EFFECTS OF NEW MEDIA ON WRITING SKILLS OF MILLENNIAL
MASS COMMUNICATION MAJORS
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Abstract

The purpose of this literature review is to assess the Millennial generation, their traits, characteristics, and use of technology – primarily social media, as observed and explained by literature and studies. It is an exploration of advantages and disadvantages of intensive use of technology, social media, use of textisms, and the effects on preparedness for writing courses in mass communication programs at post-secondary institutions. Perceptions of excellent writing skills from the Millennial's point-of-view and professors teaching writing courses at the post-secondary level in mass communication programs, differ. The literature review is an analysis of the possible cause and effect impact of technology on how Millennial students think and process information, and the writing skills of this generation in preparing for mass communication careers.

Keywords: Millennial characteristics, social media, writing preparedness

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Effects of New Media on Writing Skills of Millennial Mass Communication Majors

This paper is a literature review on the millennial generation, digital technologies, and how technology has affected the writing skills of this student group, more specifically mass communication and journalism majors. The impact that digital technologies and millennial students' writing skills may require post-secondary faculty members who teach writing-centered courses in the journalism and mass communication classroom to alter/change their writing instruction in order to prepare this student group for careers in mass communication.

Higher education institution studies suggest that post-secondary students are entering with writing deficiencies. Links have been found between increased use of technology, more specifically social media and text messaging, with the decline in writing skills. The parallel with the growing use of socially interactive technologies, such as text messaging, Snap Chat, Instant Messenger - which uses unusually informal written communication practices, and multitasking between applications, are associated with grammatical and formatting errors, and basic writing skills such as spelling, punctuation, and proper word use.

Regardless of a college students' major concentration in journalism, public relations, or advertising, they must demonstrate professional writing skills. Today's global society requires journalism and public relations professionals to be excellent in relationship-building, and to do so they must understand societal trends, multicultural and global issues, which requires research and listening. To be competent professionals, they must master the skills needed for research, organization, writing, and conveying information, to create the end product, which is the message. They must be able to write across formats in Associate Press (AP) style.

A decade ago, research findings began to show that the top-rated competencies sought in hiring entry-level mass communication and journalism practitioners are writing skills, critical thinking and problem-solving skills, and communication skills, both verbal and written. All too often, these competencies are weak or missing in both entry-level and advanced practitioners. Writing skills, understanding of business practices, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills were identified as deficiencies with a direct correlation to rapidly changing media and technological change (McCleneghan, 2006).

Every generation sees new technology--and the social changes it brings--as a possible threat to the rightful order of things. It was perceived that reading would be the downfall of oral tradition and memory. Society has endured the industrial revolution, print media, radio/television, and is now seeing advancing technology changing society.

There is a disconnect in looking at previous generations and their experiences with technology as the millennials are the first generation to grow up with technology as part of their everyday lives. Millennials have grown up with cell phones, pagers, computers, personal electronic entertainment, and most recently, continuously connected to social media outlets. They have grown up immersed in technology.

In trying to assess a theme or connections of new media effects on writing skills of Millennials, it is more complicated than just a mathematical equation of exposure to new technologies and new media and generational change of capacities and attitudes. The volume of interaction with technology has no choice but to influence how students think and process information. It is fundamentally different from at any point in history and time. First, to analyze this phenomenon, it is imperative to understand who the Millennials are.

Literature Review

The Millennial Generation

Characteristics

The millennial generation, defined as those individuals 18-34 years old and 77 million strong, will soon surpass the baby boomer generation (Fry, 2016). Millennials, also referred to as generation Y, generation next, echo boomers, chief friendship officers, or 24/7s, are the most diverse generation in American history (Foote, 2014).

Millennials have no tolerance for delays, require almost constant feedback to know how they are progressing and are not tolerant of unproductive processes. Their desire for speed and efficiency is at the forefront of everything they do (Sweeney, 2006). DeVaney's interpretation is much in line with Junco (2007) and Sweeney (2006) in that the millennial mindset and attitudes include characteristics of entitlement, optimism, they are civic minded, choose close parental involvement, are impatient multitaskers, and team oriented (2015).

