

The Games Generation  
How learners have changed

Marc Prensky, 2001  
From Chapter 2 of *Digital game-based learning*  
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This is a rich chapter with much material to consider. It seems obvious, from an evolutionary standpoint, that the brain can adapt to external conditions. Since variation is useful but genetically constrained, seems like plasticity should evolve. This is the case Prensky makes.

Picky critiques: some sloppiness – where were the 300 million walkmen sold (37). This section reads like the Beloit list.

Prensky fails to address some important points:

- ◆ What about the digital divide? These ‘trends’ address only the haves, not the 25% or so of people who are not online or who might not be able to afford the latest gameboy version or play cube.
- ◆ Prensky argues for a hyperlinked brain emerging (44): but a hyper linked brain should easily be able to handle linear, so this should not limit the hyper linked brain, although it might limit the linear brain.
- ◆ Just because our kids can operate at twitch speed and are engaged by flash, does not mean that should be their sole source of educational material. (Would you feed the starving child only cake because they like it so much?)
- ◆ And back to twitch speed: not all the world operates at this speed, and this is not limited to places on the wrong side of the digital divide. Consider cultures that plan for long term, like many Asian cultures, or Islamic fundamentalists, who believe their death is irrelevant because the cause is eternal.
- ◆ What is the role of hard work in Prensky’s world? Consider the grunt work of memorizing stuff needed for certain professions (medicine, biology, geology)
- ◆ If multitasking is in, how do we teach students to do the difficult synthesis, requiring skull time?