



EXAME DE PROFICIÊNCIA EM LEITURA EM LÍNGUA INGLESA
Grande Área: Ciências Humanas e Ciências Sociais Aplicadas

**THE NET GENERATION IN JAPAN:
A SURVEY OF INTERNET BEHAVIOURS OF STUDENTS AGED 13-21**

by **Keith Taynton**

1. Background

While distance education has been using technology to deliver courses to students in nontraditional settings, recent innovations such as blended learning bring technology directly into the classroom for purposes other than ICT instruction. For example, a project in New York teaches children entirely through the use of technology where students work in teams to make videogames to learn the concepts they are being taught (Corbett, 2010). Technology could even signal the end of traditional classroom-based education. The Khan Academy (Khan Academy, 2011), among other Open Education Resource providers (OER Commons, 2011), seeks to provide quality education on many different subjects using YouTube videos and online worksheets to test understanding for anyone, anywhere, anytime. Forecasts for growth in virtual or online schooling even predict that half of secondary level courses will be delivered online by 2020 (Searson, Monty-Jones, Wold, 2011: 363).

Many forms of technology are being introduced into educational environments: smartboards, Web 2.0 technologies like blogs, Facebook and YouTube, Virtual Learning Environments such as Moodle and Blackboard, and mobile apps for learning that are available on cell phones or other mobile Internet-connected devices. The utility of Web 2.0 technologies in learning and teaching for blended or online classes has been researched across a wide range of disciplines (e.g. Means, Toyama, Murphy, Baikia, Jones, 2009; Lai & Land, 2009; Marenzi, Kupetz, Nejd, Zerr, 2010). As the results show, they can be useful in facilitating learning although there are also some problems with introducing these types of technology into courses (Schedlitzki, Young, Moule, 2011). Within English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context there is a broad range of research showing how blogs and other technology-enhanced learning activities can help students learn effectively (e.g. Kukulka-Hulme, 2010; Maynard, 2007; Wang, 2009). Social media like blogs can be used as a constructivist learning tool which can encourage students to participate in the making of meaning and knowledge through content creation activities, critical feedback on others' content, and critical reflection on their learning (Lee, 2011).

While some educators are embracing these opportunities for using technology to enhance their students' learning, questions remain about the ability of students to adequately use technology in their studies. On the one hand, researchers like Prensky (2001a/b), Brown (2002) and Oblinger and Oblinger (2005) have characterised this generation as 'Digital Natives' or 'the Net Generation' who are team oriented, comfortable with technology use and prefer to learn actively, depend on communications technology and work in a multitasking way. (...) Sparrow (2011) claims to show that memory is being affected by the use of Google as this search facility replaces the need to remember facts and figures. Brown hints at a new form of literacy to accompany reading and numeracy: "The new literacy, beyond text and image, is one of information navigation" (Brown, 2005). There is some skepticism that such a generation exists (e.g. Kukulka-Hulme, Pettit, Bradley, Carcalho, Herrinton, Kennedy, Gaillard-Kenney & Long, 2011). As Bennett et al. comment: The picture beginning to emerge from research on young people's relationships with technology is much more complex than the digital native characterisation suggests. While technology is embedded in their lives, young people's use and skills are not uniform. There is no evidence of widespread and universal disaffection, or of a distinctly different learning style the like of which has never been seen before (Bennett et al, 2008: 783).

Although there is a dearth of research generally about the impact of moving classes online (Searson et al., 2011: 363), there are large scale projects such as the annual Educase Center for Applied Research (ECAR) study that try to capture the current trends and attitudes about technology of student cohorts as they enter higher education (Smith & Caruso, 2010). The ECAR survey has been conducted annually since 2004 and covers a wide range of student demographics with a very large sample (2010 had 36,950 respondents). The questions cover a wide range of technology related issues such as type and use of software and hardware, usage and perception of university online services, and how students use and



integrate technology with their learning. The data shows the changes in young people's attitudes and use of technology within a learning context which can help educators plan their classes. This study investigates the situation in Japan in order to provide a glimpse at what students are using the Internet for and how they are using it.

2. The Japanese Context

As more teachers in Japan start to introduce more technology into their courses, educators need a clearer idea of what kind of technological environment students are familiar with and what their abilities to successfully engage with technology to fulfill class activities are. As of 2008 there were five dedicated online or distance degree granting institutions in Japan, including the Cyber University and the Open University Japan, and 41 offering a form of distance education (Kubota, Terashima, Nakahashi, Morioka, 2008). There was also a large population of students taking high school classes online (Kobayashi & Shibui, 2008). Another aspect is constituted by Self-Access Learning Centers (SALC), which are slowly emerging in Japanese universities and are provided to encourage independent learning, often using technology. Furthermore, popular Learning Management Systems (LMS) like Moodle require students to be able to use a Website to complete lesson tasks, and as universities start to integrate the Web into their administration, students have to become familiar with corporate Web environments to check lessons, schedules and register for classes. This shows that Web-based activities are slowly becoming a part of education in Japan at different levels, however, the question arises what students are able to do using this technology.

3. The study

To gain a clearer picture of what type of technology, how frequently it is used, and perceived ability when using it, a survey was conducted at two private universities and one private middle and high school in Osaka. The subjects' ages ranged from 13 to 21 and included a variety of disciplines at the university level, and different ability levels across the whole sample. All proper ethical safeguards were taken and permissions obtained. The survey was paper based and written in Japanese by a native Japanese speaker to facilitate understanding and response rates. There were 390 responses and data was manually input into SPSS v19 for analysis. The survey comprised 21 questions that were split into three sections: 1. Technology ownership, frequency of use and perceptions of ability; 2. Frequency and type of use of the Internet and Web; 3. Use and perceptions of school or university website.

4. Conclusion

Within the Japanese context it seems that, at least in the sample in this study, many young people frequently use the Web, feel able to do so, and have the technology to access it. Just as in other countries students on the Internet in Japan differ by ability and purpose. (...). Results from this study indicate that a high percentage of online activity is for consumption, while only a minority use it for learning or content creation. Therefore, common consumption activities and low-level navigation skills may not be problematic, but many students may need support to develop higher levels of digital literacy so that they can more effectively find, evaluate, and understand information, as well as create original content. Educators might also consider the usability of their LMSs, and perhaps give more support for mobile device formats to enhance participation and access.

Fonte (com adaptações): *Teaching English with Technology*, 12 (1), 3-19, <http://www.tewtjournal.org>



Leia o texto **“THE NET GENERATION IN JAPAN: A SURVEY OF INTERNET BEHAVIOURS OF STUDENTS AGED 13-21”** e responda as seguintes perguntas de acordo com o texto:

- 1) Qual o exemplo de Corbett (2010) para mostrar as novas tendências nas tecnologias de comunicação e informação e quais as previsões feitas para 2020? (2pts)
- 2) Qual a visão de Lee (2011) sobre a mídia social? (2pts)
- 3) Como Bennett e seus colegas explicam a relação dos jovens com a tecnologia? (2pts)
- 4) Quais os exemplos que a autora menciona na parte 2 “The Japanese context” para afirmar que a tecnologia está aos poucos se tornando parte da educação no Japão? (2 pts)
- 5) Como foi feito o estudo da autora e quais foram os resultados? (2 pts)