THE CYCLE OF GENERATIONS

According to Deborah Gilburg, “There are a number of research studies, articles, and books that describe the historical and socioeconomic trends that influence the traits of different generations. Foremost, however, is the research conducted by historians William Strauss and Neil Howe. Strauss and Howe’s seminal book, Generations: A History of America’s Future 1584 to 2069 (William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1991), examines the socioeconomic, cultural, and political conditions throughout American history and their impact on the formation of distinct generational characterizations, or “peer personalities.” A number of factors influence peer personalities, including the cultural norms for childrearing at the time, the perception of the world as members of the generation start to come of age, and the common experiences the generation encounters as it enters the adult world. In this way, a generational identity is formed that has distinct effects on the environment and, in turn, younger generations.”

Source: https://thesystemsthinker.com/empowering-multigenerational-collaboration-in-the-workplace/

Each generation tends to “correct” for the perceived mistakes of the previous generation, thus making a quarter of a turn around the cycle. In general, Nomads are parents of Artists. Heroes are parents of Prophets. Artists are parents of Nomads. And Prophets are parents of Heroes. Gen Z were parented, for the most part, by Gen Xers.

CURRENT AGES (as of 2017)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Generation</th>
<th>Ages</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alpha</td>
<td>0 to 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen Z</td>
<td>7 to 21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Millennial</td>
<td>22 to 35</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gen X</td>
<td>36 to 52</td>
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<tr>
<td>Baby Boomers</td>
<td>53 to 74</td>
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<tr>
<td>Silent</td>
<td>75 to 92</td>
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</tbody>
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CAUTIONS:

- We are talking about generational cohorts as a whole. Individuals within a generation may not share all of the same characteristics with their peers.
- Generations may share characteristics with each other. For example, Gen Z and Millennials are not necessarily “opposites”.
- Stated year ranges of generations vary by researcher.
- Some characteristics may seem contradictory and we need to look more deeply at what may be going on contextually.
**GENERATION Z in COLLEGE**

AKA: Homeland, Plurals, Centennials, iGen, Post-Millennials, Posts, Founders, Regenerators, ReGen, Pivotal

Born 1995 to 2010

They may begin adulthood by going along to get along, but as they mature they will find their voice and revolt against too much conformity. They will mirror the Silent generation that actually wasn’t so silent after all – they lead the civil rights movement. Gen Z will value and promote pluralism as one of their hallmark characteristics.

**PLURALISTIC AND COMPASSIONATE**

More global. Less cliquish. Inclusive. We are all part of one big group – a big group of unique individuals. Everyone has equal value. Will more readily interact across generations. Not as likely to identify themselves as being a member of a group. Millennials differentiate: I’m okay, you’re okay. Gen Z doesn’t differentiate: We’re all okay. A mosaic of co-existence. They expect and welcome diversity. They want their social circles to be even more diverse than they already are. They seek it. They may begin adulthood by going along to get along, but as they mature they will find their voice and revolt against too much conformity. They will mirror the Silent generation that actually wasn’t so silent after all – they lead the civil rights movement. Gen Z will value and promote pluralism as one of their hallmark characteristics.

**PRAGMATIC**

Realistic, practical, matter-of-fact. Not idealistic. Neither pessimistic nor optimistic. Logical. Common-sense. Willing to see things as they really are and deal with them sensibly. Not inclined toward grand visionary plans (unlike Baby Boomers). They want to pursue what they are good at, as this is practical (rather than pursuing unrealistic dreams). They respond to messaging that reflects reality rather than the perfect life.

**DIFFERENCE MAKERS**

Gen Z wants to make an impact on the world more than they want professional recognition and a high salary. They want to serve the greater good, and not themselves as individuals. Will help create a post-oppressive society and advocate for social justice. They want to advocate for something they believe in. Make a difference for someone else. Attracted to majors and careers where this will be their focus.

**INDIVIDUALITY, CUSTOMIZERS, NOT BRAND LOYAL**

Not afraid to be unique. Less concerned what their peers think than Millennials are. They seek uniqueness in brands, experiences, leaders, etc. They will chart their own path whenever possible. Not as concerned about “fitting in” with their peers as were Millennials. Less group-work oriented. Will want their own private work-space. They don’t want the open shared work-space the Millennials prefer. They are okay with sharing space as long as they can work “parallel” but independently. They say “you do you”. While some researchers predicted this generation would be conformists, that is not what their actual behavior shows.

