

MILLENNIAL LEARNING STYLES

AACP TEACHERS SEMINAR
P. T. JACKSON • 18 JULY 2009
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<http://mediatedcultures.net/mediatedculture.htm>

**A VISION OF STUDENTS TODAY
BY MICHAEL WESCH**

SNAPSHOT

- digital natives
- unimpressed by lectures
- aware that they're both privileged...
- ...and that they aren't getting their money's worth

WHAT'S A GENERATION?

- persons born during a roughly two-decade period
- shaped by three things:
 - parenting styles
 - reactions to earlier generations still present
 - major social events
- (Neil Strauss and William Howe are the experts here)

WHAT'S A GENERATION?

- share a common *habitus* or cluster of attitudes and practices
 - baby boomers: social revolution, values
 - Gen-X: cynical pragmatism, individuality
 - millennials: optimism, conformity
- caveat: *only in the aggregate*

WHAT'S A MILLENNIAL?

- current youth generation
 - born 1982-2002ish
 - first entered college in 2000
 - will dominate college campuses until about 2025 and graduate programs until about 2030
- students who don't remember the *Challenger* explosion in 1986

THE MILLENNIAL EXPERIENCE, I

- “baby on board”
- parents heavily involved in their lives
- sheltered and overprogrammed
- not working, but engaged in developmental activities

THE MILLENNIAL EXPERIENCE, II

- rejection of Gen-X cynicism and individualism
- follow the rules; “organization kids”
- more important to get along than to be right
- socially conscious and civic-minded, like their grandparents

THE MILLENNIAL EXPERIENCE, III

- Columbine: security-based limits in school
- 9/11: security-based limits everywhere
- computers and cellular phones are ubiquitous and familiar—just another appliance
- digital natives: real-time connectivity 24/7

NETWORKED CULTURE

- “connection without constraint”
- living in public
- viral media: YouTube, Facebook, social bookmarking
- “remix culture”: sampling, transforming, *interacting*

CONSTITUTIVE MYTHS

- drawn from a generation's unavoidable iconic vocabulary
 - events, experiences...
 - ...and the media-influenced *re-remembering* of them
- pop culture plays a huge role

