

Digital Natives and Digital Immigrants in the Indian Context

Sonia Verma
Educator, Vice Principal
Kundan Vidya Mandir Sr. Sec. School, Ludhiana
Punjab, India

Abstract:- The educators and administrators in India have always engaged themselves to look at the causes of the difficulty in reaching out to the young students. After the pandemic the digital divide among the young and the millennial generation widened in India. As an educator with an administrative tool in my hand I have tried to identify the causes because behind my search would lie the answers to how the gap can be bridged? The paper hints at a few solutions so that the divide caused after the pandemic due to the entry of senior teachers into the digital world at different ages is resolved and the gap is bridged.

Hypothesis: In India the pandemic was the catalyst to the leap into the land of digital world in the education world. The chalk and challenge were the only tools that teachers used. Most schools have 60% of the staff aged above forty and not very tech savvy who lack fluency in the use of digital devices. This paper works on a hypothesis that there is no rigid demarcation between Netizens also called digital natives and digital immigrants rather there is a possibility of a continuum. Digital fluency is lacking among those who entered into the digital arena in their forties. The Generation Y. Their ability to use digital devices is dependent on the frequency of their use and upon the need to reformulate knowledge and deduce information so that they can express themselves creatively and appropriately in a digital environment. The natives however are those who just need to lay their hands on the device and its use comes to them automatically. The present day student : Kindergarten through college – represent the first of its kind generation which has grown up in this technological era. They have spent their entire life of about 30 years on this earth surrounded by and using computers, video games, age.

I. INTRODUCTION

The research paper aims to look at the causes of the digital divide due to different factors and then aims to suggest a few solutions so that the divide due to entry to the digital world at different ages is resolved and the gap is bridged. While writing this paper the digital immigrants will be considered as lacking fluency of the use of digital devices.

II. FACTORS INFLUENCING DIGITAL FLUENCY

- Demographic features
- Organisational differences
- Psychological factors
- Social influence
- Opportunity
- Behaviour with technology and Actual use of digital devices

Digital natives are this new generation of youth born into the digital age while digital immigrants are those human beings who are grappling with technology to fit into this digital world who learnt to use computers at some stage of their adult life. The other factor that affects digital literacy is the area where you belong. People living in remote areas and in those areas where internet access is difficult will find difficulty in adapting to digital devices. Even the kind of organisation you work in school, bank retail or corporate affects your digital fluency because the type of e language or tool you use are different and specific to the organisation needs. The immigrants also have this mental block that they have landed into an alien world and it would be difficult for them to adapt to this new way of life.

III. THE POSSIBILITY OF A BRIDGE AND CO-EXISTENCE

How can Digital natives and digital immigrants work together? Since the immigrants did not grow up using technology to teach and learn in the classroom they can give an insight to the natives as to how to work when technology fails. The natives will learn how to troubleshoot. The scenario otherwise would be the natives teaching the immigrants how to create and use the tools that were more popular with the new neuroplasticity wired brains. The way to do so would be dealt with later in the paper.

A short survey was conducted upon teachers with about 20 years of experience from various schools in different cities of Punjab. The questionnaire aimed at assessing the comfort of learning and teaching on a digital platform. The various subject teachers, mostly aged 46 + were given the questionnaire.

Survey Report	Used assistance from younger family members (during Covid) to teach. Way out	Use of twitter/ Blog/ writing prior to teaching On digital platform.	Preferred to Just teach by lecture method by keeping camera on	Used tools only for assessment And took a longer time to complete the lesson if any tool was used.	Student assessment was done
	84% senior teachers used help of their children or younger colleague	15% had used twitter and 6% heard of Blog	80% of the teachers(maths) used mobile focussed on board to teach	62 % teachers said they avoided tool	PPT 100 %
	Collaborative teaching engaged a new age teacher to prepare content or PPT or test and IT teacher was assisting all.	Creating and writing blogs was by 2%	About 73% of the Science teachers and Economic teachers used the camera on the notebook	56% of language teachers said time consumed for assessment was much more than otherwise.	Time bound Google forms 50%
	Lecture methods dominated and teachers attended crash courses to learn basic IT skills. Initially 70 % of teachers preferred sending notes on whatsapp.		Almost all Language teachers preferred sharing PPT made by someone else and sending notes on whatsapp or google classroom.		Viva 80%

➤ Table 1:- Survey Summary Report

IV. SURVEY REPORT BASED ON QUESTIONNAIRE

The above survey depicts that there are significant differences in the two groups usually categorised by age and demographics.