72% want the right to design their own majors. They want a smorgasbord to choose from, not a prix-fixe menu. The same goes for products they purchase. Design their own smart phone cases, for example. They will pick and choose and change their minds. They expect companies to be loyal to them rather than to be loyal to the company. They will go with whoever shows them true loyalty. They are inclined to initially mistrust a company/organization until proven otherwise.

**FACE-TO-FACE COMMUNICATION**

Their style of communicating online is Skype, Face-Time, Snap Chat, videos, photos, emojis.. Surveys are showing the prefer face-to-face communication over email and instant chat. They prefer coming in for advising meetings rather than exchanging a series of emails, for example. See email as only used in more formal and professional communications. If you want them to pay more attention to your emails, include a video or images, and keep the amount of text to a minimum.
LESS HELICOPTER and SNOWPLOW PARENTING
Most of Generation Z’s parents are Generation Xers. They are not helicopter or snow-plow parents, and don’t believe everyone should get a trophy just for participating. Gen Xers are also likely to overcompensate for their latchkey upbringings by being attentive and preparing Generation Z to make their own way.

MENTOR SEEKING AND NEED REASSURANCE
Gen Z wants mentors who will help them build strong skills. They want to be shown how to do things for themselves, so they can build their own personal brand and set of transferable skills. They want to develop the skills they need to do well – to therefore be safe and secure. While they expect to take responsibility for themselves, they also want to be sure they are not making reckless mistakes. This goes along with their pragmatism. They will check, double-check, and re-check their decisions.

RESPONSIBLE, RULE-FOLLOWERS, DUE PROCESS
Gen Z expects to take responsibility for themselves and their own lives. They are instilled with a sense of personal responsibility so they could take care of themselves and not be caught off-guard by the world. They may change their minds, and will responsibly let you know when that happens. This may look like irresponsibility to some (backing out of a commitment). They are conflicted as they don’t want to let others down. They may just overcommit (see below: Experience Accumulators) and then have to drop something at the last minute.

They accept the rules as is and just expect to follow them and expect everyone else does, too. Millennials are more apt to argue against rules they don’t agree with or think are pointless. Plurals, especially in early adulthood, are more likely to go along to get along. They believe in due process. They want honesty and transparency from leaders.

CAUTIOUS, MONEY CONSCIOUS, BUT NOT MONEY MOTIVATED
Grew up amid a global recession (2008), war, and terrorism. Somewhat risk-averse. They seek stability and security more than freedom and flexibility. This may also make them more indecisive as they deliberate a multitude of choices, trying to find the best, most practical decision. Less confident in themselves than Millennials. Want to keep student debt to a minimum and be financially responsible. Frugal. Will start saving for retirement early. Will save for a rainy day. They experienced the recession of 2008 and witnessed parents losing jobs, having to downsize and pinch pennies. However, they are more motivated by being in a career they are interested in, good at, and where they can make a positive impact on the world. They are far less motivated by having a high salary.

GRATEFUL
They show genuine appreciation, give positive feedback, give compliments, and express thanks frequently. They are more outward focused, rather than expecting the focus to be on them. Thank you notes are back! They are grateful for help and respectful of other’s time. Very thoughtful and considerate.

LESS NOTICED
GenX was in the shadow of the Baby Boomers, and Gen Z are in the shadow of the Millennials. They don’t want to be the center of attention. They just quietly go about the business of living their lives. Rather than Facebook they like anonymous incognito social media like Whisper, Secret, YikYak, Snapchat, Sarahah. They are more private and much more cautious online than Millennials. They still spend as much or more time online, but will have location services turned off, for example.

