what they enjoy doing at home -- being on a computer or video game -- but not in school, the authors insist that computers are flexible enough to be programmed to be educational and entertaining.

Of the three authors, only Kuehn addresses a phenomenon that he calls " context collapse."". He defines this term as when a teacher'steacher uses Resident approach in their private life, but areverts to Visitor approach in their professional environment. A blurring of the boundaries can occur, resulting in unintentional consequences. While Kuehn addresses little of the potential of classroom computing and the dynamics of new pedagogies, his work advocates a multi-generational approach to teaching and learning -- mainly due to the fact thatbecause the World Wide Web is universally-

accessible. Prensky and Palfrey & Gasser pay special attention to millennialmillennials who were born into the digital age, while Kuehn expresses some resentment over the degree of conformity technology has demanded.

Nevertheless, all three authors are in accordance with their assessment that there is no going back to a time before the advent and evolution of computer technology. They address the teacher-student relationship, and offer pragmatic solutions to learning gaps in the classroom regarding the new language of the digital revolution. Finally, they acknowledge that the classroom is no longer confined to four walls. It is infinitely mirrored by a digital space as well, and they argue that teachers and students alike must take heed of this new relationship between themselves and with technology. Regardless of the definitions offered by the abovementioned writers, they all agree that digital technology has transformed -- and is still transforming our brains structurally and functionally at a lightning-quick speed.

References

Kuehn, L. (2011). No more digital natives and digital immigrants. Retrieved from https://www. policyalternatives. ca/sites/default/files/uploads/publications/National%20Office20Ofice/ 2012/02/osos106_Digital_Natives. pdf

Palfrey, J. & Gasser, U. (2008). Understanding the First Generation of Digital Natives. Retrieved from http://pages. uoregon. edu/koopman/courses_readings/phil123- net/identity/palfrey-gasser_born-digital. pdf

Prensky, M. (2001). Digital natives, digital immigrants. On the Horizon (9): 5,

pp. 1-15. Retrieved from http://www. nnstoy.

org/download/technology/Digital%20Natives%20-%-%20Digital

%20Immigrants. pdf