Talkin' bout My Generation

Traditionalists to Generation Z:
Today's Adult Education Classroom

Webinar Handbook, October 10, 2018
Institute for the Professional Development of Adult Educators

Talkin' bout My Generation

Rod Duckworth, Chancellor
Career and Adult Education, Department of Education

Carol Bailey, Director
Adult Education

June Rall, Director of IPDAE

Tamara Serrano, Project Support Specialist for IPDAE

Resources Developed and Designed By
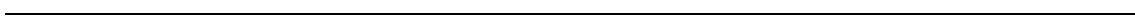Bonnie Goonen, National Consultant for Florida IPDAE

Table of Contents

An Overview of the Generations

	Traditionalists 1928-45	Baby Boomers 1946-64	Generation X 1965-80	Millennials 1981-97?	Generation Z 1996/97 - ?
Profile	• Hard working • Loyal employee • Sacrifices for the company • Thrifty • Conforms • Cautious	• Workaholic • Optimistic • Crusades causes • Success = materialism • Works efficiently	• Work-life balance • Independent • Lives for today • Distrusts companies • Bends rules if needed	• What's next? • On my terms • Civic minded • Earns to spend • Questions the status quo • Master negotiators	• Technology-reliant • Look to serve, share, and impact • Private • Inclusive • Frugal • Individualistic
Defining Events	• 1937 Disney's first animated feature (Snow White) • 1941 Hitler invades Russia • 1941 Pearl Harbor; U.S. enters World War II • 1945 World War II ends in Europe and Japan • 1947 Jackie Robinson joins major league baseball • 1950 Korean War begins	• 1954 First transistor radio • 1962 John Glenn circles the earth • 1963 Martin Luther King, Jr. leads march on Washington • 1963 President Kennedy assassinated • 1965 U.S. sends troops to Vietnam • 1967 World's first heart transplant • 1969 U.S. moon landing • 1969 Woodstock • 1970 Women's Lib	• 1973 Global energy crisis • 1976 Tandy and Apple market PCs • 1980 John Lennon killed • 1981 AIDS identified • 1986 Chernobyl disaster • 1986 Challenger disaster • 1987 Stock market plummets • 1989 Exxon Valdez oil spill • 1989 Berlin Wall falls • 1989 Tiananmen Square uprisings	• 1993 Apartheid ends • 1995 Bombing in Oklahoma City • 1997 Princess Diana dies • 1998 Clinton impeachment • 1999 Columbine High School shootings • 2001 World Trade Center attacks • 2002 Enron, WorldCom and corporate scandal • 2003 War begins in Iraq • 2005 Hurricane Katrina	• 2007 Great Recession • 2007 first generation iPhone • 2008 Obama elected president • 2015 Same sex marriages legalized • 2013 Sandy Hook • ISIS and global terrorism • Climate change • Ongoing development of technology
Communication Media	Formal Letter	Telephone	Email and SMS	SMS or Social Media	Hand-held communication devices
Approach to Learning	Tell Me What to Do	Show Me What to Do	Why Do I Need to Learn This?	Connect Me to What I Need	Engage Me and Let Me a Part of the Process

The Millennial Generation: Implications for the Classroom

The millennial generation is the generation of children born between 1981 and 1997. Dependent on the study, these years can span 1981 to 2002. This generation includes over 81 million individuals most who have already entered postsecondary education and the workplace. The Millennials have different characteristics than any generation before them and in order to serve them better, educational entities must change the way they do business. Millennials are the most scheduled generation ever, are true multi-taskers, expect to have 6-8 careers in their lifetime and are attracted to diverse environments.

The era in which you grew up has helped to shape your expectations for the classroom. Generation X children, who grew up in the era of Sesame Street and Millennials, raised with even more interactive educational television, have the expectation that education will also be entertaining. It is what they have come to expect and what the world has always given them. To refuse to participate in this "edutainment" is certainly an option for any instructor; however it will almost certainly make reaching these generations of learners more difficult than it needs to be.