Use of Technology

Burnstein (2013) noted that this generation has been instrumental in influencing and creating new technology and illustrated this noting that all the founders of YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, Groupon, Foursquare, Instagram, and Tumblr have been Millennials. Technology does not intimidate millennials because they have grown up with it.

In this computer age, how students relate to one another, how they communicate, and how they use their time are strongly influenced by cell phones (text messaging), instant messaging, blogging, social media sights such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Pinterest, Myspace, Google+,

and YouTube. They access music through iPods and now iPhones. Millennials are connected and accessing information continuously through the use of cell phones or cellular-enabled devices (Junco, 2007).

Millennials most enjoy and engage in interactive, full-motion multimedia, color images, and audio; they can use any media and especially enjoy Vodcasting and iPod casting. Multimedia is key to engaging and interacting with Millennials (Sweeney, 2006) (Drouin and Driver, 2014).

Millennial's view instant messaging as conversation. They use blogs to send messages to multiple people at one time. Millennials, also known as the Net Generation, has never known a time without the World Wide Web, IM, and cell phones. They use texting regularly and have moved away from conventional forms of communication. This generation typically owns cell phones, and a significant percentage of this population do not have landlines in their homes. They are more comfortable in using emerging communication technologies than traditional forms of communication (Junco, 2007) (Bolton, 2013).

According to data from Experian Marketing Services (2014) shows millennials spend 67 hours using media weekly which works out to approximately 9.5 hours a day. This generation is also the first to devote the majority of their media time to digital devices, including computers, tablets, game consoles, mobile phones, e-readers and MP3 players. Specifically, Millennials spend 35 hours a week with digital media and only 32 hours with traditional media, which includes television, magazines, newspapers and radio. In fact, collectively, Millennials spend 2.4 billion hours a week using digital media, which is more than a third (38 percent) of the time that all United States adults spend using digital devices.

Six-in-ten online millennials or 61 percent, report obtaining political news on Facebook. Millennials prefer to receive news about politics and government through social media than other

avenues according to a Pew Research Center analysis (Perrin, 2015). This generation has a low reliance on local television for political news.

Apps that are mobile friendly and expedite information resonates with the Millennial generation. Summly is a news summary service designed to help simplify consumption of news on mobile devices. The Summly app was created in 2011, then known as Trimit, by a then 15-year-old, Nick D'Aloisio from London. Summly offers simple browsing and condensed summaries from news outlets and allows users to digest what is happening in the world quickly. It is one thing to look at news stories in their entirety on a desktop, but as phone and tablet use expands, this app makes it easier for consumers to skim information on a more mobile product. Trimit initially was created to take large volumes of text to shrink it to fit a social network update. Trimit was about content creation (Skillings, 2013).

Employment

Millennials have work expectations including genuine interest from others, frequent praise, and feedback, the acknowledgment that they are making a difference, leeway for creative efforts, participation in decision making, opportunities for self-improvement and advancement, and expect ongoing and open communication. Millennials expect a high level of personal attention and mentoring at work and respond extremely well when trainers take the time to provide personal attention and skills training (Foote, 2014).

Caraher (2014) notes that Millennials prefer to work in smaller companies where they believe they have a hands-on role and can make a greater impact. Millennials think they are prepared for positions and do not relish working their way up the ladder. Employers note

millennials are much more outspoken about what they expect and want, including access to senior management, strong mentorship and their desires in regards to their career path.

Millennials are optimistic, fun loving, self-confident, and have a strong sense of entitlement. They are ambitious, career oriented, have a "me first" attitude at work, and desire to brand their work. Millennials question tradition, which translates to a detachment from hierarchal institutions and believe they are ready to move right to the top (Foote, 2014).

Millennials tend to stay home longer than previous generations; they want it all and now, especially when it comes to wages and benefits, career advancement, interesting tasks, and the ability to make a contribution to society through their job (Agheorghiesei Corodeanu, 2015).

