The Influence of Social Media Technology on Generation iY's Ability to Communicate Face to Face in Their Academic Careers

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Abstract

This thesis investigates how Generation iY students perceive that social media and / or texting technology has influenced their ability to track and comprehend the subtleties of face-to-face communication within an academic setting. Generation iY is defined as those born between the years 1982 to 2004. Also involved in this study are members of the faculty and staff that teach Generation iY. The theories being applied and examined in this study include, Postman's Technology Ecology, McLuhan's Media Ecology, and Ong's Orality and Literacy. These theories while addressing different aspects of technological change, all agree that the change is all encompassing with every advancement in technology. The study consisted of four focus groups. Two groups consist of Generation iY, and two groups of faculty and staff. Comparative analysis was utilized to point out the similarities and differences between the focus groups. This study has revealed that while Generation iY said that they prefer face to face communication; they are intimidated, fearful of judgment, overwhelmed, and lack the sense of responsibility that is inherent with face-to-face communication. They find social media and texting a more comfortable means of communication because it requires less effort and minimizes consequences. The quotes given by the Generation iYers in this study are in accord with what Elmore (2010), writes about them, Generation iY is isolated yet connected. Generation iY has an overdeveloped attachment to their peer group via social media. The faculty of Generation iY cites this as a major reason why Generation iY struggle with critical thinking. Weiler (2004), supports these concerns as she indicates that they gather information for the wrong reasons. They use critical thinking in order to prove their beliefs right to their peer group instead of trying to find answers to problems.

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Chapter 1:

Introduction

Importance of Study

Generation iY (born 1982 to 2004) is the largest generation since the Baby Boomers (1946 to 1969). "Already, nearly half of the world's population is under the age of 25" (Elmore, 2010, p. 19). Generation iY in the next 30 to 40 years will be the majority of our workforce, professionals, politicians, and leaders (Elmore, 2010). In summary, this generation is the future.

Elmore (2010) writes that Generation iY are our workers, professionals, leaders, and teachers of the future. Generation iY is the generation that will be guiding our society for some time to come. It is essential that the current generations that are in power educate and mentor this future generation well.

The teaching generation can accomplish their goals of good teaching and mentorship by assuring that Generation iY learns what it means to communicate face-to-face. This task becomes easier if the teaching generation has a better understanding of the generation they are attempting to teach.

When sending and receiving messages, each communicator is influenced by cognitions, that is, the thoughts that individuals have about themselves and others, including their understanding and awareness of who they are (smart funny compassionate, and so on), how well they like who they are, and how successful they think they are (Hair & Wiemann, 2009).

Generation iY has been raised with computers, the internet, cell phones, social media, and instant access to information. Technology has changed their perception of who they are, how they interact with each other, and the rest of the world. Technology has changed every aspect of their society, as Postman (1998) says, "Technology is an ecological change." In other words technology changes everything it touches. Generation iY view face to face communication differently than their parent generation. Their learning habits and their sense of self-worth are different and perceived differently (Elmore, 2012). Social media, while providing instant access to peer groups does little to prepare Generation iY for their academic careers or beyond. This will be discussed further in the next section.

The Problem

Generation iY are the future of our society. As the largest generation since the baby boomers, they will one day be the primary decision makers of our society. Lack of essential skills in face to face communication and critical thinking will hinder their ability to assume the role of leaders of our society.

The overuse of social media, instant access to their peer group, and information has given Generation iY a sense of isolation (Elmore, 2010). This overuse of social media has also promoted a false sense of maturity (Elmore, 2012). It has also given Generation iY unfounded reasons for information gathering, and eroded their critical thinking skills (Weiler, 2004). The overexposure to social media, their peer group, and instant information has led to Generation iY having issues with face-to-face communication. There also is evidence to support Weiler's (2004) assessment of critical thinking and information gathering for the wrong reasons. Postman

(1992) tells us those that resist technology are, “Are at least, suspicious of the idea of progress, and who do not confuse information with understanding” (p. 184).

A generation that does not practice face-to-face communication will experience a lack of connection. However, when a generation is taught and has experiences with face to face communication, they begin to seek information not just to appease their peer group but because they see a need to solve societies issues. They begin to participate in society; not just observe it.

Review of Chapters

This thesis will include chapters on literature, methodology, results of the study, and a conclusion. The literature chapter includes philosophical assumptions, previous established theories, and current literature in this field of study. The methodology chapter outlines how the study was conducted, and how the data collected was correlated. The results chapter shows what results were obtained, and a discussion of the results. The conclusion chapter discusses limitations of this study, recommends future studies, and the conclusions of this thesis.

Definition of Terms

- Generation: a group of individuals born and living contemporaneously.
- The Greatest Generation: Those that lived through the great depression and World War II. Also, parent generation to Baby Boomer generation.
- Baby Boomers: The generation that was born to those returning from World War II. They were born from 1946 to 1964. During this period 76 million baby boomers were born. Parent generation to Generation X.

- Generation X: This generation was born from 1965 to 1980. Known for their disillusionment with their future and the world in general. Parent generations of Generation Y and iY.
- Generation Y: Born from 1980 to 2001; this generation has grown up with technology. They are the beginnings of Generation iY.
- Generation iY: This generation overlaps generation Y; they were born from 1982 to 2004. The boom in technology has had more influence on them than any other.

Chapter 2: Review of Literature

Before this thesis can be explored previous research and eruditions must be examined. This literature will assist in explaining the history, philosophies, and theories that support the premise of this research. Technology brings about change on an ecological level (Postman, 1998). Also, these changes are more than just perceptions of one generation to another. They are real and impact not only communication but academia as well.

Philosophical Assumptions

The creation of technology has always had a profound impact on human society. From the first time that a person picked up a rock to use as a tool to the vast amounts of data that are stored on computers; technology sends ripples of change throughout our culture. Technology changes how we work, how we play, how we learn, how we see ourselves, how we think, how we feel, and how we relate to one another. It changes everything (Postman, 1998).

The survival of our society depends on the parent generations passing on what they have learned to the subsequent generations or educating them. In order to solve problems, the subsequent generations must be taught how to think critically.

Dewey's Necessity of Life

Understanding how technology has changed Generation iY; how they communicate, learn, and their ability to think through issues is more than just being able to relate to the younger generation. Each generation as they grow becomes society's caretakers. As the current caretakers of society, it is our moral and ethical responsibility to teach the younger generations.

Just as procreation allows parents to live on in their children; communicating with and teaching the future generations extends the life of society (Dewey, 1965).

Humans are not capable of, "indefinite self-renewal" (Dewey, 1965, p. 2), the continued existence of the human race is maintained by physical reproduction; however, this is not what allows the human race to continually readapt (Dewey, 1965) to the environment in which we live. Human beings survive as a race because we pass on what we have learned to the next generation.

Dewey (1965) in his book entitled *Democracy and Education* calls this, "education as a necessity of life" (p. 2). He states this necessity of life in the following way:

> Society exists through a process of transmission quite as much as biological life. This transmission occurs by means of communication of habits of doing, thinking, and feeling from the older to the younger. Without this communication of ideals, hopes, expectations, standards, opinions, from those members of society who are passing out of group life to those who are coming into it, social life could not survive (Dewey, 1965, p. 3).

A more recent author, G. K. Chesterson put it this way, "Education is simply the soul of a society as it passes from one generation to another" (The American Chesterson Society, 2014). However, even before Dewey or Postman's time this truth had been revealed, King Solomon thought it important enough to include it in his book of Proverbs, "Train a child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not turn from it" (Solomon, 1995, p. 969). It is imperative that those in charge of society's soul train, educate, and mentor the generations to come, lest society pass away from this world.

Aristotle's Dialectics

As parents, mentors, teachers and members of our society we are morally obligated to propagate our society by passing on what we know. Through communication with the younger generation we ensure that they learn how to not only maintain our society, but also how to grow as individuals and to pass on what they learn to future generations.

It is acknowledged and accepted in current literature that Generation iY has issues with critical thinking. Weiler (2004) writes, "Most college faculty and librarians are painfully aware of how often students seem to be incapable of thinking critically… (p. 47). Halpern (1998) also acknowledges the lack of critical thinking skills as she writes,

> People now have an incredible wealth of information available quite literally at their fingertips. The problem has become knowing what to do with the deluge of data. If people cannot think intelligently about the myriad issues that confront them, then they are in danger of having all of the answers but still not knowing what the answers mean (p. 450).

Colleges and universities are changing the way the teaching and learning process is viewed; the goal of which is to improve critical thinking skills (Halpern, 1998). This need points to the next of the philosophical assumptions utilized in this thesis, Aristotle's dialectics. Aristotle's dialectics is the philosophy of critical thinking in one of its earliest forms. The University of Stanford, Encyclopedia of Philosophy describes dialectics as,

> Dialectic is useful for three purposes: for training, for conversational exchange, and for sciences of a philosophical sort. That it is useful for training purposes is directly evident on the basis of these considerations: once we have a direction for our inquiry we will

> more readily be able to engage a subject proposed to us. It is useful for conversational exchange because once we have enumerated the beliefs of the many, we shall engage them not on the basis of the convictions of others but on the basis of their own; and we shall re-orient them whenever they appear to have said something incorrect to us. It is useful for philosophical sorts of sciences because when we are able to run through the puzzles on both sides of an issue we more readily perceive what is true and what is false (Shields, 2014).

The boom in technology and the instant access to information has changed Generation iY. They have access to the information but they do not know how to use it to investigate or discover the meaning behind the information they have access to.

Whether you are a teacher, mentor, or parent you are part of what Dewey refers to as "passing out of group life" (Dewey, 1965), and it is your responsibility to pass on what you have learned. Learning has never been about just memorization and recitation, it is about learning how to think through issues and problems whether they be scientific or sociological. "Put in positive terms, thinking enables us to direct our activities with foresight and to plan according to ends-in-view, or purposes of which we are aware" (Dewey, 1933, p. 17). "That it is useful for training purposes is directly evident on the basis of these considerations: once we have a direction for our inquiry we will more readily be able to engage a subject proposed to us. Aristotle's Dialectics (Shields, 2014) and Dewey's Necessity of Life (Dewey, 1965) are inexorably linked. "Without this communication of ideas, hopes, expectations, standards, opinions, from those members of society who are passing out of group life to those who are coming into it, society could not survive" (Dewey, 1965, p. 3). These two philosophies

generated by two educators eras apart point out that parent generations must teach the next generations to think critically.

