

## NAVIGATING THE DIGITAL DIVIDE: CHALLENGES OF TEACHING DIGITAL NATIVE STUDENTS

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In today's technology-driven world, educators face a unique set of challenges when teaching digital native students. Born into a digital landscape, these young learners are intimately familiar with technology, shaping their perceptions and expectations of education. As educators strive to bridge the digital divide, understanding the challenges they encounter is crucial. Through this article, we will try to delve into the hurdles faced by teachers when instructing digital native students and hopefully provide insights into addressing these challenges effectively.

### Technological Distractions

One of the primary challenges educators face when teaching digital natives is the omnipresence of technological distractions. A study by Bellur et al. (2015) revealed that students spend a significant amount of time multitasking with technology during class, leading to decreased attention and reduced academic performance. The constant temptation of social media, messaging apps, and entertainment can hinder students' ability to stay focused on classroom activities. Teachers must navigate this distraction by implementing strategies such as establishing clear technology guidelines, incorporating interactive and engaging activities, and promoting digital literacy skills to help students develop self-regulation and responsible technology use.

### Information Overload and Critical Thinking

Digital native students have access to an overwhelming amount of information at their fingertips, which can pose challenges in developing critical thinking skills. Research

by Marttunen et al. (2021) indicates that students often struggle with evaluating the credibility and reliability of online sources. The abundance of information can lead to superficial understanding and hinder the development of analytical and discerning thinking. Educators must address this challenge by teaching students how to evaluate sources, discern accurate information, and think critically about the content they encounter. Incorporating media literacy skills and guiding effective research strategies are crucial in equipping digital natives with the necessary tools to navigate the digital landscape successfully.

## Blurred Lines Between Formal and Informal Learning:

Digital native students seamlessly transition between formal and informal learning environments, thanks to their constant connectivity. A study by Ravenscroft et al. (2010) highlighted the challenge of reconciling the different expectations and approaches to learning in these contexts. Educators must recognize and leverage the opportunities presented by informal learning experiences while maintaining the structure and rigor of formal education. Creating a balance between student-driven exploration and traditional instructional practices, such as collaborative projects, real-world applications, and inquiry-based learning, can foster engagement and ensure that students benefit from both informal and formal learning experiences.

Teaching digital native students presents educators with a distinct set of challenges. By acknowledging and addressing these hurdles, such as technological distractions, information overload, and blurred lines between formal and informal learning, educators can create effective learning environments that engage and empower digital native students. Embracing digital literacy skills, critical thinking, and balanced pedagogical approaches can bridge the digital divide and prepare students for success in the digital age.

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