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Waking up the Z Generation Students through Newspapers

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Abstract

In the new digital environment, adaptive capability is the key to survival and growth because traditional methods of teaching will guarantee neither success nor sustenance. By initiating ourselves to changes, colleges can become nurseries that promote scientific and great thinkers who will be really interested in solving the problems of the society around them. Quality in higher education requires careful planning that will certainly reveal the possibility of pooling resources and exchanging expertise in the areas of shared interests and no doubt it is in the hand of an efficient teacher. If we really want our teaching to be more effective, our approach should be sympathetic and encouraging. Teachers need to ensure the genuine language learning environment. Also, a teacher is supposed to help the learner to think critically, creatively and practically. No technological devices have yet been invented to

perform the task, on behalf of the teacher. Therefore, the need of the day is to make existing teaching process more effective with the use of newspapers and technology.

Keywords

Digital Environment; Effective Teaching; Newspapers; Technology; Education.



Introduction

e-Learning has revolutionized the educational sector, and has changed the way we look at knowledge and skill acquisition altogether. Thanks to modern educational technology, e-Learning tools and techniques just keep getting bigger and better. Today, they are providing learners with a more impressive, and more effective, educational experience. More and more students and employees are using e-Learning to earn their degrees, build upon their knowledge base, and develop new skills. As such, an increasing number of online courses are now being offered in order to meet the ever-growing demand.

Z Generation Expectation

We are Generation Z: the digital generation. We now live in a world surrounded by computers, touch screens and smartphones. We are fortunate enough to have been granted access to a constant pool of knowledge at the touch of a finger. Letters have been replaced with emails and phone calls or visits to friends have been replaced with texting and social networking. Though our generation is high-achieving, it can also be very lazy. We have access to technology and can do good with it, yet we do not use it for that. The internet floods you with information and problems occurring around the world. We get news from places from near and far, all compiled into one center of stories and information. This overload of information makes it hard to care for and focus on solving one problem.

Present Scenario

Nowadays, students wake up from their sleep with smart phones instead of reading a newspaper and they read what people tweeted while they were sleeping, or check what their friends updated on Facebook. Furthermore, they receive a wide variety of news daily. It is especially hard to focus on the important news when their friends have recently posted. They get a mix of truly important news from around the world in addition to the gossip of the day. This mix of the trivial with the nontrivial is confusing, for one begins to perceive both stories at the same level of importance. Nonetheless, everything we see on social media seems to be casual. Social platforms like Facebook or Twitter were originally intended for people to keep in touch with their friends, not as a source of news. This casual feel also subtracts from the significance of the news stories. Today, when we see something on online we generally “like” the status or “favorite” the post. “Liking” a picture expresses minimal concern for a certain topic, but it does not actively help or make a change. Besides, we have to stand up and take action. Instead of simply liking a photo of, for example, a poor sick and starving child in Africa, we have to help the community around us. We should become an activist, do something meaningful and be aware of the mix of news and trivial stories that pop up on our feeds.

Changing the mind set

Generation Z has been given mobile phones and search engines to guide their way along the information highway and beyond. Generation Z needs a wake-up call to get involved in the regular practice of reading newspapers. As education molds the paradigms of the future, the classroom becomes praxis for the boardroom. The teens are to be changed into motivated citizens with a Zest for excellence. Their online and digital lifestyles go well beyond just losing sleep. Issues of being responsible digital citizens, protecting their identity and reputation, appropriate disclosure, texting, pornography, cyber-bullying, and

stalking lead them to forget the entire happiness that is obtained by reading newspapers.

Teaching the i-Generation

The present generation children and youth are immersed in technologies that give them opportunities that no previous generation has enjoyed. To them, the smartphone, the Internet, and everything technological are not "tools" at all—they simply are. Just as we don't think about the existence of air, they don't question the existence of technology and media. They expect technology to be there, and they expect it to do whatever they want it to do. Their WWW doesn't stand for World Wide Web; it stands for Whatever, Whenever, Wherever. Born in the 1990s and beyond, we label as the iGeneration. The i represents both the types of digital technologies popular with children and adolescents (iPhone, iPod, Wii, iTunes, and so on) and the highly individualized activities that these technologies make possible. Children and youth in this new generation are defined by their technology and media use, their love of electronic communication, and their need to multitask.