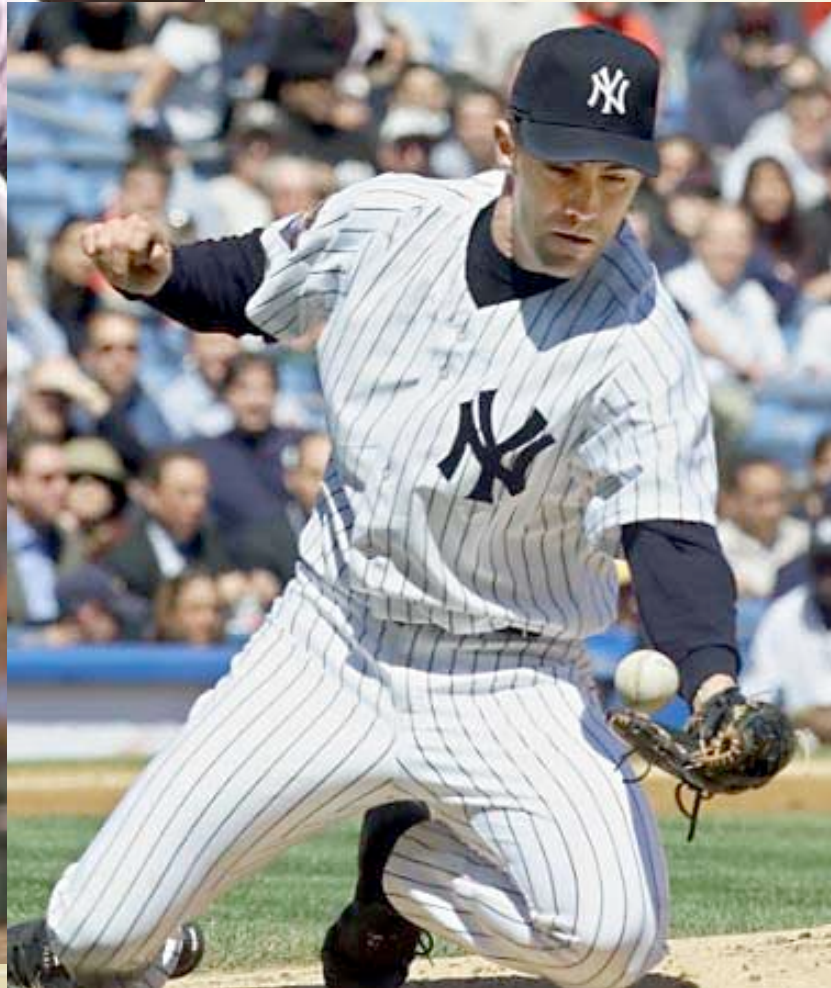
STAR WARS AND HARRY POTTER

- Star Wars and Gen-X students
 - distrust of rules and formal institutions
 - “just do it”—individual experience
- Harry Potter and millennial students
 - craving structure and guidance
 - “we can do it—together”

STAR WARS AND HARRY POTTER

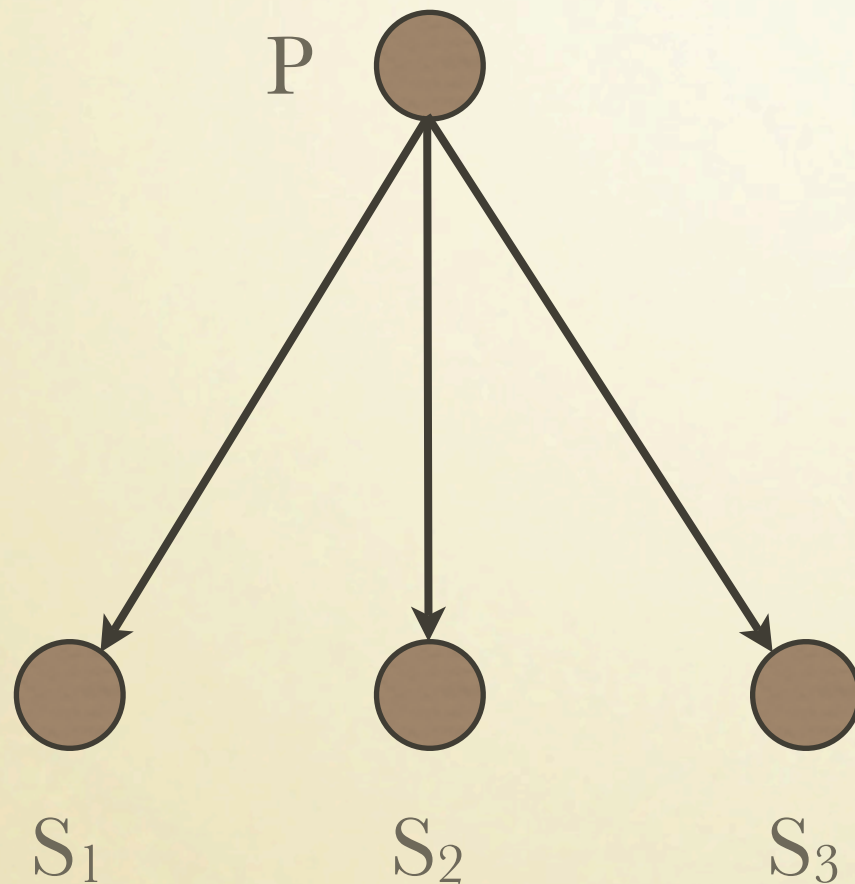
- **one-on-one**
- **teacher gives to student**
- **mystical knowledge**
- **no institutional structure**
- **group processes**
- **teacher facilitates**
- **practical knowledge**
- **clear institutional structure**

PEDAGOGICAL MODES



- teaching as *pitching*:
- toss information at students
- defend against objections
- same skills as article-writing