Millennials also change jobs frequently making it frustrating for employers who are struggling to recruit and retain talented high-performers. This generation does not respond well to the traditional command-and-control type of management systems. They have grown up in an environment where they have questioned their parents and now question their employers. They are willing to challenge the status quo; they are independent and tech savvy (Armour, 2005).

The Millennial generation with a short attention span has quick and easy access to relevant, bite-sized information in real time through online search engines, social networks, and online company repositories. Companies, therefore, will need to adopt different approaches for continuous learning that work best, so that Millennials have the right knowledge, for the right purpose, at the right time (Sharma, 2016).

Digital Communication

Short Message System (SMS)

Created in the late 1980s Short Message System (SMS) was designed to work with the digital technology called global system for mobile communications (GSM). GSM is the basis for most modern cell phones. The system was created so that when cell phones were out of signal range to make a call, they could still send messages or texts to communicate. It is important to understand this process in understanding Millennials use of technology. It is easily accessible, expedites communications, and is on demand (Averbrook, 2012).

Before 2001, you could only send a text message to people in your cellular network; texting was more of a novelty at that time. In fact, only about 500,000 text messages were sent each day in the United States in 2001. When wireless providers began connecting their networks, with regards to texting, the numbers escalated. The 18 to 24-year-old age group accounts for the bulk of texting activity (Averbrook, 2012).

Text language or textisms are created by merging the written and spoken language and includes abbreviations, slang, and acronyms. The driving force behind textisms is the ability to send comprehensible messages using the least number of characters as possible. Texting as a form of communication reached 200 billion messages sent in 2014 worldwide (Bostina-Bratu & Palea, 2015). Portio Research (2015) notes that there are more than 7 trillion messages sent each year.

The explosion of SMS language is criticized for causing the decline of language proficiency and tradition, yet there are those that welcome that the internet and texting have made writing

popular again. The belief is that these students have a broader facility of language as they can bounce between standard language and text messaging (Bostina-Bratu & Palea, 2015).

The interference with use of social media may be attributed to engagement time on media and use of textisms. According to an International Smartphone Mobility Report in January 2015, Americans are sending and receiving five times as many texts than telephone calls each day. The study was conducted by Informate Mobile Intelligence and looked at the use, consumption and comparisons of engagement on calls, SMSs and Chat/Voice over IP (VOIP) applications across twelve key global markets. VOIP is the use of technologies utilized for the delivery of voice communications and multimedia sessions using Internet Protocol (IP) networks. The study revealed that during January 2015, Americans spent 4.9 hours per day on smartphones. Thailand, Qatar, and Malaysia followed the United States as the four largest users. The United States and the Philippines topped the list regarding total SMSs sent and received per day on Smartphones (Informate, 2015).

There has been a 78 percent increase in social media use in young adults, ages 18 to 29 and a 69 percent increase for ages 30 to 40, from 2005 to 2015 showing a strong correlation between social media usage and the millennial age group (Perrin, 2015).

Phonetics/Text Speak

With the expansion of technology, text language exploded expediting the process of communicating. Words are shortened, numbers are used in place of letters, and there seems to be little regard to spelling. It is a code of phonetics.

Durkin et al. explains:

Users shorten words by dropping vowels or endings, or by using single letters, numbers, symbols or combinations, as replacements for letters, syllables or whole words. For example, 'see you later' becomes 'c u l8r' and 'going out tonight' becomes 'goin ot 2nite' (Durkin, Conti-Ramsdent, & Walker, 2011, 50).

The concern is with increased use of mobile technology and the impact that this is having on literacy skills. The assumption is that the characteristics of textisms leak into formal writing and result in language decline (Carrington, 2005, 161-175; Thurlow, 2006).

It has previously been reported that exposure to visually presented correctly and incorrectly spelled words has a significant effect on subsequent spelling accuracy. Previous research investigating this process in skilled adult readers has shown very robust results that encountering a misspelling has a detrimental effect on spelling accuracy whereas encountering a correct spelling has a beneficial effect. This effect is considered to be mediated via an implicit priming mechanism (Dixon & Kaminska, 2007).

