

FROM AN AUTISTIC SOCIETY INTO A CRITICAL LEARNING SOCIETY

BY
GUIOT / JÜRGENS

Do we all apprehend reality, concepts and relationships likewise, i.e. in the same sort of way?

Don't we all, on the contrary differ radically in our ways of thinking, in our lines of thought?

Why is it that we do approach things from basically different angles and therefore tend to jump constantly to different conclusions.

Put more bluntly: we all learn and think differently and tend not to appreciate facts and situations unisono. thesis and antithesis seldom result in a common synthesis.

On the contrary : abstracts from what we read and learn tend to differ, sometimes dramatically. Democracy and pluralism account for such differences and are endeavouring to organise them. But how to account for such discrepancy and overall mismatch in the classroom?

Let us face facts: we are all basically different both genetically and culturally. Traditional school education takes little or no account of that.

we do all actually reflect, reason and argue in totally diverse ways.

But why couldn't we also learn at school from and through each other? Learning through our differences...Wouldn't it make sense to exchange our experiences, *agorawise* -like the ancient Greek- within the educational system? Cannot Internet and modern technology turn such utopia into virtual reality. Are we actually willing and capable to overcome peacefully some of our most archaic cultural roots? Which common social and cultural models, values and principles need we actually favour and follow?

Which common socio-cultural structures need we striving for? How compatible are they? Do we really wish them to be all the same like in a totalitarian society?

Aren't some nationalists and islamists indeed dreaming of such dictatorships and not only outside Europe?

Don't successive generations think and love and live in different mental and conceptual worlds? Don't they all strive for different spheres of interest, ideologies, life philosophies, *Weltanschauungen*?

Aren't generations gradually becoming dramatically more and more different in the way they think, learn, love, eat and communicate? Aren't our paradigms of reference constantly exposed to change in a society that tends to *accelerate acceleration* ?

What is the deep nature of such complex processes? How do they affect the **X** and the **Y** ans, the **Z** generation?

Aren't constantly changing social structures gradually inflecting us into a form of autism, selfisolation, egotism, social chilliness?

It seems so indeed at first sight and it does actually get confirmed on second thoughts. But when you come to reflect on it more deeply, you tend to realize that society isn't exactly prone to overcome such dramatic autistic isolation. Our schools are filled with autists, literally of course, but also figuratively.

And isn't our postmodern society autistic as well?

CAN MUTANT CHILDREN BE TAUGHT AND HOW?

What exactly is autism? Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is a complex developmental disability; signs typically appear during early childhood and affect a person's ability to communicate, and interact with others. In one way or another internet and technologixal nomad objects gradually turn us all into virtual autists, especially the young who tend to isolate themselves in their virtual bubbles.

It just so happens that youngsters of the so called X, Y, Z generations (X is referring to the generation of those born during the eighties and nineties). have had a constant access to technology (computers, smart phones) in their youth. Also called millnials, internet generation, iGen,net generation, have literally become *mutants*.

Increasingly familiar with digits, they prove more engaged by personal and eye contact. How do you teach and educate such mutants?

Generation **Y** is the second in a series of demographic cohorts which have been given slightly odd names in a bid to define them as a collective cultural group. Generation **Y**- the *millennials*- is referring to those born from the early 80s through to the turn of the millennium., a cohort which largely came of age at the outset of a global financial crisis amid a vast acceleration in digital technology. *Zkids* are the "digital natives" who have no recollection of a world without smart devices and broadband Internet.

Unfortunately, there is very little in the research to suggest what teaching strategies work and which one don't with Generation **Y** or **Z** who have grown in a relatively unstructured learning environment.

How to match teaching strategies to their particular preferences? The early years of Generation **Y** were marked by uncertainty. significant events included 9 11, 2001 as well as other threats of terrorism, globalization, a brutal economic recession, overall violence, and an outbreak of severe respiratory syndrome due to growing pollution. Generation **Y** is seen as a highly protected and over-scheduled generation raised by parents who told them they were so *special*. They tend to value online social connectedness, teamwork, free expression, creativity, work-life flexibility, and more than anything the use of technology. Generation **Y** obviously prefers to work in groups with hands-on experiences. They enjoy trial and error but don't highly value reading and listening to lectures. In one word: ***they loathe traditional education.***

**THEY WANT LEARNING TO BE CREATIVE, INTERACTIVE, AND FUN,
AND THEY ENJOY THINKING OUTSIDE THE BOX.**

Generation **Y** should not be forced into the mold of past generations. Their differences are not necessarily weaknesses or shortcomings. Overall education should in the future ***focus much more on interactive teaching with technology, on coaching , communication and feedback.***

Successful strategies would involve teaching with simulations and group discussion. Collaborative learning coupled with immediate feedback within a practical context might be the key. Teachers should stop relying on lectures as a primary teaching method.

And when lectures are used, they should incorporate multimedia presentations or bring in case discussions with audience participation. Educators should involve learners in projects that require active problem-solving on their part.

Generation **Y** accustomed to learning with the help of technology when they should be studying in and outside the class. They are excellent at multitasking and do not understand how this ability can be perceived by teachers as *rude or distracting*. Many Educators view Generation **Y** as *lazy, unmotivated, and selfish: work and study do not come first*.

With Generation **Y** and **Z**, more than with any other group, teachers and trainers will need to be creative and patient.

They feel special and prefer to learn with teachers who are *approachable, supportive, good communicators, and good motivators*.

Generation **Y** and **Z** inappropriately share private, even shocking, information in informal ways.

But fair enough, they feel comfortable sharing their opinions and feedback. They believe that *whatever you feel is okay, thus it is okay to talk about it*. This can unsettle educators who are not accustomed to such open communication.

Their honest feedback could be crucial to making important programmatic changes. In fact this might be the best way out: using their competence and talents to teach a whole generation of *mutants*. Especially as **Generation Y is particularly concerned with what peers think**. Flexibility and adaptability are desperately required to successfully work with Generation **Y**.

HOW GENERATION Z IS SHAPING THE CHANGE IN EDUCATION

In the eyes of Sieva Kozinsky An American study has pointed out that today's students refuse to be passive learners. Instead, they expect to be fully engaged and to be a part of the learning process themselves.

Generation **Z** has gradually entered college. And just as the Millennials before them, this generation is disrupting the way learning happens in higher education. But *these differences go beyond just a greater dependence on technology. Gen. **Z** tend to embrace social learning environments, where they can be hands-on and directly involved in the learning process. They expect on-demand services that are available at any time and with low barriers to access.*

A study done by Barnes and Noble College shows that today's students definitely ***refuse to be passive learners***. They aren't interested in simply showing up for class, sitting through a lecture, and taking notes that they'll memorize for an exam later on. Instead, ***they expect to be fully engaged and to be a part of the learning process themselves***.

In fact, Gen Z students tend to thrive when they are given the opportunity to have a ***fully immersive educational experience and they even enjoy the challenges of being a part of it***.

51% of surveyed students said ***they learn best by doing*** ,while only 12% said they learn through listening. These same students also mentioned they *tend to enjoy class discussions and **interactive classroom environments** over the traditional dissemination teaching method.*

And their preference towards a **collaborative learning** environment isn't just limited to in-person interactions.

Gen Z is completely comfortable with learning alongside other students, even outside of their own school, using digital tools such as Skype and online forums.

As a digital generation, Generation Z expects digital learning tools to be deeply integrated into their education. For them, technology has always been a fully integrated experience into every part of their lives. And they don't think education should be any different. They believe they should be able to seamlessly connect learning experiences to personal experiences through these same tools.

Additionally, they expect that these learning tools be available on-demand and with low barriers to access. For them, learning isn't limited to just the classroom; it's something that can take place at any time, anywhere.

All in all: ***access to unlimited new information has created a more self-reliant generation.***

Isn't it high time we helped them to become a self-learning generation?

ON THE FUTURE OF EDUCATION

50% of students don't need a physical classroom, 53% believe that online colleges are reputable and 39% view the future of education as being more virtual.

Millennial Branding, a Gen Y research and consulting firm, and Internships.com, the world's largest internship marketplace, today announced a new study called

"The Future of Education:

*" The study shows how students view online learning, how they believe **education is changing**, how they study and interact in a classroom setting and how colleges can better help them prepare for the working world. This online survey of 1,345 students from colleges across America was conducted on May 16th 2013.*

*This study showed that students are more willing to learn online and view the future of education as **more virtual and social media driven**. Only half of students think they need to attend class in a physical setting to get an education.*

*When asked what they saw coming next in education, 39% of students said that it **would be more virtual** and 19% said that they'll be using **social media** to engage in the classroom.*

"Millennials understand that the future of education is online and since they were brought up with the internet, they are prepared for that change.

Education should not be a one size fits all model because everyone learns differently, regardless of age, occupation and location. More online courses should be offered to cater to those who learn better in a virtual classroom."

François Taddei, a French engineer who became a biologist-geneticist happens to be a recognized specialist in evolution, research as well as in education.

The French Minister of Education, Higher Education, and Research, asked him to write a report entitled **"Toward a Learning Society"**.

François Taddei: ***We have all learned, we have all learned how to learn as individuals but rarely as a collective. The idea is, that if we want really to promote new ways of learning, which we need to, in the age of AI (Artificial Intelligence), robots and so much change in our society, we have to change the way we learn and we are already doing it, but we are not necessarily optimising the way we are learning differently.***

This issue question ought to be investigated thoroughly and radically. How do we learn as individuals which we all do is an essential question but even more crucial is to ask ourselves ***how we happen to learn collectively***. Put otherwise: ***can we build a sort of collective intelligence around this, a sort of a citizen science of learning?***

The idea would be: create a collective agora, a virtual forum on which teenagers from all over Europe can communicate and teach and learn alternatively.

And that is exactly what Eyes of Europe is basically about: creating a natural and collective antidote to combat and control a possible domination of Artificial Intelligence in a near future .

We need to progress even more in this direction *because of the international competition, and even more so because of the progressive machines and the needs of the employment sector that are becoming very different than what it used to be.*

There are some countries where teaching is defined as **facilitating learning**, so *first you learn about learning and then you learn about teaching as facilitating the learning opportunities that you give to the younger ones.* EoE stands exactly for that: facilitating learning by learning collectively not in a spirit of competition but of cooperation.

HOW CAN MOBILITY AT EUROPEAN LEVEL IMPROVE EDUCATION?

One of the strengths of Europe is that it has never been easier for young Europeans to travel across the old continent in order to discover other ways of doing what you thought was possible to do only in one way. And Erasmus Programmes are indeed the great help that has been offered to students for various decades now. President Macron strongly believes in an extension of Erasmus for teenagers in secondary school education - in his "*Sorbonne speech*", in septembre 2017, he insisted *that one of two youngsters should have spent at least six months before their 25 fifth birthday.*

This sounds like the challenge of all challenges.

A daring generalisation of the Erasmus programs is indeed the best and shortest way to bring about a deeper adhesion to the fundamental values of democracy as well as rejection of racism and xenophobia that have thrived across Europe over the last few years, especially in the Eastern states.

Quite a few youngsters are actually attracted by values such as nationalism, islamism, salafism in a continent that is more and more haunted by a moral, social and political decline. More than anything, Europe is in need for a profound democratic refoundation that appeals to the youths.

This can only be achieved by means of revolution in education.

More and more numerous are those youths that feel rejected first by the educational system and, in the end, by the social system.

A generalised Universal Erasmus might indeed bring about a profound transformation of Europe which may take a full generation if not more.

Some like Macron are contemplating the creation of what is already called a Universel Erasmus in order to tackle such challenges as the linguistic gap between Europeans as well as the cultural, the social ethical-religious gap between them. It is very doubtful there will be enough money available for such a collective global educative investement.

The question is whether a virtual version of Erasmus is not likely to do the job better and on a much more affordable basis.

It has often been suggested that Hollywood and Voice of America have helped maintain the American dream and keep alive the spirit of democratic liberty which helped the Americans and their allies to win the second World War against both forms of totalitarianism nazism and communism.

Hollywood and Voice of America have indeed helped to boost the spirit of democracy towards a final victory. There are now new varieties of totalitarianism to combat, new ideas to struggle for.

Eyes of Europe is willing to achieve the same goal by means of its autoactive platform that induces young Europeans to be in constant contact with each other in real time. The idea that has been developed here many times before is to help them teaching each other the 12 essentials which indeed have been widely explained in previous papers on this Website.

Eyes of Europe, a virtual autoactive agora, sees itself as a realistic introduction into a European Learning Society.

Eyes of Europe is clearly willing to open a realistic way from an autistic society into a critical open learning European society.

GUIOT / JÜRGENS
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