“Serendipity in the Classroom - Teaching Social Media and Lessons of Letting go of Control”

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Then I started hearing some new terms....

• Digital immigrants vs Digital natives
Is there a new student?
Do we have a different student?

Native
- Student
- Fast
- Young
- Future
- Spontaneous
- Multi-tasking
- Image
- Playful
- Digital
- Action
- Connection

Immigrant
- Teacher
- Slow
- Old
- Past
- Planned
- Serial Thinking
- Text
- Serious
- Analogue
- Knowledge
- Isolation
Digital Natives according to Mark Prensky, 2001

The claim:

1. Young people of the digital native generation possess sophisticated knowledge of and skills with information technologies.
2. As a result of their upbringing and experiences, digital natives have particular learning preferences and styles that differ from earlier generations of students.
3. The technology is mutating people’s brains (generational divide).
Digital Natives according to Mark Prensky, 2001

Summary: a distinct generation of natives exists, and education must fundamentally change to meet the needs of the group

- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9CL7pgOpoLY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9CL7pgOpoLY)
HELP!!!!

OVERLOAD!
Traditional Teaching Methods

- Lecture
- Group work
- Video
- Research
- MOOCs
- Active learning
- Flipped classroom
Traditional Student Issues

• Don’t do the reading ahead of time
• Don’t watch the videos ahead of time
• Hate group work
• Don’t speak, prefer to sit back and absorb
• Need time to think before answering questions
• May not attend class regularly
• Are distracted during class – FB on their laptops!
My approach

• I reached out to several digital natives
• I also reached out to other faculty
• I researched on the internet for authors on the subject
Contagious
WHY THINGS CATCH ON
JONAH BERGER

Social Media Examiner
Your Guide to the Social Media Jungle

Tribes
WE NEED YOU TO LEAD US
Seth Godin

Groundswell
WINNING IN A WORLD TRANSFORMED BY SOCIAL TECHNOLOGIES
Charlene Li

Social Media Marketing
Strategies for Engaging on Facebook, Twitter & Other Social Media
Liana U. Evans

The New Relationship Marketing
How to Build a Larger, Loyal, and Profitable Network Using the Social Web
Mari Smith

forward by Guy Kawasaki, author of Enchantment
The serendipity of Social Media

ser·en·di·p·i·ty
ˌserənˈdipədē/
noun
noun: serendipity; plural noun: serendipities
the occurrence and development of events by chance in a happy or beneficial way
My Serendipitous Moment

- Fast Company Article
- AAU Student Publication
- Thealicianicole.com
How do you design for loss of control and serendipity?
Give Students More Control

- Make course relevant to their needs and interests – not what I think is important
  - 3x5 cards to question what they want to learn on day one
  - Focus on what they are interested in – blog topics
- “Crowdeducation” – allow students to collaborate and be a part of the teaching
  - Design an open curriculum where students set the pace
  - Students chose amount of discussion and amount of in-class work time
  - Students serve as instructors on topics they know
  - Student needs dictate which course resources they use
- Turn student questions into investigations and curiosity into learning
  - Crowd sourcing
  - Social justice
  - Twitter
  - Instagram
Give students less control

- But more meaning...
- Counter the abundance of choice in Social Media
- Semester long project
  - Keep blog on topic of your choice
  - Post three times a week
  - Must use blogspot blogging platform
  - Metrics and final presentation determine grade
Embrace Serendipity!

- Transparency
- Vulnerability
- Being authentic
- Openness

“What is interesting about you is you.”

(Alonzo King)
Student Reactions/Feedback

• 100% felt that serendipity is a huge part of SM
• 70% of class had serendipitous moments
• those who found serendipity were motivated by it and it showed in their blog performance
  • Most # posts
  • Most # followers
  • Most # of comments
• When questioned they were unsure how to introduce serendipity in the SM course and felt it cannot be controlled
Strategies for Serendipity

• Set the tone for the classroom
• Seed the idea of serendipity – Contagious
• Provide triggers for serendipity
  • Open class time for students to work with one another
  • Guest lectures
  • Student research on SM topics
  • Peer critique
  • Open critique of professor’s work
• Follow on-line “rabbit trails” brought up by students
  • Look for happy accidents
Benefits of Serendipity

• Allow students to build on previous knowledge
• Encourages personal connections to content
• Encourages concept exploration
• Compels students to make meaning – blog

Courting Serendipity: Constructivist Theory and Classroom Practice, Marilyn Duckworth Jensen, University of North Florida, 1998


What We Can Learn From Accidental Learning, Maryellen Weimer, PhD, Facultyfocus.com, 2014
Conclusions

• Faculty have a lot to offer the digital natives
• Evolving subject matter demands a “design for openness” approach
• Let go of “control” in the classroom
• Create “control” (meaning)
• Encourage serendipity
Sources

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9CL7pgOpoLY

Digital Immigrants – Digital Natives, part of my EDCMOOC digital artefac
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w2FysgEiJXM

Courting Serendipity: Constructivist Theory and Classroom Practice, Marilyn Duckworth Jensen, University of North Florida, 1998


What We Can Learn From Accidental Learning, Maryellen Weimer, PhD, Facultyfocus.com, 2014

Jackie Gerstein, Ed.D., Jackie Gerstain’s Blog

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cXcCBuU3ytU explanation of flipped classroom model

Tim Leberecht Blog Post: TEDGlobal 2012: Out in the Open

Tim Leberech Blog Post: Openness or how to design for the loss of control?
http://designmind.frogdesign.com/blog/openness-or-how-do-you-design-for-the-loss-of-control.html-0