Research on the use of text speak, spelling, and literacy, where it was initially thought to have an adverse impact on spelling, studies show that textism use does not harm children's literacy development that it supports spelling development (Wood, Kemp, & Plester, 2014). Additionally, research has expanded to the effect of textisms on grammar abilities in written language and the inconsistency in coding between studies and use of written tasks, which do not strictly denote grammar, may have concealed the effects on grammar abilities (Kemp & Waldron, 2014; Cingel & Sundar, 2012; Kemp, Wood & Waldron, 2014; Wood, Kemp, Waldron & Hart, 2014).

Young adults estimated their textese use were linked to better informal writing for all participants, but to poorer formal writing for those with some or no college education (Rosen,

Chang, Erwin, Carrier, Erwin, Carrier, & Cheever, 2010). Researchers who looked at adults'
actual texting use have observed negative links with some, but not all literacy skills (De Jonge &
Kemp, 2012; Drouin & Driver, 2014; Grace, Kemp, Martin, & Parrila, 2014).

Critics of text messaging suspect that shortcuts and abbreviations integrated into text
messaging are producing problems with teaching proper spelling, grammar, and sentence
construction. It increases the speed and ease of communicating, but text messaging does not
ensure that students are learning to write effectively. Proper writing skills are not observed in
text messaging where brevity is a central feature.

Employer Expectations

In light of the skills, employers' expectations of college graduates in mass communication programs is driving the urgency for assessment and reform or improvement of student writing skills. Studies and literature emphasize the importance of solid writing skills as a prerequisite for employment in the communications field. The core competencies for this field area are critical thinking, problem-solving, excellent verbal communication skills, and writing skills. All of the skill-sets go hand-in-hand.

Communication Skills

Effective communication skills, including oral, written, and interpersonal skills, establish a minimum threshold for new employee success. For individuals to stand apart from their competition in the workforce, job seekers must demonstrate effective communication skills. Given the culturally diverse, global marketplace in which 21st-century leaders will function, Millennials must successfully communicate across all platforms of fellow workers, customers, and publics.

ATD's study Leadership Development for Millennials surveyed 592 business and learning professionals and assessed five skills Millennials need to succeed in the workplace. Soft Skills Training was noted by 56 percent of the respondents, including Millennials. This generation is not equipped with the skills needed to be successful in the workforce. Millennials are tech savvy but lack communication, listening, patience, leadership, and relationship building techniques. Just under half of the respondents noted that Millennials are often promoted to management positions before they are prepared to handle the job. The third skill recorded was information

learning environments with 53 percent of respondents reporting on-the-job training to be the

most efficient training and development strategy for Millennials, followed by setting clear

performance expectations and providing frequent feedback. Millennials change jobs frequently,

and rotational job programs present a healthy alternative retention approach for this population.

Lastly, Millennials are known for their lack of patience with structure and hierarchical

organizations, and 54 percent of respondents believe that they will have a greater influence on an

organization's culture than it will have on them. Organizations need to create a culture that

allows Millennials to be participatory will help to recruit and retain this generation (Von Ins,

2016).

 The Association for Talent Development (2015) notes that matching the STEM skills gap as

one of the most critical areas is communication and interpersonal skills. In today's connected

economy, the ability to communicate clearly across multiple platforms is imperative. What

works well on social media sites such as Twitter or Facebook, does not translate well in business

communication.

 According to the ASTD report Leadership Development (2013), Millennials are highly

qualified in technical skills, but they need to work on other competencies, particularly

diplomacy, communication, listening, patience, and relationship building. This type of training

for the Millennial generation requires particular attention; well over one-half of the survey

respondents indicated that they believe the Millennial generation needs specialized leadership

development programs.

 According to the Adecco (2013) report, the communication skills gap was noted to be of

critical importance. For all the traditional talk about a skills gap in technical skills, 44 percent of

respondents cited soft skills, such as communication, critical thinking, creativity, and collaboration, as the area with the largest gap. This type of training needs to be taught alongside industry-specific and STEM skills. Leaving college knowing how to do a particular job but not having developed stronger critical thinking and communication skills is a real disservice to students— universities need to ensure they offer a balanced education, regardless of an individual's major or field of study (Adecco, 2013; Association for Talent Development, 2015).

