Overcoming the 7 inch Barrier to Learning

A New Approach for Entrepreneurial Millennials

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Outline

• Entrepreneurial Millennials
• Barriers to learning.
• Mobile Phone Usage within the Classroom
• Learning environment.
• Ways to overcome some barriers to learning
Identifying with the Millennials

• Millennials have lived during an era of rapid technological change and a highly interconnected global world (Keengwe et al, 2014).

• Strauss and Howe (1991), suggest the millennial generation was born between 1982 and 2003, they revised their findings in 2001 and implied the millennial generation was born between 1980 and 2000.
Pensky (2001) perceives the millennials as digital natives.

Digital natives are also called “Thumb Generation”, due to their intense exchange of text messages which has resulted in constant use of their hands (Gu, 2015).

Digital Immigrants are individuals who may not have been born within digital world however are fascinated by technological advances therefore adopt digital media within their lives (Pensky, 2001).
Pedagogical Reasons to consider using Mobile phones

• “Phones are social tools that facilitate authentic and relevant communication and collaboration among learners “ Reinders, 2010:3)

• Mobile phones are part of student’s everyday routine- the help minimise the separation between the classroom and the outside world (Ibid)

• The use of mobile phone in classroom is perceived as a way of weakening the lecturer ‘s overall power (Haughton , 2008 in Wei et al, 2012)

• Integration of phones in the curriculum can positively affect student-teacher interaction (Langmia & Glass, 2014,p.13)
Technology and Social Media
Barriers of Mobile Phones in a learning environment

It is noted that a challenge for most staff in an education setting is “how to keep the students fully and richly present in the classroom” (Sierra, 2016, p.1).

Students frequently use their mobile phones during class despite rules against doing so (Tindell & Bohlander, 2012)

When students are allowed to bring gadgets in classroom, there is disturbance, distraction, disorder when they go off and when students pay more attention to them than the lectures (Langmia and Glass, 2014 p. 13)
Boundaries of Mobile Phones in the Classroom

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R9rymEWJX38
Research Methods

• Observation analysis (HE4, H5, H6 Business Undergraduates)

Three teaching groups were observed

• Questionnaires

82 questionnaires were analysed.

• Focus Group

There were three focus groups that took place between HE4, HE5 and HE6.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HE Level</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Total:</td>
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Mobile Phone Usage within the Classroom

**Controlled (H6)**

- Specific time allocation for the task
- Boundaries
- Phones on the desk (face down)
- Some students ask permission to take a picture of the slides.

**Uncontrolled (H5)**

- No boundaries
- Learning is open, millennials can use their phone as and when they feel necessary
- Temptation to use or look at the phone
- Allow them to use their phones to access social media and then move on to the task.
The Learning Environment

- **Theatre**
  - The lecturer is not always able to gauge mobile usage. Barriers to learning are high within this setting.

- **Horseshoe**
  - The lecturer is able to move around the students and see whether they are undertaking the prescribed task.

- **Circular**
  - The lecturer is be able to view mobile usage. Barriers to learning are minimised.

- **Paired tables**
  - Specifically for cooperative learning, the students may share one mobile phone, between two or three. A high level of engagement displayed.
1. How effective was the use of the mobile phones in the lecture?
   R5 - “It was effective because I could see how the task we needed to do on the phone, was linked to our directed learning”.
   R11 - “It allows me to get up to date knowledge on things we are looking at for example current issues in the media”.
   R3 - “Good because we can use them to do quizzes”.
   R6 – “The blog task was good because it was not just about my education, I also reflected on others work and could learn from them”.

2. What did you like about using your mobile phone in class?
   R8 – “If there is a set task to do, I prefer to use my phone to complete it in lesson rather than in my spare time”.
   R5 – “I can look at things in real time and in more detail than my memory might allow”

3. Did you find yourself distracted in class when you were asked to read and critique your fellow student’s discussion on the forum?
   R12- “I get alerts on my phone, its very easy to click on them when I am set to do a task”
   R1 – “I knew that you would be questioning us after the task to see what we wrote, so I made sure I completed the task in the time you said”
   R8 - “I avoid distraction by setting my phone to alert me via colours on (emails, text messages or personal)”
4. Do you think having a mobile phone on your desk during the lecture is distraction? If so, how?
R-13 “Having the phone on my desk is useful for emergencies, for example if there are family issues”
R2 - “Yes, it can be if it is out the way then you won’t think about it”
R2 - “At times it’s an unconscious reaction, because you can see you have received a message”
R4 - “Yes, if I use it the lecturer may shout at me”

5. Some universities advise that all mobile phones must be turned off and in your bags, whilst in lecture. What are your views on this?
R2 - “I don’t agree, we should be treated as adults at university”
Educational Approaches – Micro Learning

Micro-learning (ML) refers to a learning activity being undertaken over a short period of time (Hug, 2007).

Micro-learning combines micro-content delivery with a sequence of micro interactions which enable users to learn without information overload (Bruck et al, 2012:527).

Examples could include;

1. 20:10
2. Bitesize
3. Quiz or Blog upload
Students were asked about the effectiveness of a micro-session
“Because it goes straight to the point and gives us the opportunity to take part in class which consequently help us to learn faster”
“Opened a bit more of my understanding of the topic”
“Because all the information was delivered clearly and explained in a way that I understood. It also makes student pay attention knowing that the sessions are short, therefore there is full focus and the information is taken in and absorbed quickly”
“Sufficient information, and no time wasted”
“Not effective because I missed the first ten minutes and did not understand what the session was about”

Did you at any point check your phone? No.

“I did want to miss anything”
“We had less time to check, or send messages on our phones”
Conclusions

Students want to take ownership of their learning, getting them to engage with their mobile phone during class can lead on to further teaching and learning prompts (apps/ quizzes) in the future.

Entrepreneurial Millennials have lived in a digital era, banning the use of mobile phones in the classroom is unsympathetic to current teaching and learning strategies. There is need for digital immigrant lecturers to invest development of IT skills into their teaching and learning environment.

New teaching methods that allow mobile phone usage in the classroom, do reduce distraction.
Research Questions

How have you embedded/managed mobile phone usage in the classroom?

What challenges have you come across when embedding mobile phones into your lecture or lesson?

Can the mobile phone cause a distraction when placed on the desk or when allowed to be brought in the classroom?
The incorporation of mobile phones within higher education (HE) classroom settings should be encouraged to enhance student learning and engagement.

The usage of mobile phones differentiates from generation to generation, it is important to empower the millennials with ownership of their learning.

It is imperative to ensure interpersonal skills are not lost through technology, integration of cooperative and micro learning is paramount within higher education.

The use of mobile phones should be incorporated within the curriculum, staff members should be up to date with contemporary teaching practices.

New methods that allow mobile phone usage in the classroom, nevertheless would reduce distraction is necessary moving forward.

To provide an atmosphere that nurtures and facilitates entrepreneurial developments, for example industry experience.

A short spell of teaching (20:10) is recommended to engage millennials and to check understanding.
References