Theoretical Basis

The philosophical assumptions in this thesis show that in order for society to survive, knowledge must be passed on. It also maintains that critical thinking must be passed on if the ensuing generations are to be able to solve problems and therefore adapt.

Postman's (1998) Media Ecology states, that any technological advancement changes everything. In other words, technology is neither a positive change nor a negative one; it is an all-encompassing change that impacts every level of our society and culture. Technology changes how we communicate, how we behave, how we learn, how we teach, how we think and how we relate to ourselves and each other. This point is crucial to this thesis as the generation in question; Generation iY, have been exposed to the greatest influx of technology in history (United States Government;, 2014). This in turn has changed how they gather information, learn, communicate, and think. If the generations responsible for teaching them are to be successful in their communication with and education of Generation iY then they must be aware and adapt to these changes.

Other pieces of literature that support Postman are, Ong's (1982), *Orality and Literacy*: *The Technologizing of the Word* and McLuhan's (1962), *The Gutenberg Galaxy: The Making of Typographic Man*, Elmore's (2010) *Generation iY*, and Alcoff's (1989) *Data Information Knowledge and Wisdom*, presented by Bellinger, Castro and Mills. These works show that technological advancement has changed our society in the past and how; as well as, the differences in thought processes given the technological influences.

Postman's Five Things

Neil Postman describes his five things we need to know about technological change in a speech given in Denver, Colorado in 1998. In this speech entitled, Five Things We Need to Know About Technological Change, Postman gives five ideas that are inherit in any technological advancement. Postman's five things are listed below. Postman is not anti-technology; however, he is cautious about accepting a technology just because we can invent a technology.

1. The first idea is that all technological change is a trade-off. I like to call it a Faustian Bargain. Technology gives and technology takes away. This means that for every advantage a new technology offers, there is always a corresponding disadvantage (Postman, 1998, p. 2).
2. The advantages and disadvantages of new technologies are never distributed evenly among the population. This means that every new technology benefits some and harms others. There are even some who are not affected at all (Postman, 1998, p. 3).
3. Embedded in every technology there is a powerful idea, sometimes two or three powerful ideas. These ideas are often hidden from our view because they are of a somewhat abstract nature. But this should not be taken to mean that they do not have practical consequences (Postman, 1998, p. 6).
4. Technological change is not additive; it is ecological. I can explain this best by an analogy. What happens if we place a drop of red dye into a beaker of clear water? Do we have clear water plus a spot of red dye? We have a new coloration to

> every molecule of water. That is what I mean by ecological change. A new medium does not add something; it changes everything (Postman, 1998, p. 7).

5. I come now to the fifth and final idea, which is that media tend to become mythic. I use this word in the sense in which it was used by the French literary critic, Roland Barthes. He used the word "myth" to refer to a common tendency to think of our technological creations as if they were God-given, as if they were a part of the natural order of things (Postman, 1998, p. 8).

Postman is not the only scholar that subscribed to the theory that technology creates huge changes in our society. Ong (1982) examines how going from an oral to literate society changed all aspects of our culture.

Ong on Orality and Literacy

In his book entitled, *Orality and Literacy*: *The Technologizing of the Word*, Walter J. Ong (1982) maps out the basic, yet all-encompassing changes that have occurred as the societies of the world have gone from an oral based culture to a literate based culture. Ong correctly identifies writing as a technology, "Yet writing (and especially alphabetic writing) is a technology, calling for the use of tools and other equipment…" (Ong, 1982, p. 80).

Ong compares and contrasts an oral based society and a literate one; the reason for his comparison is to emphasize the changes that progressing from an oral based society to a literate one has had and how every aspect of people's lives change as a result. One of Ong's explanations of the differences and how vast they are is below.

> The fact that oral peoples commonly and in all likelihood universally consider words to have magical potency is clearly tied in, at least unconsciously, with their sense of the word as necessarily spoken, sounded, and hence power-driven. Deeply typographic folk

> forget to think of words as primarily oral, as events, and hence as necessarily powered: for them, words tend rather to be assimilated to things, 'out there' on a flat surface. (Ong, 1982, p. 32)

Oral based societies consider the spoken word to have power and behave as a living thing. In contrast a literate based society considers words to be lists, things, inanimate objects or simply events. For this research the labels are not as important as is the extremely opposite viewpoints of the two societies. See how drastically and vastly different the two paradigms are. This is the influence of technology. Marshal McLuhan actually worked on this same type of dilemma and his thoughts will be discussed in the following section.

The Gutenberg Galaxy

This philosophy of technological change being ecological is not only bolstered in Ong's work, but also in Marshal McLuhan's (1962) work entitled, *The Gutenberg Galaxy: The Making of Typographic Man*. In this book McLuhan contrasts literate man with non-literate man, or if you prefer a verbal based society with that of a written word based society. McLuhan (1962) states the contrast as, "The interiorization of the technology of the phonetic alphabet translates man from the magical world of the ear to the neutral visual world" (p. 18).

Further explanation of the contrast is given when he describes a non-literate man vs. a literate man and how they each perceive and interact with the world. McLuhan via Carothers compares an African child to a Western European child.

> That is, a child in any Western milieu is surrounded by an abstract explicit visual technology of uniform time and uniform continuous space in which "cause" is efficient and sequential, and things move and happen on single planes and in successive order.

> But the African child lives in the implicit, magical world of the resonant oral word. He encounters not efficient causes but formal causes of configurational field such as any non-literate society cultivates. Carothers repeats again and again that rural Africans live largely in a world of sound – a world loaded with direct personal significance for the hearer – whereas the Western European lives much more in a visual world which is on the whole indifferent to him. (McLuhan, 1962, pp. 18-19).

McLuhan is highlighting the differences between a more technologically advanced society versus a lesser technologically advanced society. He also points out how these differences could influence the perceptions of one society to another. McLuhan's work accentuates Postman's Five Things and also shows specifically how people are affected by the level of technology they are exposed to. His work also shows how they would interact with those of different societies, cultures, or even generations. In the next section more current and specific work will be reviewed. These works will help to identify how the boom in technology has changed Generation iY and how these changes impact their ability to communicate in their academic careers.

The Literature

The theoretical review section examined the history of theories in the fields of communication, pedagogy, and critical thinking and how technology has impacted these areas. In this section literature will be reviewed that is of more current or leading into the future of the research.

Ellul's Technological Order

Jacques Ellul's (1962) The Technological Order refers to technology as technique, "It has become the new and specific milieu in which man is required to exist, one which has supplanted

the old milieu, that of nature" (p. 394). He further points out, and this is where he and Postman agree.

> Since Technique has become the new milieu, all social phenomena are situated in it. It is incorrect to say that economics, politics, and the sphere of cultural are influenced or modified by Technique; they are rather situated in it, a novel situation modifying all traditional social concepts (Ellul, 1962, p. 395).

Ellul realized that technology permeates every aspect of our society, just as McLuhan and Postman did. However, Ellul states that the most prevalent problems that mankind complains about when it comes to technology are false problems (Ellul, 1962).

> We make too much of the disagreeable features of technical development, for example, urban over-crowding, nervous tension, air pollution, and so forth. We hear too often that morals are being threatened by growth of our techniques. We dread the sterilization of art through technique. We fear eliminating instinctive human values and powers" (Ellul, 1962, pp. 396-397).

Ellul also states that the real problems are whether we can master the techniques and whether or not a new civilization can appear which is inclusive of technique (Ellul, 1962). Ellul is correct in saying that these are real problems; however, given the influence that technology is having on Generation iY's ability to think critically and face to face communication; there is some validity to the fears that Ellul states are false. Mumford has a different take on technology and how it impacts our society.

> Instead of functioning actively as a tool-using animal, man will become a passive, machine-serving animal whose proper functions, if this process continues unchanged,

> will either be fed into a machine, or strictly limited and controlled for the benefit of depersonalized organizations (Mumford, 1966, p. 303).

Face-to-Face

Face-to-face communication provides a deeper connection to people; it bonds us to the person or persons that we communicate with in this manner. "Face-to-face communication provides a rich mix of verbal and non-verbal cue systems that convey highly nuanced emotions, and even double meanings" (Walther, 2012, p. 138). Face-to-face allows us to have a deeper knowledge of who we are dealing with; however, in order to achieve this we also lose a modicum of control over the communication taking place.

> Madell and Muncer (2007) found that young adults tend to prefer text messaging (as well as IMing) because it allows for more control over the social interaction. Several benefits of these socially interactive technologies include the ability to control how the user interacts with others and the length of the conversation. In addition, online communication and text messaging gives the user added control over the message, in that users have the ability and ‘‘time to think about how best to articulate themselves" (Pierce, 2009, p. 1368).

This increase in social media has led to a reduction in face-to-face communication. The result has been that Generation iY has had less practice in face-to-face communication. "Online interaction greatly reduced face-to-face social interaction" (Pierce, 2009, p. 1368). It is understandable then that Generation iY feels more trepidation when having to communicate face-to-face.

Turkle's Alone Together

A main theme in face-to-face communication is a verbal and non-verbal behavior. "A strong and persistent theme throughout this volume; concerns the value of describing and analyzing naturally occurring overt verbal and non-verbal behavior" (Knapp & Daly, 2002, p. 11). We see the person we are communicating with; we hear their inflections and their tone of voice, we read their non-verbal transmissions.

Turkle realizes that technology is diminishing our ability to communicate face to face.

> Technology is seductive when what it offers meets our human vulnerabilities. And as it turns out, we are very vulnerable indeed. We are lonely but fearful of intimacy. Digital connections and the sociable robot may offer the illusion of companionship without the demands of friendship. Our networked life allows us to hide from each other, even as we are tethered to each other (Turkle, 2011, p. 1).

The result is that as Generation iY withdraws further into the digital or virtual world; it becomes more isolated. "The paradox we observe, then, is that the Internet is a social technology used for communication with individuals and groups, but it is associated with declines in social involvement and the psychological well-being that goes with social involvement" (Kiesler, et al., 1998, p. 1029).

When communicating online via text, social media, or instant messaging people tend to exaggerate, outright lie, or take every opportunity to enhance their image. "Self-presentation, or impression management, occurs when persons seek to control how others perceive them" (Wright & Vebb, 2011, p. 80). "O'Sullivan contends that at times people strategically select mediated channels while shaping the information they wish to convey or to maintain more control over communication outcomes" (Wright & Vebb, 2011, p. 81).

Two of the reasons that Generation iY finds computer mediated communication so appealing are; they are in control of their interactions and they are in control of their image. Continuously portraying yourself and the world around you in a less than truthful manner leads to false expectations from yourself and from the world.

Elmore's Paradoxes

Generation iY is the most contradictory generation; therefore the hardest to comprehend (Elmore, 2010). Elmore's book (2010), *Generation iY*, list 8 paradoxes about Generation iY. These cover a range of subjects from concern and lack of caring to their being adventurous yet protected. However, the two paradox hypotheses that relate most to this thesis are, paradox number 3, "They are social yet isolated by technology" (Elmore, 2010, p. 38), and paradox number 6, "They are diverse yet harmonious" (Elmore, 2010, p. 44).

Social yet Isolated

The first of these paradoxes to be examined is #3, social yet isolated. "This very special generation is in danger of becoming the most isolated of generations because of so much of their relational contact comes via technology" (Elmore, 2010, p. 38). The majority of Generation iY's social contact is via technology; whether that is text, social media, or videos posted online, this is where and how they connect with their peers. This type of connection while it is being social lacks a sense of commitment and allows this generation to remain in control of their social interaction and create their own identity.

> Many of the cultural values of the Internet derive from its origin in text only interfaces. This removes cues relating to identity such as age, race, gender, status, disability, and location. Removal of these cues provides the opportunity for anonymity and allows the adoption of the different identities (Rettie, 2002, p. 255).

Elmore goes onto write that, “The trouble, of course, is that it’s hard to develop real relationships in an unreal world” (Elmore, 2010, p. 39). Elmore is not anti-technology he recognizes some of the benefits of technology; however, he sees a degradation of social skills in Generation iY that will limit their growth as adults. “It can help develop certain kinds of motor skills and help with multitasking, but it can also hinder development of emotional intelligence. You cannot build a career via an avatar, nor can you have a meaningful relationship” (Elmore, 2010, p. 39).

Diverse yet Harmonious

The second hypothetical paradox that is pertinent to this thesis is, #6, diverse yet harmonious (Elmore, 2010). While being one of the most diverse generations in American history; they also are the most team oriented and least individualistic generations in modern history (Elmore, 2010).

Team work is a very positive aspect to Generation iY and one that needs to be encouraged; however, there is a con to this teamwork as well. When one of this generation is isolated or ostracized; the connectedness of Generation iY makes this worse, as illustrated by “cyber bullying,” that have resulted in suicides or school shootings (Elmore, 2010).

The reason why the consequences of being kicked out of the social group is so devastating to Generation iY is the majority of their time is spent with their generation. “My research tells me they typically spend over 50% of their day with peers and only 15% with adults, including parents. In fact 30% if their day is spent without any adult supervision” (Elmore, 2010, p. 45).

Since their social interaction is mainly with their peer group; being ostracized by that peer group is especially devastating; plus, the lack of interaction with other generations adds to

their isolation. So, when they leave home and are forced to interact with other generations; such as, faculty, staff, and administrators within academia they simply do not know how.

> As a result, many don't learn how to interface with folks from a different generation. Life for them is like an isolated compartment containing mostly people just like them. So this connected, diverse, teamwork oriented generation is also strangely homogenous (Elmore, 2010, p. 45).

Artificial Maturity

Elmore's hypothesis of Artificial Maturity assists in the understanding of the gap that exists between Information, Knowledge, and Wisdom for Generation iY. It's also relevant in explaining why their critical thinking skills are not as developed when they reach college years and their social skills are not up to par. "Most college faculty and librarians are painfully aware of how often students seem to be incapable of thinking critically about coursework in general, and about information needs or information resources in particular" (Weiler, 2004, p. 47).

Elmore's second book *Artificial Maturity* describes his theory of Artificial Maturity for Generation iY; this occurs when other generations mistake cognitive maturity due to the overexposure to data as overall maturity (Elmore, 2012).

Elmore states that the dilemma can be stated in this way. "Children are overexposed to information, far earlier than they're ready. Children are underexposed to real-life experiences far latter than they're ready. This overexposure-underexposure produces artificial maturity" (Elmore, 2012, p. 4).

There is a difference between information, knowledge, and wisdom. Information is just that information; there is really nothing you can do with information until you attempt to apply

it. Knowing how and why to apply information is knowledge. Knowledge becomes wisdom when the when to apply and when not to apply is learned through application and experience.

In his review of Turing's Man, Halper (1988) quotes Bolter about computers ability to turn everything into information or data, "Computers are adept at working with data, and they encourage a tendency to see all knowledge as facts. Bolter describes this feature of the computer as its ability to manipulate "nuggets of information" (p. 66). In his book *Technopoly*, Postman eludes to a similar concern, "…the computer redefines humans as "information processors" and nature itself as information to be processed" (Postman, 1992, p. 111).

Elmore (2012) describes 6 virtues that have atrophied in our youth due to what he refers to as an, "iWorld." "The iWorld is convenient, instant, simple, and often virtual. iWorld has also caused certain intellectual, emotional, relational, and spiritual muscles to atrophy because they don't get exercised" (Elmore, 2012, p. 66).

Critical Thinking

The definition of critical thinking is as follows and this definition will be used throughout this thesis. "Critical thinking is the intellectually disciplined process of actively and skillfully conceptualizing, applying, analyzing, synthesizing, and/or evaluating information gathered from, or generated by, observation, experience, reflection, reasoning, or communication, as a guide to belief and action". (Foundation for Critical Thinking, 2014)

One of the key factors in critical thinking is communication. It has been noted by Weiler (2004) that Generation iY has trouble with critical thinking; that they gather information and think more to impress their peers that they are right in their beliefs than solving problems or creating new ways of doing things. This issue that Generation iY has with critical thinking directly influences their academic careers.

While their constant connection to the internet makes Generation iY extremely computer savvy and gives them unprecedented access to information, it also hinders their emotional intelligence and abilities in areas such as critical thinking.

Critical thinking requires exploring other ideas and options for the sake of solving a problem or acquiring new knowledge. Part of Halpern's (1998) definition of critical thinking is, "Critical thinking is purposeful, reasoned, and goal directed" (p.450). Generation iY wants to be right because of their strongly held opinions rather than seeking purpose or trying to achieve a goal. In a study conducted by Weiler (2004), she writes,

> Those students holding strong views on such topics cited their strongly held views as their main reason for discussing these topics, as opposed to being motivated by the prospect of learning more or seeking information about the issues or the viewpoints of others (p. 47).

Weiler's study has found that students motivations for discussing topics is just so they will be right and be able to retain their strong viewpoints then this cannot be defined as critical thinking.

Research Rationale

Bridging the Generational Gap more Important than Ever

According to Elmore (2010), Generation iY are social yet isolated. This isolation is brought on by the constant use of social media and texting. This isolation influences their ability to communicate face-to-face. Turkle (2011), puts it this way, "Digital connections and the sociable robot may offer the illusion of companionship without the demands of friendship. Our networked life allows us to hide from each other, even as we are tethered to each other" (p. 1). Weiler (2004), also sees social media influencing the reasons for seeking information and their

ability to think critically. Weiler's (2004) premise is that Generation iY is more concerned about gathering information to prove themselves correct within their peer group than using information to critical think and solve problems.

Dewey maintains that each generation must teach subsequent generations or our society could fail (Dewey, 1965). Generation iY has been raised in the most technologically advanced time in history (United States Government;, 2014). Postman's Media Ecology states that technology changes everything (Postman, 1998). It is imperative that the generations that must teach Generation iY understand how this invasion of technology has influenced how they communicate, learn, and think.

Elmore's (2010) research shows that this is an issue with Generation iY. This thesis' research also shows evidence that this loss of face to face communication skills is a cause for concern. Face-to-face communication, while not as efficient as social media, allows for a connection to others and to our society (Postman, 2014). If Generation iY are to be successful they must learn to communicate face-to-face and make their bond with each other and the rest of society strong.

Think of all of the great thinkers, inventors, explorers, and engineers of our past. For example, DaVinci, Columbus, or Tesla, if all they desired was the approval of their peers, then some of the greatest discoveries in history would never have come to fruition. How well Generation iY communicates face-to-face is not the only part of the equation of solving the issues of their time. They must be able to utilize the vast amounts of information they have available to them for the right reasons. They must be able to think about the issues that face them in a reasonable order. They must be able to gather information and think critically about

that information for a higher purpose than just being well thought of among their peers. Generation iY's academic careers is where they learn the abilities to communicate face-to face and how to think critically.

Using different age groups for each of the focus groups allows this research to have a unique contrast and comparison of the data collected. This contrast and comparison allows for a better understanding of how each generation views the other. It allows those that read this thesis to see through the eyes of the other side, and promotes the understanding that is needed to teach and to learn. In order to further the research in these areas the following questions will be examined.

RQ1: How do Generation iY students perceive that social media and / or texting technology has influenced their ability in face to face communication within an academic setting?

RQ2: How do college professors perceive the influence of social media and / or texting technology on Generation iY's ability in face to face communication within an academic setting?

Chapter 3: Methodology

Introduction

The method of research was qualitative and was in the form of focus groups; two groups for each generation. "The focus group is a special qualitative research technique in which, people are informally "interviewed" in a group discussion setting" (Neuman, 2011, p. 459). The focus groups consist of students, faculty, and staff of a local university, a local college, and a local high school. .

The purpose of the qualitative research approach; in this case the focus groups, was to obtain substantive data on how Generation iY (students) perceive how social media and / or texting has influenced their ability to communicate face-to-face and how this may influence their academic careers. The focus groups with the faculty obtain data about how the teachers of this generation see their students. When those that are trying to communicate take the time to discover the other's perspective it allows for better communication, teaching, and learning. This data will give the view into this window.

Scope

The focus group sessions were conducted at a university and each focus group session was conducted separately from the other. The first group consist of 8 to 10 people, mixed gender, between the ages of 18 to 24 years. Focus Group #2 consist of faculty and staff of the University. There are six males with ages that range from 36 to 68. This group makes up the older group of the faculty and staff._Focus group #3 is made up of 11 freshmen at the University, ages range from 18 to 19. These focus groups represent Generation iY. Focus Group #4 consists of 4 faculty from a local college, two universities, and a local high-school. The participants

range in age from 32 to 45. The purpose of the two types of focus groups is to analyze the subject from presumably, vastly different perspectives. As the research questions state; the purpose of this research is to discover the face to face communication skills of Generation iY, how social media has influenced these skills, and to understand how this impacts them in their education and their academic careers. By learning how each group views the other we come closer to narrowing the generation gap that exists between the two. This allows Generation iY to comprehend why their professors communicate the way they do, and their professors' to understand why Generation iY communicates the way they do.

Research Method

Focus groups were chosen for this research to get a more intimate view of Generation iY. The main reason for using a focus group for this research is one of the benefits to a focus group is, "It is very empowering to the participants that they are treated as experts and allowed to work in close collaboration with the researcher during the focus group discussion" (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008, p. 177). This benefit of the focus group fits into Generation iY's sense of self-importance and their desire to change the world (Elmore, 2010). This allows Generation iY subjects to open up and have real discussions about characteristics and issues that impact their education.

The focus groups helps to pinpoint areas of interest in Generation iY's view about themselves and other generations. Also, it helps to identify those areas that merit further study.

Focus Group

A focus group is defined as, "A group of individuals selected and assembled by researchers to discuss and comment on, from personal experience, the topic that is the subject of

the research" (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008, p. 173). Since the subject of this research is Generation iY; they are one of the groups participating. Also, this research dealt with Generation iY's academic careers, so faculty and staff of their university were the second group participating.

While the focus group is the heart of this research there are some strengths and weaknesses associated with this type of method. Some of the strengths of this type of method are; the setting allows people to express opinions and ideas freely, the people in the group are empowered and tend to question topics of discussion which can lead to new ideas and concepts being explored (Neuman, 2011).

The real strength in this particular research is its ability to view the participants in a social and academic environment; this allowed the facilitator / researcher to gain a more intimate prospective of the subjects involved in this study. This more in-depth view is due at least in part to the participants are not pressured and can take their time to respond. Also, this setting gave them time to respond with different ideas prompted by ideas within the group. Eriksson and Kovalainen (2008) put it this way, "They can take their time to digest the views and issues raised by other participants. Because there is time to consider one's responses, new points of view may arise, which would remain unsaid in personal interviews" (p. 177).

Unfortunately, there are some weaknesses as well. The first is known as the "polarization effect" this is when attitudes become more extreme when discussed within a group setting (Neuman, 2011). Another is, limited time allows for only so many topics to be discussed.

The focus group is an appropriate method for this research. Given the people that were involved the researcher was excited to hear what they had to say. However, concerns were note

taking, and coding the information into useful data. Also, some other concerns were recruitment of participants, finding the time and location of the focus groups, and maintaining the identities of the participants.

Focus Group Data Collection and Analysis

The focus groups were video recorded. The second level of recording data was the facilitator taking notes on content, emotional responses, and any use of media during the focus groups. These were used to perform axial coding and selective coding (Neuman, 2011) for the data collected.

The participant's discussions were examined via content and emotional responses. This technique allowed the researcher to ask the questions to identify the causes, interactions and processes (Neuman, 2011). This process of identification in turn allowed patterns of characteristics and communication to evolve. This will allow any additional coding to be identified and refine existing coding.

Selective coding was performed after the focus group stage. Selective coding allowed the researcher to illustrate themes and make comparisons (Neuman, 2011). This step of analysis was used to show whether the characteristics and communication practices identified by previous researchers proved to be valid. Analysis of the focus group's discussions allowed the contrasting and similar viewpoints to guide the researcher to the underlying issues and possible solutions.

Research Instruments

In order to identify how social media and texting have influenced Generation iY's ability to communicate face-to-face and how this has impacted their academic careers; one type of

research instrument is being utilized during this study. The instrument used are questions that are based on the research of Dewey, Postman, Ong, and McLuhan, and the hypotheses of Elmore and Weiler; as well as, personal observations while teaching. Please see Appendix A (student questions) and Appendix B (teacher questions) for a list of the questions. Asking questions of both parties involved in the education of Generation iY allowed similar and contrasting viewpoints between the two types of groups to be examined.

This research instrument was utilized in this fashion in order to peel back the layers of characteristics, attitudes, biases, and thoughts of not only Generation iY but also those that teach them. "This means that the researcher analyzed not only content of the conversation, but also what the conversation situation was like in terms of emotions, tensions, interruptions, conflicts, and body language" (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008, p. 175). Communication is a two way street; assisting both sides to understand one another promotes better communication, teaching, and learning. The questions used as the research instrument will assist in this understanding.

Ethical Concerns

Social research must always attempt to maintain a balance between scientific knowledge and ethical behavior (Neuman, 2011). In order to address any ethical concerns, all participants were told that their identities are anonymous. All participants were given an informed consent (Neuman, 2011) form and required to sign it before participating in the study. Please see Appendix C. Social researchers must do everything within their power to ensure no harm comes to those participating in the study (Neuman, 2011). There does not appear to be any concern for physical harm, but the possibility of psychological stress during the focus group does exist; albeit

minimal, the facilitator will take steps during these processes to ensure that the discussions remain civil and that no harm comes to the participants.

Strengths and Weaknesses

The method of research used in this study has its strengths and weaknesses. Some have to do with administering; others with logistics, and participants; while others have to do with dealing with people and data collection and analysis. The biggest constraint on the study is time or in this case lack of time needed to conduct more focus groups and thus collect more valuable data.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study is to discover how Generation iY is influenced by their communication preferences and how this impacts their academic careers. By discovering these influences, both sides; those that teach and those that learn will be able to connect, not just be befuddled by the other. By better understanding how Generation iY communicates; their teachers, professors, and employers can better assist them for their future and ours.

The focus group method of research assists in giving an in-depth view of the generation in question and those that teach them. Given that Generation iY is more comfortable with their peers and a significant part of their information comes from their peer groups (Elmore, 2010), focus groups are the correct venue for open discussion about how technology influences them and their academic careers.

Chapter 4: The Study

Introduction

This study is about understanding how a generation (Generation iY) in our society has been influenced by social media technology. Specifically, this study examined the influence that social media has had on Generation iY's face-to-face communication skills, their ability to think critically, and how this impacts their academic careers.

This research can best be described as descriptive research. Descriptive research's purpose is to "paint a picture" or present a profile (Neuman, 2011). In order to "paint a picture" of how social media influences Generation iY, focus groups were conducted. These focus groups consisted of Generation iY and those that teach Generation iY. Understanding, when dealing with how humans communicate is a two-way street. Better understanding of both parties' leads to better communication whether that be via social media or face-to-face.

In Appendices A and B are the questions used during the focus groups. These questions were designed to examine how Generation iY's face-to-face communication skills have been influenced by social media. Specifically examined are their comfort level with face-to-face communication and how this influences their academic careers. The same information was gathered on how the teaching generations view Generation iY. By exposing both groups' assessments a better understanding can emerge and thus, better communication, learning, and communication can be achieved.

Results of Study

The data collected during the focus groups was evaluated using analytic comparison. Analytic comparison allows similarities and differences to emerge in how the two types of focus groups views Generation iY and their abilities in face-to-face communication given their use of social media. "Analytic comparison involves qualitative data from a small number of cases and adopts an intensive rather than an extensive data analysis strategy" (Neuman, 2011, p. 523). Given the small number of cases this type of analysis not only allows for a better quality of analysis but it also meshes with the purpose of the research.

Using quotes and paraphrasing from the focus groups a pattern of beliefs, thoughts, and insights emerge that was examined and linked to social medias influence on face-to-face communication and how it impacts their academic careers.

Focus Group #1

Focus group #1 consists of students from a local university. These students are from the ages 20 to 24 years. There are 8 individuals in the group; six males and two females. These students are all juniors or seniors at the university.

Face-to-Face and Social Media

Focus group #1 was excited and in good spirits. After allowing them to get refreshments, the mediator introduced himself and the topic to the group. Upon receiving acknowledgement that they understood the topic the mediator proceeded with the questions. The first question asked was, which type of communication do you prefer, face-to-face or social media? The response from the entire group was immediate. They preferred face-to-face communication.

One student put it this way, “Society prefers communication via technology, but face-to-face is more real and you build deeper relationships with it, all of our relationships suffer because we avoid face to face” (Focus Group 1. , 2014). There was complete agreement with this statement from all participants.

The responses from the follow-up question were interesting. How have you and your peers’ exposure to social media or texting impacted your ability to communicate face-to-face? The responses contradicted the preference they had expressed previously with face-to-face communication.

Their answers, their body language and facial expressions exhibited trepidation with anything other than technological communication. “Face-to-face feels wrong”. “Face-to-face is hard work”. “Face-to-face is so intimidating, there is always the possibility of being rejected” (Focus Group 1. , 2014).

None of the participants seemed to recognize that there was a contradiction until the next question was asked, why is face to face more difficult? It was when they began to consider the difficulties with face-to-face communication that the contradiction dawned on them. “In this generation we are so concerned with what people think” (Focus Group 1. , 2014).

Another student added, “It is because there is a lack of confidence in yourself to accomplish what you want. This is what our generation is lacking” (Focus Group 1. , 2014).

One student commented on their high opinion of themselves, “We don’t want to find out that we are not the most important person in the world” (Focus Group 1. , 2014).

