

GEN Z IN THE REALM OF EDUCATION 4.0

by:

Pepito B. Hernandez

Teacher II, Roosevelt National High School

If you were born after 1996, welcome to Generation Z! -a generation where learners were practically born with mobile phones on their hands and perceived technology as essential as air and water. Growing up in a hyper-connected environment already equipped them with the skills to process and absorb vast amounts of information. As the true archetype of digital natives and technology-dependent entities, the greater challenge is determining how these types of learners will engage in learning effectively.

Invading the schools and replacing the millennials, Gen Z, or the internet generation (iGen), have brains wired to acquire information virtually since their region of visual ability is more established, brought upon by so much exposure to fast-paced, sensory-laden multimedia environments. They are also into storytelling, explainer videos, interactive games, collaborative projects, experiential learning, and other forms of visualization. They can access various technologies as well as information, like a walk in the park. Given the characteristics of this generation, as well as the drastic changes in modern times and the environment, a change in the preferences of today's learners must be implemented in order to maximize the availability of technologies and the innate characteristics of Gen Z without further compromising the essence of learning.

The Fourth Industrial Revolution blurs the boundaries among the physical, digital, and biological domains where transformation of the world is achieved through the progress of creating technological breakthroughs. This concept of IR 4.0 poses an important challenge to the educational landscape, especially in the Philippines, since it is fueled by a wide range of breakthroughs in the digital realm (e.g., artificial intelligence),

physical realm (e.g. new materials), and biological realm (e.g. bioengineering). The existence of IR 4.0 brought a shift in the world of learning, giving birth to the principle of Education 4.0—a model of education for the emerging futures.

Contextualizing Education 4.0 vis-à-vis IR 4.0 will be a good avenue to respond to the challenges of this generation as it will utilize mobile learning, individualized learning, flexible curriculum, and practical application of knowledge. To enter the portal of the realm of Education 4.0, students are then expected to be capable and ethical in the utilization of new technological tools along with their critical, creative, and reflective selves.

Moreover, Education 4.0 will not solely transform the future of education using advanced technology and automation, but it will also pave the way for students' creativity as they are challenged to reminisce the traditional educational paradigms with a more futuristic approach, ensuring that they are neither instructed nor information-fed but rather led and let them access the information. A peer-to-peer learning environment for learners enabling them to collaborate with each other will certainly achieve the main highlight of Education 4.0—an innovation-based education. However, it will not be possible without the help of the teachers as they will be the facilitators and innovation catalysts, by which professional development will be the main level that they should pass to also enter the portal.

Ideal as it may seem, little by little, we are already heading towards the realm of Education 4.0. Uplifting the achievements and status of Gen Z learners, and future generations, would be a bottleneck, but it can be achieved by recalibrating the current educational system anchored to Education 4.0 and IR 4.0. Also, it is crucial that we must be prepared with the educational facilities, technological advancements, and other precursors as we embark on this new era.

Let me ask you again: are you a member of Generation Z? If it is still a yes, then be grateful, but you must also be prepared.

References:

Alda, R. & Boholano, H. (2020). Teacher Education Institutions in the Philippines towards Education 4.0. *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research*.
Pangandaman et al. (2019). Philippine Higher Education Vis-À-Vis Education 4.0: A Scoping Review. *International Journal of Advanced Research and Publications*.

Websites used:

<https://www.qs.com/everything-you-need-to-know-education-40/>

<https://www.philstar.com/other-sections/education-and-home/2019/07/28/1938565/education-40-rebooting-phl-teacher-education>

<https://www.creatrixcampus.com/blog/Education-4.0>

<https://www.insiderintelligence.com/insights/generation-z-facts/#:~:text=Gen%20Z%20Terms%20and%20Definitions&text=Pew%20Research%20recently%20defined%20Gen,or%20%E2%80%9Csocial%20justice%20warriors.%E2%80%9D>