Writing Skills

Communication skills, both written and oral, are competencies expected from entry-, mid-, and senior-level public relations practitioners (Flynn, 2014). Millennials perceive themselves to be excellent writers and will note as much on resumes and in job interviews. In one study, an online survey administered to 109 Millennial entry-level public relations employees and 56 supervisors regarding entry-level job skills and professional characteristics, supervisors rated six of the eight job skills and all 16 professional characteristics as significantly poorer than the Millennials had rated themselves. Computer and social media skills were the only two items that did not generate a significant difference (Todd, 2014). The 2015 Job Outlook report ranks writing third (behind only leadership and teamwork) in the list of skills most sought by employers (Gray & Koncz, 2014).

Sharma notes that most companies are continuing with the traditional professional development and training that does not resonate with the Millennials which are now flooding the workplace. For Millennials, formal learning doesn't contribute much too substantial retention, and they expect more informal, just-in-time learning sources to acquire and assimilate knowledge. For them, context is more important than content (2016).

Business, government, nonprofits, healthcare, and industry value and need graduates to fill public relations and communications positions. Public relations and communications majors help organizations build and maintain robust, mutually beneficial relationships with stakeholders at a time when the challenges of globalization, technology, diversity and ethics have never been greater.

Faculty Assessment

Fundamental writing skills include that of grammar, usage, mechanics, and style. Grammar includes an understanding of fragments, run-on sentences, garbled sentences, subject-verb agreement errors, ill-formed verbs, pronoun errors, missing possessives, and wrong or missing words. Mastering usage requires students to be able to identify bad or missing articles, confused words, wrong form of words, faulty comparisons, and preposition errors. The mechanics of writing includes things such as proper spelling, capitalization, and punctuation. Lastly, the mastery of style requires a student to identify the use of overly repetitious words, inappropriate use of words and phrases, sentences beginning with coordinated conjunctions, very long and short sentences, and passive voice sentences.

Misspelled words and muddled construction of sentences erodes public confidence. Practitioners should be able to compose a tight lead and know how to use a comma. All prose, including news writing, is highly rhetorical in nature, and practitioners should be able to compose an authentic story that is compelling concerning audience impact. Tragic, comic, and otherwise rhetorical pieces are the kinds of well-read stories that editors want, and of which get printed in the newspapers and magazines. The bottom line is that practitioners must be able to communicate effectively on paper.

Adverse effects

When student's text, they use shortcuts, omissions of non-essential letters and initials, to quickly and efficiently, compose a text message. According to Drew Cingel, a former undergraduate student in communications, Penn State, and a doctoral student in media,

technology, and society at Northwestern University, noted that those who frequently used language adaptations (textisms) performed poorly on a grammar test (Swayne, Messer, 2012).

Cingel, who worked with S. Shyam Sundar, Distinguished Professor of Communications and co-director of the Penn State's Media Effects Research Laboratory, said the use of these shortcuts might hinder a person's ability to switch between techspeak and the normal rules of grammar. Cingel gave middle school students in a central Pennsylvania school district a grammar assessment test. The researchers reviewed the test, based on a ninth-grade grammar review, to ensure that all the students in the study were taught the concepts. The researchers then passed out a survey that asked students to detail their texting habits, such as how many texts they send and receive, as well as their opinion on the importance of texting. The researchers also asked participants to note the number of adaptations in their last three sent and received text messages (Swayne & Messer 2012).

The study distinguished a decline in grammar scores based on the number of adaptations in sent text messages. The frequent texting negatively predicted the test results, but both sending and receiving text adaptations were associated with how poorly they performed on the test. Avoiding capital letters and not using periods at the end of sentences did not seem to affect their ability to use correct capitalization and punctuation on the tests (Swayne & Messer, 2012). The decline in writing skills was identified more than a decade ago. Bauerlein' The English Problem in the Digital Age, showed that student scores on three national assessments of student reading and writing ability have decreased steadily since the 1990s. On the National Assessment of Educational Progress, in 1992, 80 percent of twelfth graders scored basic or higher and in 2005 that figure had fallen to 73 percent. Students SAT and ACT scores decreased, and the

percentage of test-takers who met college readiness benchmarks in English fell by 2 percent. Only two-thirds of these test-takers are prepared for college writing (2010).

