UNDERSTANDING THE ERA OF THE POST- MILLENNIAL LEARNERS

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Post Millennials, also called the iGen, or the Generation Z, are those born between year 1995 until 2012, the generation after the Millennials. This generation of digital age have no consciousness of a world without the World Wide Web, smartphones, tablets, iPads or personal computers. They are a generation who are very much inclined to Internet-surfing, iPoding, texting, Instagraming, Googling, Facebooking, IMing and other social media and interactive applications. For most of them, texting and instant messaging are the primary means of communication and interaction. They have a total dependence on technology and 24-7 access to any information. Perhaps most of them knows how to connect and communicate with one or another electronic device since they were toddlers. It is truly amazing to see this generation manipulate and take control of the gadgets even without teaching them how.

But technology is not the only thing that makes the Post- Millennials different from every generation ahead of them. According to Twenge (2017), they are also different in how they use and value their time and how they behave, act, react, and think toward spirituality, sexuality, and politics. They socialize in completely new ways and want different things from their lives and careers. More than previous generations, they are obsessed with safety, self-gratification and acceptance, have no patience for inequality, very much conscious to the number of likes and friends on social media and trouble distinguishing fact from opinion because of the great number of information readily available thus they have a sense of entitlement that anything on the internet is up for grabs.
In the classroom, Post- Millennials or the iGen want a more relaxing learning atmosphere and teachers who cater this approach. They want to have the control, manipulation and access of technology everywhere at all times. Today’s learners are more laid- back in their approach to learning. To them, a classroom is not just a building. It can be a lounge, a park, a coffee shop, a workplace, or anywhere as long as their minds can work and be productive. They also want teaching styles that involve less lecturing and more of interaction and participation where they can express themselves, their thoughts and ideas.

Teachers can apply and explore a wide variety of fun, contemporary and effective teaching methods in their own teaching space. Teachers can try to include more experiential and exploratory methods where there is emphasis on pupil engagement. They can use dynamic learning techniques for pupil- participation and look for opportunities such as community service where their volunteer efforts have value and the work is more acknowledged. Try to build a social environment beyond the four- walled classroom. Remember that a Gen Z learners are attached to their social networks. Teachers must make themselves available through social apps for questions. For most learners, this may be the only way they feel comfortable asking questions. Furthermore, a teacher must also show them that the content they are learning has relevance in the global world. Gen Z learners need a personal connection to the material or else, they will only disengage and quickly forget and even lose their motivation to try. The learning experience matters to them. They would not be willing to passively sit through a lengthy lecture where in fact they can watch to the same content through multiple engaging podcasts, or tutorial videos.

Lastly, engaging a Post- Millennial learner begins in tuning in. Be well- informed about technology, news, trends as they are and accept that all information is instant and new information spreads readily and easily.
References:
