

Communications and Technology: Are Old Rules Overrated?

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Today's students use a variety of ways to communicate and to deliver the communication. A 2001 report by the Pew Internet and American Life Project found that 13 million teenagers use instant messaging. One-fifth of teenagers with Internet connection stated that instant messaging was their primary means of communication. (Morrison, 2003) A recent AOL study found that 81% of 12-17 year-olds use the Internet to email friends and family while 70% use instant messaging. For 18 and 19 year olds the figures climb to 91% and 83% respectively. (Van Wyk, 2003). With the new technologies has come new language and adjustments to old rules.

Educators' views are mixed about the effect emailing and instant messaging as well as other technologies have on students communication skills. Don Blake, a senior technologist at the National Education Association stresses that IMing (Instant Messaging) and email can be beneficial to teens in terms of learning how to communicate in a more concise way (Kridler, 2003). April Bernard, an educator from Bennington College states "Computers make everyone write a lot more, and a lot longer, but they're absolutely not making them write better." (Leibowitz, 1999). These conflicting views sum up the diverse views of educators'.

This discussion examines the new technologies and their effects on written and oral communications. The researchers will look at both the negative and positive aspects of the influences of the technology and the "Y" generation culture on students' oral and written communication skills. The discussion will include positive uses of technology to enhance and remediate students in protocols of communication.