Omah and Miah performed a study selecting emails written by 100 university students to their professors and examined the emails for writing errors. Thirty of the emails contained missing words and pertinent information, and thirty-eight emails had spelling errors. The study demonstrated that students experienced interference from the use of social media and texting in their writing (2012).

With the creation of technology for communication and devices such as spell check, students are no longer proofreading their academic work which results in misspellings and omission of words not being caught (Omar & Miah, 2012). Microsoft Word's red spell-check lines do not appear below single letters and numbers such as c, u, r, 2 and 4. The lines do not catch words that have numbers in them such as "b4" and "l8r" by default.

Laura Brandenburg, an assistant professor of English at Wayland Baptist University teaches non-literature, writing-intensive courses. Brandenburg conducted a study on recognition of errors in context and how this affects the reader's perception of the writer's ethos. The study looked at where nonacademic readers notice errors when they are not intentionally looking for them and secondly, the readers' perception of the writers' character, competence or credibility. Readers rated a higher status of ethos to the error-free version. The study provided a conclusion that even though the readers did not pick up on all errors, they did notice errors and the presence of these errors reflected negatively on the writer's knowledge, expertise or competence (2015).

Positive Correlations

Some negative associations have been found between frequency of use of textisms and spelling and literacy skills, yet some studies provide data that find these positively related. The accuracy of reading textisms and speed of reading and writing textese were positively associated with spelling and reading scores (Kemp & Bushness, 2011). Positive associations with phonetics processing and retrieval abilities were also found (Wood, Jackson, Hart, Plester & Wilde, 2011; Plester, Lerkkanen, Linjama, Rasku-Puttonen, Littleton, 2011; Plester, Wood & Joshi, 2009; Wood, Meachem, Bowyer, Jackson, Tarczynski-Bowles, & Plester, 2011).

Dijk, Witteloostuijn, Vasić, Avrutin, Blom (2016) were able to provide data that reflects a positive connection of texting and grammar and the executive functions in primary school children. This particular study looked at the effects of textese on grammar performance in spoken language. The data demonstrated that textese might not only improve abilities in written language, but it may also enhance grammar skills in spoken language.

The more words children omitted in their text messages, the better their grammar performance. Omitting words while using textese may lead to the training of the grammar system, resulting in improved grammar performance in spoken language. The study offered findings that supported that in deciding which words to drop in which context, children analyzed their sentences and trained their grammatical knowledge showing a positive correlation to grammar performance (Dijk, Witteloostuijn, Vasić, Avrutin, Blom, 2016).

Multitasking and Learning

Multitasking is a term that is associated with the Millennial generation. Technology allows users to toggle rapidly/multitask across multiple formats rather than completing processes

individually. Users can send text messages, research topics, connect on social media sites, and game. The method of multitasking to Millennials is a highly practiced skill. It is much like walking and talking at the same time.

According to Biaculli (2012), the excessive use of technology may have an effect on education and the absorption of information. As students are sending and receiving hundreds of messages, browsing pages of information and images, simultaneously while learning, they are not absorbing the critical information; actual learning is being mitigated. The educational information, while supposedly more important, is falling through the cracks with these technological distractions.

In Ruleman's (2012) study, students of the University of Central Missouri were tested to assess their pattern of technology use while studying and researching. Participants in the study reported the use of mobile phones, social media sites, instant messaging, online gaming, and texting while they prepared for classes, studying and researching. A study by Santos and Čuta (2015) showed that the majority of students claim to use social networks while they listen to music, study, watch television and while they are working. Additionally, 80 percent of the students noted that they use social media while in class.

Digital devices such as tablets and smartphones allow users greater access to information at all times. As this use increases, research is showing that this is impacting learning by causing distractions. Research on metacognition has demonstrated that texting can have an adverse impact on learning. A survey that looked at the occurrence of students texting in marketing classes in two different universities showed the students received an average of 37 texts per day and initiated approximately 16. More than 90 percent of the respondents reported receiving texts while in class. Even though students believed they could multitask, following a lecture and

texting at the same time, respondents who did text received lower grades. (Clayson & Haley, 2013).