The key element to remember is that learning preferences don't necessarily change with age. That means that a Millennial student, who is comfortable with multi-tasking and multi-media will always be comfortable with these things and is not likely to change.

Silent learners will always be more comfortable with lectures and with the instructor in a traditional teaching style, rather than a more participatory style that appeals to Millennials and Boomers. Generation X learners will always prefer individual work to group work and will generally complain the loudest when given a 20 chapter book to read. Conversely, members of the Millennial generation are readers, as evidenced by the increase in the publication of children's books (i.e., Harry Potter).

What Will Work For You
- Ask for professional experiences from both Boomers and Xers
  - Boomers will often want to talk about their professional experience
  - You may need to encourage Xers to share, but the tendency of Xers to change jobs more frequently than past generations should give the older Xers a solid base from which to explain their experiences
- Change activities often
  - Research currently shows the attention span of a typical adult to be 15 minutes at best
  - Rotating group and individual activities works well
  - You can often take an individual activity (a question and answer sheet or reflection activity) into a small group or paired activity for more interaction among class members
- Tap into the technological strengths and interests of Xers and Millennials
  - Will often drag Boomers into the technology realm with them
  - Don't assume all Boomers or Silents are techno phobic
  - Don't assume all Xers and Millennials are technologically savvy

- Assign group roles for the first few team projects
  - Be sure to assign the Millennial student(s) a leadership role periodically to help develop their ability to make decisions for themselves
  - Be careful not to let the Gen X student check out of the group project by assigning that student an active role in the project
- Work to foster a team environment
  - Consider the use of formal groups with clearly defined roles that are rotated throughout the group
- Enforce individual accountability for group projects
  - Collaborative learning only works well when students feel both personally accountable as well as accountable within their group
- Require participation in some form each class period
  - This helps the less vocal generations (Silent, X at times) understand that what they have to say is valued and important for others to hear
- Find the right mix of guidance, structure, and visibility for all groups
  - Some groups or individual students will find you hovering while others will appreciate the assistance
  - Try not to offer opinions unless asked by the group and ask the group to agree on when to bring in outside help
- Encourage discussion between the groups
  - Consider an activity like you performed today to open the discussion about differences between generations and in the classroom in general
- Recognize excellent performers individually
  - This is particularly important for each generation in their own way
  - Comments on papers and/or a note in front of the class can be very effective for boosting the self-esteem of all learners
- Give individual work in addition to group work
  - Appeals to the individual nature of Xers and the Silent
  - Allows Boomers to be in charge of their own show

What Will Work Against You
- Trying to appeal to all generations in the same assignment
- As with every activity in a classroom, this just isn't possible. Things you do will appeal to learners of different ages, with different learning styles, etc. at different times. As long as you make it clear that there will be a variety of activities during the course session, all learners should be willing to "suffer" through an activity that doesn't particularly appeal to them.
- Clashes will often come between Boomers & Xers and again between Xers & Millennials
  - Boomers tend to regard Millennials as children and will often give them more latitude
  - Don't let the potential for clashes prevent you from assigning students of different generations to work together in teams. Teamwork is a skill our students need to focus on continually
- Not allowing enough time for groups to become comfortable with one another before beginning a project