Consuming a Massive Media Diet

The iGeneration consumes massive quantities of media. In anonymous online surveys, we ask young people how much they engage in a variety of activities, including being online, using computers offline, listening to music, playing video games, talking on the telephone, instant messaging, texting, sending and receiving e-mail, and watching television. The typical teens or preteens are constantly switching between their laptop, cell phone, television, MP3 player, and video game console with apparent ease. In school, we involve them to unitask by listening to the teacher, completing worksheets, writing with pen and paper, or engaging in other solitary activities. There are better ways of teaching our students. Of course, using technology to enhance education doesn't mean that we should move classes totally online.

Need for the day

Students need face-to-face social interaction, especially in the primary and middle school grades. It doesn't mean that teachers should simply assign work on computers and let students find their own way. According to Mercy Gnana Gandhi, "The teacher needs to predict the possible needs of the students and have communicative language activities readily available to meet these needs. The activities should be designed so that the students experience a high degree of success". It does not mean providing technology in the classroom for technology's sake. Interactive whiteboards and desktop computers often sit unused by teachers who did not want them and who were not trained to use them. Activities using newspapers play a vital role in teaching grammar apart from finding educational technologies to use in the classrooms. Newspapers are considered as one of the most powerful sources of sharing information and enriching knowledge bank. The basic reason of selecting English newspapers as a teaching tool is very pragmatic as English newspapers cover an array of information and knowledge and that too within the reach of our students' wallet. The English Newspapers can be used as an efficacious teaching tool to improve the language skills of the students. The use of English Newspapers will certainly encourage and motivate the students and help them to sharpen their LSRW (Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing) skills. Teachers are required to teach specific content. The point is not to "teach with technology" but to use technology to convey content more powerfully and efficiently. Teachers can access an enormous amount of curriculum content online in a variety of formats, including audio and video pieces and even online newspapers that can help bring the material to life for students. These materials are often free.

World of Newspapers

English language students discover a whole new world through newspapers, new words, new phrases, new ideas and even new faces! They may

have read the news in their own language but reading it in English is so much more exciting and puts the English language in to context for them. Students love being able to understand and read current news in English and there is something to interest everyone in a newspaper. The average reading age for most newspapers is approximately 14-17 years old, just perfect for those learning English as a foreign language. Newspapers are also a handy resource for English language teachers. They are expected to collect enough newspapers keeping one copy between two students. There are heaps of activities from just one edition of a newspaper, so we should not throw them away after just one session, since they can be shared with other teachers of our school or college.

Classroom Activities

The role of newspapers in our lives

The role of newspapers in our daily life can be discussed as a whole class, in pairs or in small groups. Questions such as, “Do you read newspapers? Why do you read them? Which newspapers do you prefer and why? How often are newspapers published? Are they daily or weekly? How much do they cost? Where can you buy them? Are they expensive or cheap? Do you believe everything you read in the newspaper? Why? Why not? Has the role of newspapers changed over the years? Do you think newspapers will die out with news on the internet? Why or why not? Talk about the newspapers in your student’s country. How do they vary? What news do they report on? Which newspapers do you read and why?” can be raised.

Different sections of a newspaper

Two minutes may be given to the students to list out as many sections of the newspaper that they can – then the teacher has to make them compare their lists to the person sitting next to them. A detailed discussion on the different sections of a newspaper; news, classifieds, cartoons, horoscope, weather, opinion, letters to the editor, travel, advertisements, editorial, sport can be done in the classroom. The teacher needs to ask, “What would you

expect to read about in each section? Which sections usually appear where in the newspaper?” For example: news at the front, classifieds at the back. Students have to find an example of each in a newspaper. Students could also write a piece to illustrate one or more sections of a newspaper.

Working for a newspaper

The teacher should explore the idea of working for a newspaper. “Who writes for the newspaper? What is the role of the editor, journalist, photo journalist, photographer and advertising sales? How do you get a story into the newspaper? What would you like about working in one of these roles and what wouldn’t you like? How do newspapers make money?” are the motivational questions to be discussed in pairs .

