

SCHOOLS 10-15 YEARS FROM NOW?!

At Vidya Sanskar, I read various books, scholars and my own experience with kids, new teaching methodologies, use of internet and hours of talking with them to know how they see schools could/should or would be 10-15 years from now. Their answers were fascinating; some answers were expected, some surprise but overall an interesting impression of how influential kids are becoming – not just on family purchases from break fast cereals to buying TV or Cars.

Children nowadays are tyrants. They contradict their parents, gobble their food and tyrannize their teachers. Dream as if you'll live forever. Live as if you'll die today. James dean

Almost every aspect of today's tween-ager is different from what we have seen among past generations. They've grown up faster, are more connected, more direct and more informed. They have more personal power, more money, influence and attention than any other generation before them.

There can be no doubt that the steady diet of information, available 24 X 7 X 365 via a wide variety of channels, be it through cell phone, laptops etc is playing a major role in shaping this new generation. Penetration through technology is a key factor in an unprecedented level of global integration.

This is the first generation born with a mouse in their hands and a computer screen as their window on the world. These kids understood windows icons before they could read. They now surf the Net with an ease and speed that belongs only to those who are at home in cyberspace. They think in megabytes, pipeline sizes and screen resolutions, in the same way that previous

generations thought about swapping stickers, memorizing foot-ball scores and perfecting wheelies on their bicycles.

In other words, for this generation being online is as comfortable as being offline. The way they live online has changed their view of seeing the world. This dramatic change can be compared to the advent of colour television. Once colour came to the small screen, there was no going back.

School needs to work on interactive dimension, on innovative dimension. The only mail these kids know is e-mail and they expect replies within hours.

Kids prefer to communicate through cell phones, They have long lists of contacts on their instant messenger service, which beeps them when a connected computer comes online. They write and expect replies within minutes. If they have to wait any longer, they give up and move onto something newer and more engaging.

With such hunger for information and spontaneity, is your education mechanism ready up for the challenge? Can your school handle these kinds of kids? Are your teacher trained enough to lead such young minds or are they just house-wives who have taken teaching as profession because it's a good time pass?

More later,
Nitin Mendiratta