Born Digital: Looking at Information Literacy Instruction Through a Generational Lens

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Studying Generations

- Provides a theoretical perspective for the study of students as a group, rather than as individuals
- Allows us to examine both peer influences and the interactions between members of different generations in the school, workplace, or community
- Importance of the “cycle of generations”
  - Youth (Age 0-21)
  - Rising Adulthood (Age 22-43)
  - Midlife (Age 44-65)
  - Elderhood (Age 66-87)
- Importance of the generational “biography” and “peer personality”

Source: Howe & Strauss (2003); Strauss & Howe (1991)
Generations on Campus Today

- Silents (b. 1925-1942)
- Boomers (b. 1943-1960)
- Thirteeners (Generation X) (b. 1961-1981)
- Millennials (Generation Y) (b. 1982-2002)

Source: Howe & Strauss (2000)
Millennials Are . . .

- Special
- Sheltered
- **Confident**
- Conventional
- **Team-Oriented**
- Achieving
- Pressured

**Source:** Howe & Strauss (2000)
Millennials Are . . .

- **The largest** generation in history
  - 80,000,000+
  - 33% larger than the Boomer generation (*)
- **The most diverse** generation in history
- **The most educationally ambitious** generation in history
  - 75% of first-year students surveyed in 2002 reported that they expect to earn a graduate degree

Source: Howe & Strauss (2003); Sax (2003); Sax, et al. (2002)
“One of the defining characteristics of the Millennial generation is its technological literacy.”

Source: Coomes (2004)
The Information Age Mindset

- Computers Aren’t Technology
- Internet Better than TV
- Reality No Longer Real
- Doing Rather than Knowing
- Nintendo Over Logic
- Multitasking Way of Life
- Typing Rather than Handwriting
- Staying Connected
- Zero Tolerance for Delays
- Consumer/Creator Blurring

Source: Frand (2000)
The Digital Disconnect

- Millennials assume that technology is part of their natural environment (always accessible; preferably free)
- Millennials make use of a variety of new communication technologies for communication, socialization, community
- Millennials believe themselves to be more “Internet-savvy” than their teachers and find many classroom applications of technology uninspiring

Source: Jones (2002); Levin & Arafeh (2002); Oblinger (2003)
The Digital Divide

- 85.7% of first-year students report using a computer frequently in the last year (vs. 27.3% in 1985)
- The difference between reported computer use between different racial/ethnic groups, however, continues to increase (with a 15% difference in reported frequent use between African-American students and Asian-American students in 2004)

The Digital Disappointment

- Familiarity with Web searching and/or Web-based communication is not the same as:
  - Critical Thinking
  - Familiarity with Technology Tools or Web Resources Needed for Academic Work
  - Understanding of Appropriate Use of Technology for Academic Purposes

- Experience with file sharing, freeware, and availability of music/video files all lead to the assumption that “if something is digital, it is everyone’s property” (Oblinger 2003)
“[Widespread] use of the Internet may be shaping a new generation of students’ conception of ‘fair use,’ leading them to view the mass of information so freely shared in cyberspace as public knowledge. . . . For a generation raised on Napster, as well as for many others who regularly work and play within online communities, questions of ownership on the Web have become deeply problematic” (Scanlon 2003).

41% of college students surveyed in 2001 reported engaging in “cut-and-paste plagiarism” (up from 10% in 1999) (Center for Academic Integrity 2003)
Bridging the Gap in the College Curriculum: Online Course Environments

Blackboard (University of Kansas)
http://courseware.ku.edu/

- Facilitates communication with students and faculty
- Provides class resources 24/7
- Integrates technology into coursework
- Supports collaboration
Bridging the Gap in Student Life: Online Communities

The Facebook [http://thefacebook.com/](http://thefacebook.com/)

- Builds social networks within and across campuses
- Provides access to students with similar academic and social interests
- Provides a model for building academic community
Bridging the Gap in the Library: Digital Reference

HawkHelp (University of Kansas)
http://www.lib.ku.edu/hawkhelp/

- Multiple opportunities for help at the point of need
- Integrates library service into online course (or other) environments
Bridging the Gap in the Library: RSS and Blogs

Library News & Subject Blogs (Georgia State University)

http://www.library.gsu.edu/news/

- Customized information service
- Regular updates
- Integrates academic information into existing network for communication
Implications for Instruction

- Provide instruction at the point-of-need
  - Make use of existing electronic communication and course environments
  - Stay “connected”

- Focus on active learning
  - Millennials have a “bias toward action” (Brown 2000)
  - Knowledge is constructed through interaction, rather than acquired from lectures

- Allow opportunities for collaboration
  - Apply collaborative learning techniques to information problems (Barkley, Cross, & Major 2005)
Collaborative Learning Techniques – Major Categories

- Discussion
  - Think-Pair-Share
- Reciprocal Peer Teaching
  - Jigsaw
- Problem Solving
  - Case Study
- Graphic Information Organizers
  - Word Webs
- Writing
  - Dialogue Journals

Source: Barkley, Cross, & Major (2005)
Implications for Instruction

- Focus on process skills rather than knowledge of specific tools
  - Information Navigation
  - Partner with Similar Campus Programs
  - Preparation for Lifelong Learning

- Gaming as meta-narrative for instructional design
  - Help Screens/Pathfinders/Bibliographies Are Secondary
  - Problem-Based Learning

- Need for Instruction in Information Ethics
Information Ethics Across the Curriculum

- New Student Orientation
  - Introduce Campus Policies Related to “Responsible Use” of Information Technology
- Discussions of Academic Dishonesty in the Classroom
  - Review Recent Cases of Plagiarism in the News and the Discipline
  - Review Campus Sanctions for Academic Dishonesty
- Instruction for Ethical Use of Information in the Library
  - ACRL – Standard 5
  - Writing and Citing Print and Electronic Resources

Source: Fyffe & Walter (2005)
Questions?
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