

MEETING THE NEEDS OF MILLENNIALS

Integrating Technology

By Steve Baxendale

As educators, we need to engage in creative thinking if we are to meet the needs of the Millennials, as the current generation of students has been named. As Doug Levin and his colleagues point out in *The Digital Disconnect: The Widening Gap between Internet-Savvy Students and Their Schools* (2002, available at www.pewinternet.org/PPF/r/67/report_display.asp), the Millennials believe a disconnect exists between their use of technology inside and outside of school. For a growing number of students, school is increasingly out of touch and is not preparing them for today's workplace.

Technology provides educators with the tools to completely transform education to meet the individual needs of students.

solutions to problems. Gamers also expect to fail a few times before finding the solution, and are willing to take more risks. Businesses are already changing their corporate training and management practices to accommodate these attitudes and effectively manage Millennials in the workforce. Some businesses are even moving training from traditional to game-based environments

Success in the gaming environment often depends on quickly gathering, analyzing, and reacting to information. Gamers are continually analyzing and sharing information to successfully overcome the challenges they face. Unfortunately, our classrooms don't often provide this level of interactivity and excitement. It's not surprising these students see schools as being out of touch with the digital world.

Technology is having a major impact on the lives of students and is changing the way they approach learning. Instant messaging, text messaging, blogging, and gaming have become key parts of most students' lives and are having profound effects on the way students acquire and use information and solve problems. Yet education has been slow to effectively implement these environments. In fact, some schools have even banned these new tools to prevent cheating.

The challenge for all of us is to work together with today's generation of students to develop effective applications of these new technologies for use in learning. We as educators must explore a multitude of options to meet the learning needs of students.

Technology now provides the opportunity to increase the number of learning opportunities both within and outside the typical brick and mortar school.

It is an exciting time to be involved in online education. At Pacific Resources for Education and Learning, we're looking forward to meeting the learning needs of the Millennials and to working with educators and students in designing creative technology applications. If you would like to learn more about the way the Millennials use technology, check out some of the following resources.

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Photo: Lane Singh

▷ Today's generation of students requires greater use of technology in education.

These tools allow teachers to develop and monitor individual education plans (IEPs) for their students. Technology also provides the ability, through learning and student management systems, to monitor learning through the nearly instantaneous reporting of data. However, by most measures (e.g., test scores, drop out rates, surveys) these tools are not having a transformational effect on students.

A large number of Millennials are gamers. According to John Beck and Mitchell Wade in *Got Game: How the Gamer Generation is Reshaping Business Forever* (2004), there are differences between the attitudes of gamers and students of previous generations. Gamers want to do things well and stand out, expect all problems to have a solution, and are willing to try multiple