While another acknowledged that they do have a lack of experience with face-to-face, “It also has to do with a lack of practice” (Focus Group 1. , 2014).

Others in the group commented on their uncomfortableness with face-to-face. "Your response has to be faster, there is no time to think about your response". There are so many levels to it (face to face). It is very difficult to think through it all" (Focus Group 1. , 2014). "When doing social media or texting all I have to pay attention to is what I am writing or reading" (Focus Group 1. , 2014).

The Influence in their Academic Careers

The responses to the following question were few, and for the most part this question received a cool reception from the group. The question was asked, how many times during a semester do you initiate a face to face conversation with your professors?

The demeanor of the entire group changed. There was fidgeting and some even slumped in their chairs to avoid being asked to answer. However, this student said, "I see some of them outside of class and exchange greetings but I don't often engage in conversation. Sometimes I do talk with them but normally that is to ask a question about the material" (Focus Group 1. , 2014).

Another student said, "I visit the majority of my instructors at least one a week in their offices. I have found direct help from professors to be extremely helpful in my education" (Focus Group 1. , 2014).

Still another had this to say, "I interface many times a semester, probably an average of twice a week. This does not include transitory greetings but actual interaction on something such as further clarification on assignment or lecture" (Focus Group 1. , 2014).

Once the mediator moved on to the following question, there was considerable relief from the participants, and they were once again eager to answer. How has social media influenced your academic career?

One student pointed out the positive aspect to social media, but immediately expressed his disdain for it "Social media helps communicate with other students, but I dislike it. If it weren't for two groups I'm part of, would delete Facebook" (Focus Group 1. , 2014).

Another student was convinced that it had no impact on his academic career, "I do not believe so at this point. I use texting to communicate and do not spend a significant amount of time on social media" (Focus Group 1. , 2014).

Another student saw it as a useful tool to coordinate activities, "I have used texting a fair amount, and it has been useful to communicate immediately for team meetings or late night homework" (Focus Group 1. , 2014).

Social Media and Critical Thinking

When the following question was asked there was more passion involved in the answers; as if, this question put them in their comfort zone. How has social media impacted your ability to think critically? Responses on this question varied, but most had an opinion about the subject of the question.

One student expressed disbelief in most information, "There is information overload out there and I am skeptical of all of it" (Focus Group 1. , 2014).

Another acknowledged that they did not like or do well with questions that had not previously been covered. "We don't like it when professors give us test questions that they have not prepared us for. It makes us think beyond the information that we know" (Focus Group 1. , 2014).

One student said he found uninformed questions challenging, but acknowledged that his peers did not share his affinity for them, "I like it when professors throw a curve ball at me; I

take it as a challenge" (Focus Group 1. , 2014). Most of our peers would rather just get the answer from their group or from Google" (Focus Group 1. , 2014).

Another student confirmed the influence of peer group members holding more sway than teachers or those helping their teachers. The rest of this group agreed with his statement. "I have seen students take the advice of their peer group rather than the advice of their professors or SIs (Student Instructors)" (Focus Group 1. , 2014).

The diverse responses to this question were very interesting. It shows that there are some in Generation iY that still embrace critical thinking; however, it also shows that the majority (most of our peers), would rather get answers from their group or Google. This type of misunderstanding of critical thinking is exactly what Weiler (2004) refers to as information gathering in order to satisfy their peer group.

When asked the following question the group became a little agitated. It seemed they did not like what they saw in their peers. How do you view your peers when it comes to face-to-face communication?

There was a tick of silence; as if acknowledging this would betray some of their friends, however, one did finally get the ball rolling. "A lot of my peers cannot communicate face-to-face" (Focus Group 1. , 2014).

Then another student added, "Overall, I feel like my peers still value face to face communication and interaction but don't heavily participate in it. They tend to favor faster and easier communication methods such as social media or texting" (Focus Group 1. , 2014).

Another expressed that it was dependent on the individual, "That depends a lot on the individual. Some are very good with face-to-face conversations. There are others that it is almost impossible to do that with" (Focus Group 1. , 2014).

Focus Group #2 Faculty and Staff

Focus group #2 consists of faculty and staff from the University. These faculty and staff members are in the age ranges from 36 to 68 years old. There are 6 individuals in the group; all of them male. Their jobs are mechanical engineering professors, mechanical technician, electrical engineering professor, bio-engineering professor, and computer programming professor. This group of people deals with Generation iY on a daily basis, and provides needed data to provide the comparison being used in this thesis.

The overall demeanor of this group was more business-like. There were some greetings exchanged and some stories told before the start, but for the most part it was let's go.

Social Media and. Face-to-Face

Their eagerness and interest in the subject was clear when they all agreed with the answer to the first question. Which type of communication do they; meaning their students, prefer face-to-face or social media? The group responded in agreement that social media and texting were Generation iYs preferred method of communication.

One professor put it this way, "When you see a group of people sitting in the same area and instead of conversing face-to-face they are communicating via text, it is obvious which one they prefer" (Focus Group 2. , 2014). Another professor had this to say:

> There is more and more pressure with this generation to put themselves out there; via social media, so that they can be noticed. There is so much noise and clutter out there that the more others are using it the more they have to use it to be noticed (Focus Group 2. , 2014).

Another of the group told this story.

> I have had several discussions recently with students and adults about their Facebook page and how many likes they have on their Facebook page, having likes on their social media makes their day, they feel important; however, one dislike on social media can totally ruin their day. Who cares what you had for breakfast or lunch? Why does it bother you so bad when someone comes back and says they don't like it (Focus Group 2. , 2014)?

The group was in consensus about face to face communication has been hindered in Generation iY and that it is hurting their academic careers. This acknowledgment changed the emotion of the group from interest to one of sadness and frustration.

One professor, and all the others agreed with him, summed it up this way, "In the last ten years I have seen a dramatic change. I used to have people initiate coming into my office for counseling quite often. Now people only come into my office for counseling because I ask them to" (Focus Group 2. , 2014).

The group expressed Generation iY's desire to escape and a lack of practice as an answer to the following question. Why do they find face-to-face communication so difficult? One professor summed up the group's feelings this way:

> Technology is not escaping, it is an electronic leash, and you're not escaping if you are still answering social media, texts, or emails. You may be physically isolated but you are not socially isolated, you're still hanging on to it; therefore you are not escaping (Focus Group 2. , 2014).

Social Media and Critical Thinking

The following question prompted the most debate and passion from the faculty and staff. Has social media influenced their academic careers or their ability to think critically?

With an exasperated tone one professor answered this way, “They will pull anything off of the internet and believe it as true, but when they are shown actual data they doubt its validity immediately” (Focus Group 2. , 2014).

Following up on the previous statement another professor added, “Their mindset is who needs more education when all of the information I need is right here in the palm of my hand” (Focus Group 2. , 2014).

Still another professor pointed out that they are being trained as consumers, “I think most of that comes from the information overflow. Getting all of your information from the internet has given us the mind set of being consumers, not people but consumers” (Focus Group 2. , 2014). One professor had the following anecdote:

> The definition between information and knowledge has become so blurred. I purposeful have conversations with some of my students where questions like well what year was that? For example what year did that song come out? They immediately reach for their pockets, to which I say don’t touch your pockets, your brain, your brain, and my brain are having an interaction here and the internet has nothing to do with this interaction. The point of it is to let them know that you don’t have this knowledge. The hope is to make them want the knowledge and not just the information (Focus Group 2. , 2014).

The following question was answered in unison and slightly louder than they had been speaking previously. The no and the reason were both answered in unison and all were in agreement. It was obvious that these professors have engaged in this discussion before this thesis was even thought of by the author. Do you consider what they pull up on the internet knowledge? "No, because there is no context being applied to the information; therefore it cannot be knowledge" (Focus Group 2. , 2014).

This story from another professor involves how important their peer group has become to them and impacts their ability to think clearly.

> I don't know how many times this scenario has played out in my office, a student comes in and states that he wants to change his or her major / schedule. When I ask why they say, "I texted someone on my floor (peer group) and they say that I should because of this" (Focus Group 2. , 2014).

> The things that they are being told by their peers, I am just astounded at how wrong they are. I tell them those aren't facts; as a matter of fact, those are 180 out from truth. I try to employ as Socratic Method in getting them to do the critical thinking part with me just giving them information. The result is usually them getting frustrated and asking, "Just tell me what the answer is" (Focus Group 2. , 2014).

Another member of the group relayed his experiences with a Gen iY's ability to think critically.

> Several times during a semester I will have students come to me interacting about equipment. One example is a student comes in and says I need to do this. Well there are about three ways you can accomplish this which way are you using? Your professor

gave instructions, which way does he want you to do it? The response is, "what"? Didn't your professor give you notes on this? "No he talked about it". "Okay great what did he talk about"? The question is met with silence, then a sheepish, "I don't know".

You need to go back to your professor and find out what his criteria is and which direction he wants you to go. The response is, "You mean I gotta think"? This type of attitude repeats itself. They are taught this in school from junior high to high-school, just get the answer don't worry about the process to it, just get the answer (Focus Group 2. , 2014).

The above quotes and stories relayed by the faculty group shows a pattern of behavior from Generation iY that shows a direct concern about their ability to differentiate between information and knowledge and their ability to think critically. While social media and / or texting are not the sole cause of this; there is evidence that supports that it is a contributing factor. Instant gratification, instant information, instant communication has conditioned Generation iY to expect solutions be given instead of having to figure solutions out.

Faculty's Views of Generation iY

Given what this group had shared about their experiences with Generation iY. The mediator added a question for them. What is your view of their face-to-face communication skills? To this was added, how has social media or texting influenced them? Their responses were enlightening and had a note of concern to them.

The first response was followed by the whole room agreeing with what was said, "As a whole they don't want to take responsibility. They see it as their parent's responsibility to

provide all their needs and not help out. They have a sense of entitlement" (Focus Group 2. , 2014).

One professor addressed a concern about narcissism, "I think what academia and society has taught this generation is that it is all about me and not to be concerned about others" (Focus Group 2. , 2014). One professor told about this experience in narcissism with a Generation iY student.