PEDAGOGICAL MODES



- “sage on the stage” is dying
- availability of information
- millennials are bored
- flawed pedagogy in the first place

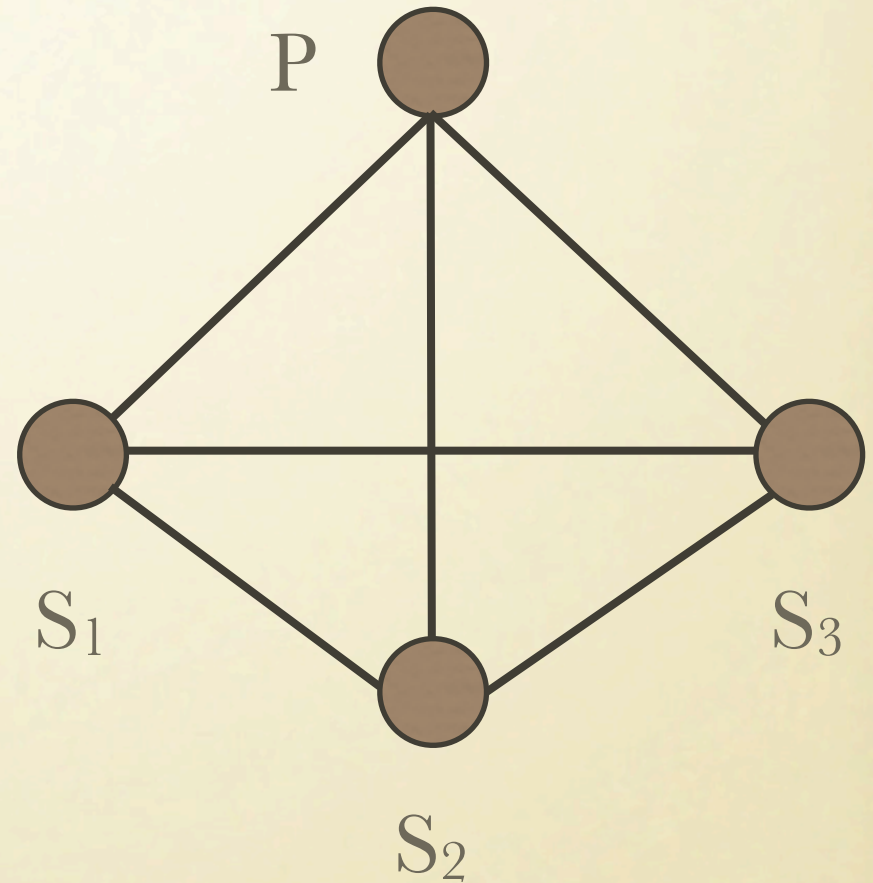
PEDAGOGICAL MODES

- teaching as *hitting*:
 - hand students the ball
 - raise challenges for their arguments
 - make *them* the pitchers



PEDAGOGICAL MODES

- better uses for “face time”:
 - discussion and debate
 - craft workshops / case conferences
 - simulations
 - learning communities



FOUR RULES FOR TEACHING MILLENNIALS

1. the Google Rule: don't lecture!
2. the Firm Embrace Rule: rubrics, rubrics, rubrics—
and feedback
3. the Division Rule: let them work together in small
groups as much as practically possible
4. the Computer Rule: *use whenever it makes sense*

COMPUTERS

- two functions:
 - specific projects
 - general atmosphere
- do not underestimate the importance of participating in networked culture
- let the students teach you



TEAMS

- millennials love collaboration
 - p2p filesharing
 - continuous interpersonal networking
 - sense of fair play
- defending the group justifies speaking up



Responsibility for selecting objective conditions carries with it, then, the responsibility for understanding the needs and capacities of the individuals who are learning at a given time. It is not enough that certain materials and methods have proved effective with other individuals at other times. There must be a reason for thinking that they will function in generating an experience that has educative quality with particular individuals at a particular time.

—John Dewey, *Experience and Education*