

Consolarium meets Marc Prensky Part 1

Hello, Derek Robertson here, representing Learning and Teaching Scotland at the WISE Initiative in Qatar where we were sharing our work about games-based learning in Scottish schools with the delegates here. I am really delighted to introduce Marc Prensky here, Marc will probably need no introduction visionary in terms of games-based learning and coined in the phrase digital natives and digital immigrants that Scottish schools know only so well. Marc really nice to see you. Thank you really nice to be here. Greats thanks for giving me some time.

Marc, first question, big question. Some people in the UK and Scotland would say there is no such thing as a digital native. How would you respond to that?

The term is almost ten years old now, so things may have changed since it originally put forth and people have had their criticisms of it but I disagree there is no such thing. There is a group of people who have grown up with the technology around them whether they have it or whether they don't have it, they have different attitudes and ways of looking at this thing than older people who didn't. They may not know everything about technology because you are not born knowing everything about technology but when to come down to whether they are comfortable with it, their comfort level whether they can pick up something and figure it out in ways that many adults can't, I think there is a difference.

In the ten years that since you coined that phrase what changes do you think you've seen in particular in relation to teachers and technology and games?

I think that certainly there has been some transfer that we have had some people try to adapt the technology more. I still don't think there is enough communication going on where people consider themselves equals with students knowing perhaps more about technology, teachers perhaps knowing more about other things but feeling mutual respect for one another. I still think that has a way to go. Where I'm focussing now is on is what I call digital wisdom which means how do I take things that the mind does really well and things that machines do better because there are many things that machines do better like remember forever and deal with complexity and deal with multiple complex databases. How do we put those together in a wise way and that I think is a question for all of us.

You talked in your presentation yesterday about passion-based learning. You said ask a child what they are passionate about and address that. How would a teacher address a passion-based curriculum then with 30 individual passion-based programmes of work?

Well, there are lots of way, if you don't know what your students passions are then you basically don't know who is sitting in front of you and that makes teaching at a really deep level, I think difficult. Its never 30 separate passions its typically clusters of passions so one thing that you can do is to put people into clusters so those who like music can sometimes be approached by a music metaphor direction or those who like sports can be approached from that direction and those who like to environment can be approached that way so it is really something in the back of your head that if you know that this boy or this girl, this young man or young woman is very interested in this then you can help them and inspire them to go further by showing them how it relates to what their passion is and you can also allow them to say I am just going to follow my passion. There ought to be times in a day, maybe the days that a substitute teacher comes in when what you say to kids is 'your job today, is to just learn more about what you are passionate in' and it may have nothing to do with our curriculum but it is still important because you are going to find it valuable.