> In the last 72 hours we had a gentleman do a poor job of presenting his technical work. So we sat down with him to try to figure out how we could help him. His response was, Frankly, I don't care what these technical experts think about my work. Who cares if that guy doesn't like it, I like it who cares what he thinks (Focus Group 2. , 2014)?

The same professor relayed yet another experience with a different Generation iY student.

> I had a guy in printer lab the other day tell me that this is ridiculous that you would have me build this 3D printer. I can get someone to build this for me there are people all over the world that know how to do this. I don't need this experience, I can just go online and get someone to build this and they'll have it done and shipped to me in three days (Focus Group 2. , 2014).

The group agreed with one professor's assessment of the overall impact of social media and technology have on Generation iY.

> It used to be that escape was I'm feeling stressed I'm going to go ride my bike, I'm going to hit the heavy bag, or I'm going to go run, not it is I'm getting on Facebook or Twitter

> or I'm going to go play my game. This has no beneficial physiological effect. We have the most medicated freshmen rising over the last decade; they all cite stress and depression. I think it is because they really are not escaping the stresses (Focus Group 2. , 2014).

Finally, a professor pointed this out, "To us they're not escaping, but to them they are, because they go into a virtual world. This is where they feel comfortable. They are able to change their identity" (Focus Group 2. , 2014). This professor was not in disagreement with the others he simply pointed out that there is a difference in what is escape to the two different generations.

From the responses; the view that the teaching generations have about Generation iY are that they are narcissistic. They are very smart but they do not know how to apply that intelligence. They rely too heavily on technology to escape reality, they do not want to take responsibility, and they have become too reliant on technology and not enough on what people tell them. Their reliance on social media has given too much weight to their peer groups opinions versus those who have the experience and the knowledge to teach them.

Focus Group #3

Focus group #3 consists of students from the same university as focus group #1. These students are from the ages 18 to 19 years. There are 11 individuals in the group; 7 males and 4 females. These students are freshmen. These students' demeanor can best be described as excited at the prospect of sharing their views.

Face to Face and Social Media

These students were asked, which type of communication do you prefer? Focus Group #3 students, just like Focus Group #1 students, said that they preferred face-to-face communication. Similarities between the two focus groups did not end there; when discussed further it is revealed that communication of any sort is not about what is favored it is about which is most applicable and efficient at the time of use.

"It really just depends on what you're doing, what you need, and how well you know the person" (Focus Group 3. , 2014). The group agreed that this was how they would determine which communication type they preferred. Another student said, "It's all situational" (Focus Group 3. , 2014).

There was a concern about how much time face-to-face communication takes. "Texting and social media are more efficient. A lot of times you don't have the time to get into a full blown conversation. You don't want to use face to face if this is the case" (Focus Group 3. , 2014).

The group's excitement waned some when asked, is face to face more difficult and why? This group like focus group 1 agreed that face-to-face is more difficult and for some of the same reasons. In this group's case fear of rejection and comfort level was the key motivating factors.

This student indicated a fear of rejection, "Face-to-face is the most intimidating, because you are seeing a person's reactions to what you are saying. If they don't like what you are saying there is a fear of rejection" (Focus Group 3. , 2014).

Another student revealed the amount of information that has to be processed is the hard part of face-to-face. "Face-to-face is more difficult because you like have to really think on your feet, versus if you're sending a text or Facebook you have time to process and send a reply" (Focus Group 3. , 2014).

Even avoiding face-to-face all together was brought up, "If you have to tell them something they don't want to hear, it is easier to send a text. If it is an uncomfortable subject it is easier to send a text" (Focus Group 3. , 2014).

The excitement level was back; however, when the question why was asked, there was uncomfortable silence followed by a sense of uncertainty. They quickly recovered from this and, again the motivating factors were fear of rejection and comfort level.

One student's response was, "You don't have to read that judgment back from them" (Focus Group 3. , 2014). If it's something really important I'm going to come and talk to you, even though it is easier just to type out a message" (Focus Group 3. , 2014).

Another added, "I don't want negative feedback and I can ignore it if it isn't face to face" (Focus Group 3. , 2014). Then the following quote summed up their feelings on face-to-face communication.

> For me personally, I think face to face is more difficult. Mostly because when I am looking someone face to face I am under pressure to not do anything that will make that person mad or upset, because if I do then I have to deal with that immediately, if I make someone mad via social media or texting I can just set my phone or computer aside and I don't have to deal with it (Focus Group 3. , 2014).

The following question sent a shock of disbelief through the group. As if they never considered that they were supposed to do this. How many people in this group have initiated a face-to-face session with their professor? When asked this; by a show of hands 3 out of the 11 had initiated a session with their faculty. This comes to 27.3% (Focus Group 3. , 2014).

Their comfort level with the following question was noticeable. How many have had a face-to-face with their professors outside a formal setting? By a show of hands 8 out of the 11 indicated they had; this comes to 72.7% (Focus Group 3. , 2014). This group of Generation iYs prefers informal settings for their face-to-face communications versus formal settings.

When asked to talk about their peers by asking, how has social media or texting influenced your peers' ability to communicate face-to-face? One student gave emphatic thumbs down when asked this, 7 out of the 11 students agreed with this assessment. This comes to 64% of the group (Focus Group 3. , 2014).

One student summed it up their feelings about face-to-face with a story about a younger sibling; a sibling that does most of her communicating via texting. "I have a sister that was born in 2000, I was born in 1995. I prefer face to face, but she hardly ever speaks face to face she prefers texting all of her communication (Focus Group 3. , 2014)."

Another student relayed a story about their sibling, "I have a brother that is great at talking over voice over IP (such that is used in video gaming), but when people try to talk face to face with him he is scared" (Focus Group 3. , 2014).

Yet another student admitted that face-to-face is associated with negative events. "Face to face is associated with negative things, like being called to the principal's office or your parents wanting to talk to you" (Focus Group 3. , 2014).

> What I associate with face to face is something serious. What if I run out of things to say or don't know how to respond, with social media or texting I can just set my phone down for 5 minutes until I think of something (Focus Group 3. , 2014).

The majority of this group didn't see a difference between face-to-face and other forms of communication. They were asked, are you saying that you don't see a difference between face to face and social media or texting?

One student has this to say, and the majority agreed, "Only that texting is slower because you have to type the conversation out" (Focus Group 3. , 2014). One student did see a difference between face-to-face and social media. He told a story about his cousin.

> I have an example contrary to yours. My cousin was born in 1994 when he got his iPhone he slowly started to withdraw from face to face conversations and became increasingly dependent on his phone for all of his conversations. It got to the point that he would lock his bedroom door and text people from there (Focus Group 3. , 2014).

The sense of excitement returned when questions about their peer group were asked, how has social media or texting affected your peer group? Their responses to this question shows a need to be doing more than one thing at a time and a frustration level with face-to-face communication because it takes too much time and focus.

"I think we have a hard time focusing on one thing. We have to be doing multiple things" (Focus Group 3. , 2014). To this another student added, "This can be really frustrating if you are trying to tell them something face-to-face" (Focus Group 3. , 2014).

One student saw face-to-face to be too hard to deal with because of the emotions involved, “It’s hard to talk about emotional subjects face-to-face. When I text there is no emotion it is just a text. It is hard for me to deal with emotions because I am used to texting” (Focus Group 3. , 2014).

Another student acknowledged that they have shorter attention spans. “Our attention span is getting shorter and shorter. We have to have that electronic communication and instant gratification” (Focus Group 3. , 2014).

A couple of students pointed out that social media can lead to a lack of self-esteem and even depression. There was agreement on this point from the rest of the group. “If someone unlike a post on Facebook it devalues their self-worth” (Focus Group 3. , 2014).

Another student said, “Facebook can add to your depression because people don’t post the bad stuff in their lives and you feel like you’re the only one that has bead stuff in your life” (Focus Group 3. , 2014).

The response to the following question was quick and emphatic, do you think that this generation is more narcissistic, if so why? All agreed that Generation iY is more narcissistic than previous generations. Their responses to why were equally as quick and emphatic, “Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, Selfies, we want instant gratification (Focus Group 3. , 2014).

Social Media and Academic Careers

Again, just as in Focus Group #1 the results of this question were mixed. When asked, how has social media or texting influenced your academic careers? This group unlike focus

group #1 said that they saw social media as a benefit. One student pointed out, "Helped it, we can gather information faster and we use Facebook to collaborate" (Focus Group 3. , 2014).

Another added, "It gives us an opportunity to collaborate and do great things" (Focus Group 3. , 2014). However, there was one in the group that had a different opinion about social media and his generation's academic career.

> They been talking about how it helps, I'm going to talk about how it hurts you. I have seen this in high-school and college. People will plug their phone's in and text, do Twitter, and even watch You Tube and movies during lectures (Focus Group 3. , 2014).

When faced with the above observation; the majority of the group did acknowledge that social media does serve as a distraction.

One student admitted, "I'm not even going to lie I do that during Chemistry. I walk in open my laptop and watch a movie" (Focus Group 3. , 2014). "Social media and technology is a distraction to our academic careers" (Focus Group 3. , 2014).

Social Media vs. Critical Thinking

The observations on the following question were mixed and generated some disagreement. How has social media or texting influenced your ability to critical think? Some in the group saw it as a positive others did not. Several people in the group saw the following observations as a positive aspect of social media, "We can just Google everything, we don't have to think. We don't have to worry about it because it is already out there" (Focus Group 3. , 2014).

While several others saw social media as having a more negative influence on their patience and the validity of information they use. "I think social media and texting has really diminished our patience. Our generation is really impatient and critical thinking takes time and because the information is out there we don't take the time to think" (Focus Group 3. , 2014).

Another student added to the above observation, "I think it is very easy to get lazy, because there is so much out there" (Focus Group 3. , 2014).

Still another pointed out the lack of validating the information they obtain, "Articles and stuff that are shared on Facebook get read and people do not take the time to find out who wrote them or research whether they are factual or not" (Focus Group 3. , 2014).

