“Digital Age Learners”

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A digital age learner is a relative new term that teachers are now using. Over the last few years I have heard this term used more and more. What is a digital age learner? This term is what researchers suggest is actually what we call students who have been labeled with Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD). Each year I have more and more students who are labeled as ADD and it makes me wonder can all of these students really have ADD? What causes students to have ADD? After reading the articles it all makes sense I don’t feel that all of these students really have ADD I believe they are just Digital Age Learners.

1. **Have some of these students rewired their brains to multitask?**

I believe that yes students have rewired their brains to multitask. I find myself multitasking all of the time. I consider myself a digital learner/ digital native some things come natural to me and others I have to learn when it comes to some new technology. Students today have been involved in technology since an early age making them comfortable with everything. These students have learned and transformed their brains into being able to do multiple things at one time. Many students today have such a high knowledge of technology that they speak, write, and converse better using technology than any way else. This is why I believe their brains are rewired differently than previous generations. According to Mark Prensky, “today’s students think and process information fundamentally differently from their predecessors (Digital Natives)”. This is due to the staggering amount of time spent with technology.

1. **Can they read e-mails, send instant messages and text messages over hand held devices, speak to one another in short sentences, and continue to watch movies and participate in multiple conversations, all while finishing their homework?**

Students today amaze me with all of the things they can due at once. For instance currently I am watching television and typing at once I am doing two things and it is difficult at times. Students however watch TV, text message, eat and do their homework all at once. What cause students to be able to do this? Students have grown up with this technology and their brains our wired differently to allow for multitasking. Mark Prensky stated students spend

“10,000 hours playing video games not to mention 20,000 hours watching TV” (Digital Natives).

1. **When we try to place these students in the traditional learning environment, are we working against their cognitive or digital learning style?**

Students who are labeled as ADD have a hard time setting in a classroom focusing on what is being taught. This all goes back to digital age students are multitasking they need to be working on several things and be challenged as they work. “Single biggest problem facing education today is that our 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).”Having students sit at a desk and focus on a teacher is hurting out students we need to create a challenging digital classroom.

1. **What are your thoughts about this theory for this new generation of digital kids?**

Students today are digital natives we need to spend our time focusing on how to teach them using technology as the base not using our old methods. Marc Prensky stated, “Those teachers who want to give their kids a backup education can’t understand or accept that the world of their students is diverging incredibly quickly from their own. (Backup Education)” I believe this statement whole heartedly. Why are we still trying to teach our kids math algorithms and multiplication tables? Students have calculators on their phones or I pads they can look this up anytime the need something. I can’t tell you how many times I teach math class and think to myself how stupid is this? These kids will never need to know these algorithms technology is at the touch of their finger. Technology will not fail it will only get better and better from here so we need to get on board and forget the past. (Backup Education)

1. **Do you see the differences in their learning?**

I see a big difference in the way students learn today everything they need is at their fingertips. If a student doesn’t understand something most of the time they look it up using technology. Rather than asking a teacher for assistance or classmate. Writing is another example students struggle to hand write assignments but are able to quickly type the same thing in half of the time. Students gain so much knowledge by using strictly technology because we are speaking their digital language. Students considered ADD I can distinguish from the rest of the class easily because they are my students who play video games often and watch a lot of TV this has created a different mindset for them. Students who play video games must be on high attention for every little thing changing in the game. This is why they need multiple things occurring quickly in the classroom to learn.

1. **What suggestions do you have for teaching them?**

Technology changes everything. Technology is our keys to allowing students to succeed in everything they do. Classrooms that are mainly technology based I feel is the key to our digital natives success. Keeping students motivated and active all through each lesson we teach can cut down on students loosing focus. We as educators must keep out students motivated and meaningfully engaged all of the time with the use of technology. “The tragedy is that if we used the money and momentum now available with the *right* focus and effort, our students‟ education *could* be made real, valuable, and useful for the future – and fairly easily.” (Reformers)

Work Cited

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