

Reading Strategies of Generation X and Y: a Survey on Learners' Skills and Preferences

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Abstract— Mixed generation classroom is a phenomenon that current higher education establishments are faced with daily trying to meet the needs of modern labor market with its emphasis on lifelong learning and retraining. Representatives of mainly X and Y generations in one classroom acquiring higher education is a challenge to lecturers considering all the characteristics that differ one generation from another. The importance in outlining different strategies and considering the needs of the students lies in the necessity for everyone to acquire the maximum of the provided knowledge as well as to understand each other to study together in one classroom and successfully cooperate in future workplaces. In addition to different generations there are also learners with different native languages which has an impact on reading and understanding texts in third languages, including possible translation. Current research aims to investigate, describe and compare reading strategies among the representatives of generation X and Y. Hypotheses was formulated - representatives of generation X and Y use different reading strategies which is also different among first and third year students of the before mentioned generations. Current study is an empirical, qualitative study. To achieve the aim of the research, relevant literature was analyzed and a semi-structured questionnaire conducted among the first and third year students of Tallinn Health Care College. Questionnaire consisted of 25 statements on the text reading strategies, 3 multiple choice questions on preferences considering the design and medium of the text, and three open questions on the translation process when working with a text in student's third language. The results of the questionnaire were categorized, analyzed and compared. Both, generation X and Y described their reading strategies to be „scanning“ and „surfing“. Compared to generation X, first year generation Y learners valued interactivity and nonlinear texts. Students frequently used strategies of skimming, scanning, translating and highlighting together with relevant-thinking and assistance-seeking. Meanwhile, the third-year generation Y students no longer frequently used translating, resourcing and highlighting while Generation X learners still incorporated these strategies. Knowing about different needs of the generations currently inside the classrooms and on the labor market enables us with tools to provide sustainable education and grants the society a work force that is more flexible and able to move between professions. Future research should be conducted in order to investigate the amount of learning and strategy- adoption between generations. As for reading, main suggestions arising from the research are as follows: make a variety of materials available to students; allow them to select what they want to read and try to make those materials visually attractive, relevant, and appropriately challenging for learners considering the differences of generations.

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