When it comes to social media and its impact on their academic careers and or critical thinking skills; this focus group had mixed opinions about it. The majority (72%) did see it as a detriment; however, those that saw it as a positive were fully convinced that they were in the right and were not swayed by the others in the group.

Focus Group #4 Faculty

Focus group #4 consisted of faculty and staff from some other colleges and high-school from the surrounding communities. There is one English Literature teacher, one Fine Arts professor, one Mechanical Engineering professor, and one college English professor. The focus group was held at a local coffee shop and lasted for 1 hour. The mood of the participants was eager and excited about the topic at hand.

Face to Face vs. Social Media

While focus group #2 consisted of faculty from one university, focus group #4 has a variety of faculty. This group was asked the same questions as the others, starting with, what type of communication does Generation iY prefer? Half said that they definitely saw that they preferred texting and social media to that of face-to-face. The other half stated that it was situational.

One professor pointed out, "It depends on the nature of the communication. (Focus Group 4. , 2014)" "Like any of us, sometimes face-to-face is the way to go at other times texting is more efficient" (Focus Group 4. , 2014). The other 2 stated that texting and social media were the preferred communications medium of Generation iY (Focus Group 4. , 2014).

The most passionate unanimous response came from the question, is face-to-face more difficult for them, if so why? All agreed with this statement, "Yes, they struggle with it. They miss the subtleties of face-to-face; such as, body language tone of voice, or facial expressions" (Focus Group 4. , 2014).

Another added, "They do struggle but I think this is because our language is changing with the level of technology. It's like we no longer speak old English. The modern era has abbreviated our language, now technology is having the same affect" (Focus Group 4. , 2014). Another of the group had this to say, "Most kids I run across do not want to take the time to have a face to face conversation, it is too much of an inconvenience for them" (Focus Group 4. , 2014).

Social Media vs. Academic Careers

There was agreement on the next question, but a debate on as to why followed when focus group #4 was asked, how has social media or texting influenced their academic careers? They were in agreement that it does influence Generation iY, but mixed on why it does.

One said, "It has influenced them, but it is because they communicate so differently from the generation that instructs them" (Focus Group 4. , 2014).

Another added, "Social media has distracted them to the point that an academic career is made more difficult for them" (Focus Group 4. , 2014).

"Yes it distracts them, but only if we allow it to distract them" (Focus Group 4. , 2014). The conversation then turned to how much of avoiding these distractions is the responsibility of the faculty and how much is the responsibility of the students. After about 5 minutes of debate, a concession of it is a shared responsibility was reached.

When asked if they saw the influence of social media a negative influence. The response was a resounding yes they did see it as a negative influence (Focus Group 4. , 2014). The follow up question of why elicited this response from one and they all agreed, "People skills are vital to success and the more distanced they are from people, the more those skills don't develop or atrophy" (Focus Group 4. , 2014).

Social Media vs. Critical Thinking

This group was asked, how has social media impacted their ability to critical think? Again for this group the opinions were mixed. One said, "I believe that it had actually improved their ability to critical think; they have an unprecedented access to information and this has

benefitted them" (Focus Group 4. , 2014). Another said that, "They place more value on their peer group opinions than they do facts". Then the statement that the group seemed to acknowledge as true was given.

> I think social media and texting have had little impact on their ability to think critically. The internet has severely limited their ability to think critically as they default to Googling all problem and don't practice fact and logic based critical thinking (Focus Group 4. , 2014).

Discussion

Groups 1 and 3 were made up of students from a university. Group 1 consisted of upper classmen, while group 3 were all freshmen. When the discussions are analyzed what is found is that Focus Groups 1 and 3 said similar things; however, their outlook on the influence is different. Their differences were not so much in what they said, but whether it has a positive or negative influence on their generation. Group 1 mainly saw the influences as a negative; whereas, group 3 saw them as having neither a positive or negative influence. Group 3 saw it as this is just how it is.

Groups 2 and 4 were made up of faculty and staff of one university, one college, and one high-school. Focus group 2 was mainly of older faculty and staff ages 36 to 68. Focus group 4 was made up of younger faculty, ages 32 to 42. There was some agreement on most of the topics. The disagreements in their deliberations came mainly from their opinion about how it has influenced Generation iY. The majority of group 2 saw social media as a negative influence across the board. While group 4 found some positive aspects to social media and the influence it has on Generation iY. Below in Table 1 is the comparisons; in brief form, of the similarities and differences between the groups.

Focus Group Comparisons

Topics	*FG1 Junior and Senior Students*	*FG2 Faculty and Staff Older Generation*	*FG3 Freshmen Students*	*FG4 Faculty and Staff Younger*
Social Media vs. Face to Face	Preferred ftf. Intimidated by it and it is difficult. Negative that they are not as good at it as previous generations. **Majority**	They prefer social media and texting over ftf. This group sees it as a negative due to lack of practice and preparation for their academic careers and jobs. **Majority**	Preferred ftf. Intimidated by it and it is difficult. Saw it as situational neither positive nor negative. **Agreement**	Half see that Gen. iY favor social media the other half see it as a situational decision. It is a distraction but can be managed. **Split**
Social Media vs. Academia	This group sees the majority of their peers as being adversely influenced by social media when it comes to academia. In particular, patience, paying attention, and getting the work done. Does realize that social media is a deterrent to their academic careers. **Majority**	Social media has given them a sense of connection that is not really there. Lack of face to face communication has led to a tendency to be irresponsible and blame others when things don't go their way. **Majority**	It helps us; social media gives us a chance to collaborate, but it is a distraction to us. Especially when used in class. **Majority**	Social Media has had a negative influence on their academic careers. Yes it distracts but only if we allow it to distract them. **Split**
Social Media vs Critical Thinking	Peer group pressure influences what information peers will believe. They would rather Google than investigate. It definitely has a negative influence and we do not think critically as we should. **Majority**	They do not value education because they believe that they can get anything off of the internet. The difference between information, knowledge and wisdom has become so blurred. Peer group more important source of information than professors. **Majority**	We can Google everything we don't have to think. I think social media has reduce our patience. **Majority**	They place more value on their peer group than they do their professors. Google is the problem it does not allow them to practice fact and logic based thinking. **Split**

Agreement = 100%

Majority = 70% or more

Split = 50% or less

Comparisons between the Focus Groups

Both student groups referred to face to face communication as their preferred method of communication; however, both groups referred to it as hard, intimidating, more pressure, fear of being judged, or not wanting to accept responsibility for someone else's reaction. These responses and reactions would indicate that face to face is not their favorite form of communication.

The overall discussion in group 1 was that social media and texting enhanced their academic careers, but there were negatives associated with social media. They were able to stay in touch with their classmates and collaborate in an efficient manner. However, in group 1 there were more negative influences discussed. One person put it like this, "social media reduces communication to sound bites and 140 characters" (Focus Group 1. , 2014). The majority of group 1 agreed with this observation. Social media, while efficient and convenient to group 1 lacks a certain intimacy that they are discovering is crucial to their success.

Group 3 noted that staying in touch and collaboration was also a positive of social media; however, there was one outlier that said, "People will plug their phones in and text, do Twitter, and even watch You Tube and movies during lectures" (Focus Group 3. , 2014). Both groups admitted that these things do happen; however, Focus Group 1 saw it as a negative, whereas, Focus Group 3 did not view it as a negative, just a fact of what happens. Group 3 did not see it as a positive or negative, but did admit that it could be a distraction to academia. Group 3 did not see any difference between social media and face to face communication; to them, both were merely tools.

There was agreement between the two groups that their critical thinking has been influenced by social media. However, there was disagreement within the two groups about the type of influence. The majority of group 3 sees social media as a positive; while a few see it as a negative. Group 1 mainly saw social media as having a negative influence. Google comes up in both groups' discussions about critical thinking. "We can just Google everything we don't have to think" (Focus Group 3. , 2014). "Most of our peers would rather just get the answer from their group or from Google" (Focus Group 1. , 2014).

While there are some in the groups that see Google as a source of all knowledge; others have a different view of what social media has done. "I think social media and texting has really diminished our patience … and critical thinking takes time" (Focus Group 3. , 2014). "I have seen students take the advice of their peer group or social media rather than the advice of their professors or SIs (Student Instructors)" (Focus Group 1. , 2014).

A difference between the two student groups was Focus Group #3 saw face to face, social media, and texting as a situational choice versus Focus Group #1 who saw it as a choice between deeper conversations versus efficiency.

Another difference that must be noted here are that the junior and senior members of Focus Group #1 said that more of them had initiated face to face counseling sessions with their faculty members than Focus Group #3 had. Focus Group #1 over 50% had initiated contact with their faculty and in Focus Group #3 72% had not.

Like the students' focus groups, there is agreement on the influence of social media but some debate over what type of influence. The majority of participants see social media as having a negative influence; this comes from Focus Group #1 and Focus Group #2. While there are a few that see it has having a positive influence on Generation iY. There were two from Focus Group #4 that saw it as situational. This was also the feedback given by the majority of Focus Group #3.

There was agreement that social media influences Generation iYs skills at face-to-face communication; however, whether they prefer it and how much of an affect it has was mixed. The majority of Focus Group #2 (83.4%) saw social media as Generation iYs preferred communication medium. They also see social media as a key contributing factor to Generation

iY not being very adept at face-to-face communication. Focus group #4 was split down the middle on this, half saw social media as being preferred and the other half stated that it was situational based. Both groups see social media as a distraction and a detriment to face-to-face skills.

From both faculty focus groups social media is identified as a distraction to Generation iY's academic careers; however, 83.4% of focus group #2 indicate that the responsibility of controlling this distraction is that of the students, while 50% of focus group #4 says that it is a joint responsibility. The other half of focus group #4 agrees with the 83.4% of focus group #2.