Cities like Bangalore, Hyderabad, Mumbai and Pune would have a lesser divide because the culture is digital and technology friendly there. Acceptance is usually less in the upper age group but more in states where IT has not yet taken over in the workplace. The demand in the workplace becomes the basis of the need to learn IT skills.

The various surveys conducted by researchers show that a new digital language is evolving and is increasingly prevalent with those who are tech savvy individuals as a normal means of communication.

V. SYMBIOTIC RELATIONSHIP AND COLLABORATIVE EXISTENCE

When covid struck the initial days were like mayhem of managing time and space and knowledge for all teachers . I teach English core to class XII and for me it was a cocktail of teaching ,planning ,supervision and administration plus mentorship to my very senior team members. Not only was I dealing with digital natives but on my hand was a

generation of so called digital immigrants who had been forced into an unknown land beyond the frontiers of subject knowledge.

I chatted with students and then came to know that most of them had a facebook account . I created a facebook fan page and almost my entire class became fans and indirectly it was a reminder that they had to study the subject. It was because now I was communicating with them in a language they were able to understand and in a world that belonged to them . Parents were overwhelmingly supportive , finally their child was engaged in the area of their interest ; Education. For the teachers we organised workshops and training programmes and even gave support by hand holding them when need was felt.

85% of the parents made extra efforts during the use of technology by standing by the norms laid down by schools for online teaching.

VI. FINDINGS

The findings of my research are that a new digital language is evolving and is exceedingly prevalent with tech savvy individuals as normal means of communication. This has created a lull between generations affecting both the digital natives and digital immigrants. The barrier has to be crossed , bridging the two schools of thought. The immigrant

with his day to day endeavours entered the land of learning with the natives.

The second thing is that in order to make learning effective both the instructor and the student must speak the same language and match their instructional strategy and learning style consistently. Additionally those who are responsible for aligning educational and learning strategies should meet the standards or norms required by attending training and development programs being organised by various forums and organisations. One of the principals I met at a conference said: their school had organised workshops for parents to understand the use of technology after learning it themselves.

It is common knowledge that in India there are different kinds of issues with the internet and with the fact that there are people who have yet to cross over to the land of digital devices. The remote villages have yet to be in the wifi zones with each individual carrying a mobile in his hand. The IDEA advertisement of the teacher teaching on one mobile is still relevant. Yes on the other hand elite schools are holding classes with Leds and 3D images as interfaces for teaching. The gap is so vast. The stakeholder in the school is reluctant to bear the cost thinking the device may become redundant.

The learning and thinking requires a paradigm shift on the part of the immigrant ;as the learner or the native; is already coming rewired and with new neuroplasticity; if the word is seen in the larger context. The shift relates to how the both receive information and how it stimulates the brain to connect the inputs with previously learned data to manipulate it with the stored information and apply it using problem solving approach and critical thinking with his cognitive skills. If we look at the demographics we will see that where there is a dire need, the bridge is built faster and where the availability of alternatives is wide the shift is slow. But the communication divide has to be bridged. The immigrants must understand that the facebook profile and the Personal profile are two different aspects of an individual teacher or educator. Educators must be cognizant that what they online is not private, and that their actions and activities in the virtual world can have real world consequences. They must do everything within the frame of media policy and follow all net etiquettes The loop should include the authorities under whom you work.

VII. YOU CAN DO IT ATTITUDE

Self confidence:-If you can use blinkit, use indriver, order from zomato or swiggy or book a cab with blah blah and ola, definitely you are not an immigrant.

You just need the pass of practice : to enter this land.

Let them be teachers:-The children today are real good mentors, the only problem being their speed and agility. They are experts whereas the immigrants are still attending the driving school.

VIII. LEARN FROM WHAT OTHERS DID

Educational organisations have exhibited giant leaps towards digitalisation in India. Hand holding by CEOs and by digital lions in schools has been an ongoing process.

Some schools even went to the extent of calling parents to teach them how to ensure their children are using the device as per requirement. Which icon to open? How to upload ?How to make a video or pdf ?The parents have been trained too.

IX. CONCLUSION

Long back in 2003 there was a buzz about twitter and skype. Now they are in our educational arena, some behaviour modification and some open mindedness is all it takes.

Behaviour modification is a must to gel into the world of these natives. Mobiles were banned in our school now tablets are in.

Technology is here to stay, evolve and change the world. So the digital immigrant and the so-called native are now aborigines of the same land.

The change is constant and yet progressive. The continuum exists and will be a part of our existence provided we take it constructively.

REFERENCES

- [1]. Classroom Management in The Digital Age.
–Heather Dowd
–Patrick Green
- [2]. Tech -savvy Classroom
– Dianne Witt.