Job section

The teacher has to look at the jobs that are advertised in the careers section of the newspaper. He has to ask the students to choose a job that they would like to apply for. He has to make them write or discuss what skills they would need for this job. They can then discuss this in pairs. The teacher can even expand this lesson to include CV writing and role play interviewing each other for a job. Questions such as “How and where do you look for a job?” “What jobs are your students currently working in?” “ Do they like this job? Why or why not?” can be raised.

Newspaper treasure hunt

The students are made to collect enough newspapers to share one between two – free press papers are really good as articles are not long and are usually easy to read. Prior to the lesson, the teacher has to go through the newspaper and to come up with a list of questions that relate to the articles and advertisements that appear throughout the newspaper.

Read and summarize an article

The students are asked to work in pairs, to read and summarize an article that interests them. Each pair of students can then work with another

pair to talk about their article. Each pair then reports back to the class about the article they read. The teacher needs to list out the words or phrases that students do not know on the board and explain as need.

Classifieds

In the classifieds section the students are asked to find a builder, plumber, caterer etc. and to talk about each of these professions. “What type of work do they do? Discuss the for sale ads. What are people selling? Discuss the other types of advertisements in this section. What are they advertising? What does the advertisement tell you?” are the expected questions from the teacher. Students can write a short advertisement and share with a partner.

Photo articles

The students are asked to find a photo in the newspaper. They are made to write their own headline and/or short article to match the picture. Students can read their articles to the class or work in pairs to share their work. This is also a good homework exercise.

Produce your own class newspaper/s.

Allot different roles to different students to produce a class newspaper. Students could work in groups of two to four to produce different sections of a newspaper or produce a short newspaper as a whole class. They could produce any type of newspaper and have as many different sections in it as they liked. Making decisions about what the newspaper should be and how to do it could be part of the lesson. This would take some time for them to do so the teacher could do it in class over a number of sessions, perhaps the last 15 minutes can be dedicated. Photocopy the finished product for each student must be read out. The contents of the newspaper and the whole process of producing it can be discussed in the class.

Reporting an incident

The students are made to choose any article- sport, music, celebrity culture or current affairs whatever they're interested in. Tell them that they will

be reporting in class the next day. This exercise is a good way for students to learn about each other's interests and also an excellent way of practising reported speech.

Using Online Newspapers

The teacher has to give prompts for an international news item and ask them to look for a report on that topic in a British online newspaper or use the BBC website. Then ask them to look at a report on the same topic in their own national newspapers and do a comparison of the views reported. Although students will be using their first language to read the reports in their own country's newspapers they will then have to report on it in English. It is also a good method of practising the language of comparison and contrast.

Newspaper Quizzes

In groups of 4 or 5, the students are given different sections of a newspaper and are asked to write 10 questions that are relevant to this section. When they have completed their questions they should pass the questions and the newspaper section that they refer to, to another group. The other group should then try and answer the questions by finding the necessary information in the newspaper.

Teaching Grammar

Teach tense, voice, parts of speech, direct-indirect speech, conjunctions, types of sentences using various newspapers.

Identifying parts of speech

Cut newspaper articles into paragraphs and scatter them throughout the class. Students then have to find out the parts of speech and grammatical items within the allotted time.

Conclusion

The iGeneration is immersed in technology and their tech world is open 24/7. Now, we need to take advantage of their love of technology to refocus education. In doing so, we'll not only get students more involved in learning,

but also free up classroom time to help them make meaning of the wealth of information that surrounds them. Newspaper articles are among the most suitable materials to convey daily spoken language as well as cultural patterns and phrases/idioms. In order to teach speaking effectively daily news can be read and debated orally in the classroom. This will help learners to hear and pronounce English rather than grammar rules or cluster examples. Students will benefit more if speaking courses are constructed to include newspaper articles. Their benefits will be- learning about cultural and everyday usage of language patterns,- understanding daily news better as they see the same news in their native language,- asking/answering basic expressions about news they use in the course. So using newspaper articles to teach Z Generation students increase and improve direct access to materials, time and money saving, though using up to date materials on technology.

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