Another study of 777 students from six United States universities found that respondents used some form of digital device for non-class purposes on an average of 11 times in a typical day, including texting (85.9 percent), engaging on social networks (66 percent) and emailing (67.8 percent). Of the total respondents, 80 percent acknowledges that this activity caused them not to pay attention and miss instruction and information (McCoy, 2013).

Knight in her editorial, What to Do About Texting? describes her experience of teaching in an undergraduate business school with a focus on data analysis, interpretation, and communication. Knight notes that she answers questions repeatedly because students are continually distracted by their electronic devices. Knight believes that this dilemma does not just occur in the educational setting but permeates the workplace also (2015). Supportive of Knight's concern is an article in the Business and Professional Communication Quarterly that reported on a survey of professionals who considered using mobile phones in meetings to be inappropriate and uncivil (Washington, Okoro, & Cardon, 2014).

DISCUSSION

The America Psychological Association (APA) and the Modern Language Association (MLA) are the authorities on scholarly writing and govern what is acceptable in academic work. Both the APA ad MLA manuals address the areas of writing that are being impacted by the use of texting and social media. Due to the informal writing style of social media and texting, information writing style has become a primary concern for students' academic writing.

The written word is the most vital element in human communications. Successful communication practitioners must be excellent writers. If practitioners cannot write clearly, concisely and interestingly, they will not be able to communicate the message that they want their public to grasp and understand. Good ideas require good writing to project them. Mediocre ideas need excellent writing skills. A plethora of published research has documented how important writing is to communication practitioners.

The millennial generation loves interactivity that provides continuous feedback as to what works and what does not work. Incorporating classroom or virtual experiments and exercises are some facets of keeping the attention of millennials. Academia may create different types of class setups, incorporating just ten to fifteen minutes of lecture, followed by the virtual exploration of the topic or hands-on application process to teach millennials.

Millennials rely heavily on social media and Google to access and share information, discuss challenges and topics, and receive feedback and advice. Creating a learning environment using the technology and methodologies of informal learning to create an online collaborative learning environment resonates with the Millennial generation and should be utilized in course instruction (Sharma, 2016; Todd, 2014).

Millennials, although they claim to be tech savvy, studies show that their business communications skills are lacking. Undergraduate business writing and communication courses should include assignments that engage the class in discussion including use of email and online communication activities to improve their ability to craft a professional interaction with the instructor as an out-of-classroom activity (Sims, 2015).

The prevalence of social media in the workplace drives the need for mass communication educators to ensure that the 21st Century students understand how to create professional content and to use the tools afforded by Web 2.0 technologies. Educators will need to teach cross-platform skills by incorporating social media into the learning experience (Switzer & Switzer, 2013).

Wright and Larson (2016) implemented a one-page paper concept that requires students to be both efficient and precise in their thinking and writing. The thought is that it is more difficult to express ideas or concepts briefly. The one-page paper increases both knowledge and writing ability, which they note is the single most important core competence of a marketer.

While hyper-connectivity has induced quick-acting and multitasking in Millennials, it also drives them to settle for quick choices and lack of patience, according to the Pew Research Center (2015). To adapt to these characteristics, learning resources that are created need to be bite-sized, so they are easily digestible (Sharma, 2016).

Teachers should continue to teach formal rules of writing, assuring that students have a clear understanding of grammar rules, style, and punctuation. Findings from the study of relationships between the use of grammar in text messaging and performance on grammatical tasks reinforced the need to differentiate between deliberate violation of writing rules and the lack of knowing or understanding the rules of writing (Wood, Kemp & Waldron, 2014).

Additional studies that may result as the informal writing style of social media and texting continues to grow is to differentiate between deliberate violation of the rules of academic writing or the lack of understanding of grammar rules, style, and punctuation. Further investigation is needed to explore the impact of toggling and multi-tasking between multiple platforms on learning and the ability to perform deep research and writing.

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