

Three Reasons Why Revolutionary Change is Happening in Education and Training Today



BY MATHEW GEORGHIOU

Simulations, games, virtual worlds, and Web 2.0 are revolutionizing education and training around the world. Here are three reasons why it is happening today.

Reason One: The Video Game Generation

The idea of using games and simulations for learning is not necessarily new to the world, but it certainly is to mainstream thinking. The default thinking has been that “games are for entertainment, not for learning – if you are having fun, you can’t possibly be learning!”

That type of thinking is changing.

“Nintendo,” “Playstation,” and “Xbox” have become part of our daily vocabulary. The emergence of video gaming entered mainstream in the mid 70s, and sociologists are now producing research results that show a clear line between those who grow up with gaming and those who do not. This line – now at age 39 – marks a statistically significant delineation in how people see the world.

Research suggests that gamers tend to be less risk averse, more willing to strive for success, and are less likely to connect with traditional learning methods. The gaming generation is estimated to be bigger, and soon more influential, than the baby boom generation. And, while it is often thought that a typical gamer is a teenage boy, the reality is that the gaming generation has significant representation by both males and females in their 20s and 30s. In fact, some estimates suggest that, in the US, 81% of the business population under 35 are gamers, translating to over 56 million gamers of work age, 5 million of which are already managers.

The gaming generation is not just coming, it is already here. And, they are demanding new methods of learning that parallel the exciting and engaging digital formats in which they routinely participate – for themselves, their coworkers, employees, students, and children.

Reason Two: Educators are changing

Coinciding with the emerging gaming generation is that an estimated half of all teachers in North America will retire within the next 10 years. This means that new teachers, most who have never lived in a world without computers, and many of the gaming generation, will soon be driving education. The result is that adoption of technology and new methods of learning will be fast and furious.

Reason Three: Technology Power and Ubiquity

The final piece of the puzzle, technology, is now ubiquitous and powerful enough to deliver multimedia experiences in all aspects of our lives, via computers, mobile devices, vehicles, appliances, and anything else.

These three drivers have converged to push forward a revolution that has the potential to create drastic change in a relatively short period of time. Regardless of the outcome, it should be interesting – and fun.

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