There was agreement, from both groups, that social media has impacted Generation iY's ability to think critically. Focus group's #2 reasons for this are that they can get anything off the internet so they do not value an education. They also cite that peer pressure is greater due to social media and that they would rather listen to or please their group than the individuals teaching them. Focus group #4, again is split, half of the group says it is due to devaluing their education the other half is convinced that it is strictly peer pressure that sways their ability to critical think. The purpose of the thesis is to discover the influence social media has on Generation iYs ability to communicate facto-face and how this influences their academic careers. As Weiler (2004) indicates social media influences Generation iY's information gathering, critical thinking, and thus their academic careers. Dewey (1965) writes, "This transmission occurs by means of communication of habits of doing, thinking, and feeling from the older to the younger" (p. 3). The transmissions that Dewey refers to is what the parent generations have to do in order to pass on the knowledge that they have. Generation iY are so connected to their peer groups and their technological devices that the connections needed to convey that knowledge has suffered.

The influences of social media and texting on Generation iY are a concern that needs to be addressed with further research and earlier training in face-to-face communication skills. The data indicates that there is evidence that social media does isolate Generation iY; however, not as much as the older generations fear. There is room for Generation iY to improve on their face-to-face communication's skills. The data indicates that while they are less prepared for and even fearful of face-to-face communication they are being trained in its use. There is a concern that less emphasis is put on face-to-face communication due to the prolific use of social media and texting. There is a need for more training and earlier than at the college level, but there are indications that they are capable of and can even excel at face-to-face communication.

This was evident from Focus Group 1's assertion that face-to-face while still hard and intimidating is better at building relationships. In contrast when Focus Group #3 speaks about face-to-face communication they see no difference between the forms of communication. There is a difference of 2 to 3 years of academic experience between the two groups. Given their differences in attitudes about face to face communication; it is possible that their training and practice is what changes their outlook.

A bigger concern is their ability to think critically. While this too is being taught, there is more obstacles to overcome. Generation iY has been raised with instant access and instant gratification at their fingertips. This has given them the illusion that they do not have to have knowledge, "Why do I have to learn it, I can just Google it" (Focus Group 3. , 2014). This statement was not only conveyed via the focus group cited in the previous statement, it was prevalent in all the focus groups. Professors see it as a huge issue that stands in their way of academic success. Another student's concerns were "It (instant gratification) has eroded our patience and critical thinking takes time" (Focus Group 3. , 2014). Weiler indicates that

information gathering and critical thinking for Generation iY are predominantly about being proved correct in their peer group (Weiler, 2004). "They will listen and believe their peer group over even their professors or advisors" (Focus Group 1. , 2014) (Focus Group 2. , 2014). The data indicates that their need for acceptance in their peer group is more important than learning to them. This is an extension of the influence of social media and the instant gratification they receive via its use. As Elmore (2010) points out they are connected yet isolated.

The notion that they do not have to have knowledge and their peer group's opinion is more important indicates critical thinking is not at the top of their priority list. Postman (1992) writes about humans becoming information processors; he also warns that, computers, "Subordinate the claims of our nature, our biology, our emotions, our spirituality" (p. 111). Computers and by extension social media, texting, or Google are great tools, but they are not capable of creating, of having an original thought, of working to solve an unknown problem, or knowing whether the solution to that problem should be implemented. As a great thinker and educator of our time points out thinking is more than just processing information.

> Put in positive terms, thinking enables us to direct our activities with foresight and to plan according to ends-in-view, or purposes of which we are aware. It enables us to act in deliberate and intentional fashion to obtain future objects or to come into command of what is now distant and lacking. By putting the consequences of different ways and lines of action before the mind, it enables us to know what we are about when we act. It converts action that is merely appetitive, blind, and impulsive into intelligent action (Dewey, 1933, p. 17).

Facebook, Google, Twitter, and texting all fall into the category of instant information and instant gratification. While all of these are great for assimilating information and should be

used as a tool to gather information; information should not be confused with knowledge or wisdom. Information is the building blocks of knowledge, as we put those blocks together by learning and applying information it becomes knowledge. As we learn when to apply that knowledge it becomes wisdom. If Generation iY continues to just see information eventually thinking ceases and instead of intelligent action they are reduced to, "appetitive, blind, and impulsive action" (Dewey, 1965, p. 17).

Dewey (1965) referred to the following as the transmission of life, "This transmission occurs by means of communication of habits of doing, thinking, and feeling from the older to the younger" (p. 3). He stated and believed that this is the way that we keep our societies alive. So are we as the parent generation of Generation iY transmitting well enough to overcome the static and noise of instant information, instant gratification, peer group pressure, and social escape that is part of everyday life for Generation iY?

While as a parent generation we do attempt to transmit; our transmissions are not overcoming the noise that surrounds Generation iY. From an early age they are bombarded with instant information, instant communication, instant gratification, and peer group pressure. The data collected in this thesis indicates that all of the instant communication, gratification, and pressures are reducing the level of patience that Generation iY has. It is increasing their anxiety level in regards to rejection and fear of speaking face-to-face. Also, their belief that they need a formal education or the ability to think through problems has been influenced, after all, as several students said, "Why do we need this when it is all out on the web" (Focus Group 3. , 2014).

We live in a great time, we have unprecedented access to each other and to information; however; we must never forget that relationships are best cultivated face to face and information

does not equal knowledge or wisdom. These are important messages to transmit to Generation iY so our society lives on.

Chapter 5: Summaries and Conclusions

Limitations of the Study

Due to time constraints, the focus groups were limited to four. Normally, an ideal number for focus groups are a minimum of six (Neuman, 2011). The limited budget and time constraints also kept the type of participants to a limited geographical area (East Texas) . While the feedback given during the focus groups was crucial to the understanding of the issues involved in this thesis, more focus groups and in more university locations would greatly enhance the understanding.

The use of surveys would prove beneficial to pinpoint specific areas of questioning for the focus groups. Surveys would also provide a numerical basis for which area of social media should be focused on and its influence on Generation iY. My personal observations of Generation iY while providing a desire to conduct this study, also gave personal bias to some of the discussion and conclusions. I was aware of these biases and combatted them by not allowing myself to do much speaking during the focus groups with the students. The only time I spoke was to relay a question, clarify a question or answer, and to bring the discussion back on topic. I did not venture opinions on the subjects and even emphasized there were no wrong answers to the questions that were asked.

Further Study Recommendations

The limitations of the focus groups only allowed for a glimpse of the potential for this research. Future endeavors in this area will need to conduct surveys and focus groups with a larger and more diverse population of Generation iY. To that end it is recommended that the study be expanded to include not just college level students, but high-school and junior-high

students. The comparative analysis utilized in this thesis allowed for a contrast in views between not only students but faculty that teaches them. Going forward, it is recommended that this same type of ethnographic observations be used.

As Postman (1998) points out in media ecology; technology changes everything. Technology, especially in this age, evolves faster than we can adapt as a society. Understanding how our Generation iY and the subsequent generations are influenced by it is crucial to continuing to teach them well. For this reason these types of studies need to continue or we are in danger of; as Dewey puts it, losing the "transmission of life" (1965). More emphasis must be placed on teaching Generation iY how to interact face-to-face, so that, this generation is not as intimidated by it and not as isolated by social media as they are currently. More emphasis needs to be placed on teaching them to think through problems instead of just testing them for the answers or allowing their only source of information to be their peer group or Google. As the teaching generation, incorporate on certain assignments the ban of acquiring information from social media, Google, or any form of the internet. Introduce Generation iY to the library or a face-to-face interview. These are just some examples that can be put into place. It allows Generation iY to learn the importance of face-to-face communication and critical thinking, which will serve them well in their academic careers.

Conclusion

While social media and texting allow us to stay in touch with a variety of people faster and at greater distances; it is face to face communication that connects us as a society. Face to face communication develops stronger and healthier relationships that connect us in a way that social media or texting cannot. In order to lessen Generation iY's sense of isolation, allow them

to gain confidence in their own abilities in face to face communication, and discover their own identities; it is vital that the skills of face to face communication be taught early and often.

Social media is also dulling Generation iY's perception of the differences between information, knowledge, and wisdom. This has the impact on this generation of growing up with little or no critical thinking skills. Information on the whole is gathered in order to bolster their standing within their peer group; instead of being applied to solve problems. According to the focus groups they exhibit tendencies to listen to their peer group versus their teachers. Generation iY will one day be the ones making the decisions in business, government, academia, and all aspects of our society it behooves us as the current generations in control to ensure that they have the tools to make good decisions.

Appendix A

Focus Group Discussion Questions for Generation iY

- Which type of communication do you prefer face to face, texting or social media?
- How many times during a semester do you initiate a face to face with your instructors?
- How have you and your peers exposure to social media or texting impacted your ability to communicate face to face?
- Is face to face more difficult for you, if so why?
- How has social media or texting influenced your academic (college) careers?
- Do you see this influence as a positive or negative? Why?
- How has social media or texting impacted your ability to think critically?
- Do you perceive that you have gotten better at face to face communication since beginning your college careers?
- How do you view your peers when it comes to face to face communication?
- How has social media or texting influenced them?

Appendix B

Focus Group Discussion Questions for Teachers

- Which type of communication do they prefer face to face, texting or social media?
- How many times during a semester do you have a student initiate a face to face with you?
- How has exposure to social media or texting impacted Generation iY's ability to communicate face to face?
- Is face to face more difficult for them, if so why?
- How has social media or texting influenced their (college) careers?
- Do you see this influence as a positive or negative? Why?
- How has social media or texting impacted their ability to think critically?
- Do you perceive that they have gotten better at face to face communication since beginning your college careers?
- How do you view them when it comes to face to face communication?
- How has social media or texting influenced them?

Appendix C

Informed Consent Form

Dear Student, Faculty Member, or Employer,

If you have received this document then you have been selected to participate in a research study conducted by James H. Henry. This research is part of Mr. Henry's Master's degree program in Communication and Leadership at Gonzaga University. The information that is acquired in this study will be used to show the differences in characteristics, communication habits, and how they impact the current generation of students versus previous generations. This study will not impact your grade for good or ill. There is no cost to you and you will not be compensated for your participation. Participation in the study is completely voluntary.

If you have received this form you have been asked to participate in a focus group. Please rest assured that your names will not be used in the study and therefore your information will remain confidential.

By signing below you understand the information presented in this form, and that this is strictly voluntary and you may decline to be a part of the study at any time.

_____

Printed Name

_____ _____

Date

Signature

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