

How do digital students think and how do they differ from students of before

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Digital students are students whose brains have become accustomed to digital media, such as playing computer games, listening to music on Ipods and looking at computer screens for lengthy times.

Many of them have today evolved from sitting in front of screens to using handheld devices to send e mails, text messages and send instant messages. Some of them even talk to each other in bytes. In fact this generation is called the digital generation. Students of today live in a very different world from the world previous generations lived in. They communicate with their peers and teachers via computers, i.

. social networks. The virtual world together with its ups and downs is at their finger tips. " Apple computer defines these digital students or digital kids as kids who are; Hyper communicators, multi taskers and goal orientated. " (Shelly, Gunter & Gunter, 2010, Pg 15). Digital students think differently (critical thinking), absorb and process information differently compared to previous generations' students.

Today students have not just changed from past students by changing their clothing, hair styles and their individuality. They have grown up with new technology which changes rapidly. We grew up in a stable and slow changing environment. It is now clear that as a result of their new and different world their ways of thinking, absorbing their teachers' information and processing it is very different from how past generations performed these tasks. Besides calling them digital natives and teaches digital immigrants, we refer to them as digital kids or students. According to an article by Marc Prensky (2001) he states that research done by social psychologists shows that people who

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grow up in different cultures do not just think about different things, they actively think differently.

The environment and culture in which people are raised affects and even determines many of their thought processes. Children raised with computer develop hypertext minds, leap around. It's as though their cognitive structure is parallel, not sequential. Their attention spans are short, but that is for the old school of teaching. For digital learning and computer literacy their attention spans are perfect.

Research done on children who watch Sesame Street revealed that they do not watch continuously but in bursts. So today's neurobiologists and social psychologist agree that brains can and do change with new input. These students are independent, possess a thoughtful learning style and are self-motivated by interactive technology and their ability to use it innovatively for personal use. Students today need to have digital literacy which is information about technology and communication in today's society, The ISTE has specific standards for students which explains what knowledge they require to be competent digital users on completing their schooling. Teachers also have a duty of responsibility in teaching and transferring the knowledge to these future generation students. The ISTE also sets the standard for these teachings.

Digital students can communicate effectively on web media, they approach and understand their task with critical thinking and solve their problems in an effective way, They also work collaboratively as team players using digital communication. We as teachers have now to prepare ourselves sufficiently,

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effectively and responsibly for this future generation. (Digital communication for all students, Kirsti Aho, August 2005). Reference List: Shelly G. B, Guntar G.

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