- o All groups require some kind of "norming" process before they can really be effective as a group, so allow the groups some time for introductions and small talk before beginning the activity
  - o If you use longer-term groups, you will want to extend activities to include a formal icebreaker and/or biography exercise to ensure that students have enough time to develop relationships
- Not allowing students with experience to bring that into the classroom
  - o Build enough discussion time into your classroom to allow for students to speak as this not only validates their generational need but also helps you set the andragogy context that tends to be effective in adult learning environments
- Ignoring generational differences completely
  - o Pretending that there are no differences in students because of their age is like pretending that all students learn the same when we know that some learners prefer a more auditory style, others visual, and others require more hands-on interaction
  - o Don't go overboard in trying to design your class to appeal to every generation. Good teaching is good teaching no matter what, but keeping these generalizations in mind while designing your course and its activities will be beneficial
- Not asking students to stretch beyond their comfort zones
  - o Learning is an uncomfortable process and when you ask students to do something they aren't familiar with, you are helping to facilitate that process of growth
  - o Growth requires assistance, so be careful about throwing students into situations for which they are completely unprepared
  - o Begin with a lot of scaffolding and then gradually decrease the amount of help you give them over time to allow the students to build these skills for themselves

Beattie, Sheri. Teaching Across Generations. Baker College. Retrieved from the World Wide Web at: https://www.baker.edu/departments/etl/trainingresources.cfm

Six Simple Ways to Better Engage Generation Z

Tim Elmore on Leading the Next Generation. https://growingleaders.com/blog/six-simple-ways-engage-generation-z/

We are leading, coaching, parenting, and teaching students who've never lived a day in the 20th century. They've only known a world of terrorism, recession, racial unrest, corporate scandals, under-employment and uncertainty. They've also only known a world of portable devices, multi-tasking, social media, multiple personas and a complex world where they are more about coping and hoping.

Barkley Incorporated and Futurecast LLC collaborated on a study to inform companies and brands to better engage this younger generation as consumers. While I believe part of our job is to prepare students to enter the adult world, which includes routines and hard work, there are a number of take-aways for us in this report, as we make adjustments to better lead Generation Z. After reviewing the report, here are some of my conclusions on how to engage them:

I Will Engage Them Better If I Will:

1. Be faster at feedback.
This new generation values a faster pace of classroom, practice, rehearsal and career advancement that provides frequent feedback for meeting certain benchmarks. According to Dave Weisbeck, from data firm Visier, "They want to "gamify" their careers — a reference to online games and applications that reward players for completing specific tasks." How can you offer more frequent benchmarks to help them see and measure personal improvement? Even though our class or our season continues to be the same length of time, how can we offer quicker feedback?

2. Do it more fluid and flexible.
Young people are more likely to view themselves as being at the center of their academic paths or careers, rather than revolving their careers around one college or company. "They are building a personal brand." Therefore, the most flexible you can come across to them—communicating that you're adjusting to their new realities—the faster you'll engage them. You will give the impression of being real and "organic." The longer I "stay the same" the more I appear "plastic" or even "fake" to a student. How can you flex in your methods of delivery or communication to current news or needs that pop up?

3. Offer more frequent rewards.
While I believe we must equip our students to sustain their interest—even when the rewards are not visible at first—we can prepare them for this lifestyle by offering frequent rewards or benefits to incentivize them to stay and keep working. Sometimes the rewards can be easy for you, yet very meaningful to them—like points for finishing a project on time; affirmation for reaching a goal; or small gifts for hitting a deadline. Once they build a habit (within 21 days), it's fine to reduce the volume and watch the internal motivation kick in. How could you provide rapid rewards for great performance? Remember: what gets rewarded gets repeated.

4. Break up the meetings into smaller segments.
Former Rams coach Jeff Fisher learned rapidly that splitting up his two-hour meetings into four 30-minute meetings resulted in more engaged players. While some felt he was placating the short attention spans of Millennials, the average age of his LA Rams football team was 24 years old. He got more engaged attendees when he allowed them to get their "social media fix" every half hour. How can you divide your time with students into smaller bites and segments of content to enable them to stay engaged more hours in the long run?

5. Find a way to do it digitally.
According to Barkley, Inc. and Futurecast, "Teens today are the first generation of consumers to have truly grown up in an entirely post-digital era. Beginning in early childhood, if they did not know an answer to a question, they were taught to "Google it" or, even better, "ask Siri." As our technology rapidly evolves, the things that were once considered groundbreaking advances to other generations are taken for granted by them. For example, a smart phone is not a piece of "technology." Instead, it is simply part of life. Teens today are not amazed by the latest iPhone because they expect the functionality and ease of use it delivers. How well do you capitalize on our digital world to teach and coach students?

6. Empower them to create and curate.
In one survey from Barkley, Inc. and Futurecast, Generation Z said, "We want to work for our success, not to be discovered." Unlike former generations, they are not simply posting a YouTube video and hoping to be found by Usher or some music label. They are curating videos or creating videos as artists who want to express themselves. The more we can empower them to mix and match ideas and then create an idea that represents "them," the sooner they'll engage in the project. How can you transform your classroom or practice and let them own it?

Preferences/Learning Styles Across the Generations

Traditionalists	Baby Boomers	Gen Xers	Millennials	Generation Z
• Like the "traditional" classroom structure • Will not generally contradict or disagree with instructor in front of others • Does not enjoy being singled out in group discussions or for questions • Likes to practice alone, not in groups • Not likely to ask questions during discussions	• Enjoy working in creative manner • Sensitive to criticism • Often possess significant professional experiences • Require significant interaction and "talk" time • Enjoy icebreaker and introduction activities • Prefer a spirit of collegiality in classroom • May have problems with authoritarian instructors	• Self-reliant • Require regular, if not constant, feedback • May lack interpersonal skills • Can be cynical • Require relevance in assignments and courses • Often impatient • Consider themselves technologically capable • Are adaptable and informal	• Accustomed to group work • Comfortable with active learning • Short attention span • Sheltered (by their helicopter parents and politically correct world) • Highly visual learners • Opinionated • Multi-task with ease • Technological experts • Goal and achievement oriented • Require more structure and mentoring • Learn from failure • Motivated by money and earning potential	• Enjoy working collaboratively or solo – self-learners • Like hands-on learning; create products • Digital curriculum experts – learn from the internet • Prefer flexibility and working at their own pace • Independent, flexible working style • Driven by graphics and visuals • Tendency to think in non-linear fashion, and prefer to construct rather than be instructed • Propensity to be generalists vs. specialists

Instructional Ideas/Strategies

Traditionalists	Boomers	Gen Xers	Millennials	Generation Z
- Organize materials in bullet/outline form - Don't provide too much information - Use at least 12 point type - Take your time through the important points - Don't assume that all are technophobic ,give computer/research assignments - Fastest growing segment of population learning to use the Internet - Encourage periodic movement during class time	- Give plenty of time for Boomers to practice new skills alone - Use at least 12 point type for aging Boomers - Have a tendency to "know" things but not be able to do them - Do not generally like role-play exercises - Enjoy most team projects - Can serve as group leaders, appealing to their "me" focus - Organize materials with headings/put details on a separate sheet	- School/life balance is important - Will resist group work outside of class - Use pop-culture examples if possible - Give lots of individual attention - Use most exciting material in short lecture (15-20 min) - Use bullet points when giving information - Use plenty of graphics and white space/visual appeal is key - Explain why assignments, courses, skills are important on a regular basis	- Provide relevance in what is being taught - Prefer less formal learning environment - Require rationale for policies and assignments - Create multimedia environment - Include ways learners can customize - Provide clear objectives and standards - Give lots of activities with several steps - Use the most up-to-date technology and references available - Get creative or allow them to be creative with presentations, etc. - Allow 2-way learning experiences - Give reading materials for lectures or	- Integrate more technology-enhanced learning opportunities into the classroom - Use visually enhanced methods of teaching - Need for immediate response - Fast access and delivery of content with complex graphics - Multitasking has given them a shorter attention span – learning needs to be delivered in smaller bites - Provide problem solving trial and error activities - Minimize amount of data provided at a time – break it up - Trouble distinguishing

			supplemental information	fact from opinion and a sense of entitlement that anything on the Internet is up for grabs