SELF-EDUCATING
Find it easiest to learn from the Internet and on their own. Are adept researchers using a digital approach. They have a DIY approach to education. Gen Z college students prefer intrapersonal and independent learning, not group work. They want learning to be practical and hands-on. They want educators to help them engage with & apply the content, rather than simply share information that they themselves could find on their own online. This way of learning fits with the flipped classroom approach. Use class time to process information, not disseminate information.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RESOURCEFUL</th>
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<tr>
<td>Innovative, resourceful, determined, persistent in figuring out a way to make things work. Not afraid to ask for help. Generation Z will be interested in creating non-traditional and alternative paths to leadership. Although being DIYers, they will seek out all available help and resources in doing so. The “sharing” economy will take hold. For example, sharing a lawnmower with neighbors.</td>
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<tr>
<td>EXPERIENCE ACCUMULATORS</td>
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<td>They want to accumulate rewarding experiences. They will want to do internships and partake of other opportunities to be hands-on. They want to get experiences that will develop their skills so they can be as self-sufficient as possible. So they can market themselves to potential employers or be able to create their own business. Gen Zers want to maximize their time. They have a “fear of missing out” = FOMO and so are always checking devices to see what others are doing. They fear spending their time wrong.</td>
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<tr>
<td>ENTREPRENEURIAL and FREELANCERS and EARLY STARTERS</td>
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<td>Generation Z desires more independent work environments. In fact, 72% of high school students say they want to start a business someday. Perhaps their mistrust of companies (who fired or laid off their parents) makes them more inclined to work for themselves to gain the stability and security they seek. Where some may see being an entrepreneur as risky, they see it as more secure. 63% of Generation Z say college should teach students how to start and run their own business. The Gig economy will be popular, as will freelancing. Many employers are predicting that more high school students will go straight into apprenticeships or internships, and forego the traditional higher education route. Freshmen and sophomores will be interested in doing internships right away.</td>
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<td>LESS FOCUSED</td>
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<td>Generation Z lives in a world of continuous updates. They consume information fast which may be due to social media like Snapchat and 6 second Vine videos or newer apps. YouTube is their number one most visited website. Their attention spans are significantly lower than Millennials. One marketer says that Gen Z’s is 8 seconds long. Hook them fast or you lose them. Sell the lawn, not the grass seed. They prefer pictures to words. Use emojis. They prefer brief texts and hate using email, but will do so when they see it as needed in a professional setting. When learning to cook a new dish they prefer watching a video on how to make it rather than reading a recipe.</td>
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<td>MULTI-TASKING and SPLIT-TASKING</td>
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<td>Generation Z creates a document at school/work on their laptop, reopens it later on their smartphone while commuting by bus, and revisits again at home while watching TV. They shift from work to play, real to virtual in seamless short intense spurts (split-tasking). They may fall for the myth of multi-tasking and this is related to their shorter attention span (see below). For them, time and space are very fluid. They have a need to be in constant connection, and a fear of being without their smartphone. Have a hard time with the idea of turning it off or leaving it behind to go for a walk, for example. Distracted by wanting to check texts, etc. frequently. This is part of their FOMO. They want to stay in loop at all times and make sure they aren’t missing out.</td>
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<tr>
<td>COMPETITIVE</td>
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<td>They are less collaborative and more competitive than Millennials. They want to be judged on their own merits and showcase their individual talents. They do not want group work where their grade depends on others. They want to contribute to a team by first working independently and freely on their own stuff, and then bring it to the table. While they are good at consensus building, that is something different than doing work tasks as a group. Let’s come to an agreement on what the goal is, and then go off and work on our own part independently.</td>
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<tr>
<td>DETERMINED and PERSISTENT</td>
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<td>They tend to have more of a Growth Mind Set than Millennials. They will persevere toward a goal they believe in. They do not give up easily. They seek out resources and aren’t afraid to ask for help. They may seek out multiple people for advice on the same issue. They are just triangulating their data. It doesn’t mean they didn’t trust your information when they go to another person to get information/advice on the same question. This connects back to the need for reassurance that they are doing things right – they just want to be sure, and if they hear the same thing from more than one source, they feel more certain.</td>
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Values: Wellness, entrepreneurship, innovation, financial responsibility, diversity, customization, self-education, honesty, technology, novelty, experiences, and authenticity.

FOUR THINGS CAMPUSES CAN DO TO EFFECTIVELY ENGAGE WITH GENERATION Z (Seemiller and Grace)


2. Incorporate intrapersonal learning into class and group work. Provide opportunities for individual learning and reflection before having students complete group work later in the process.

3. Offer community engagement opportunities for students to address underlying societal needs.

4. Connect Generation Z students to internship opportunities. Consider doing this from the beginning, and not just in the Junior and Senior years.

RESOURCES:


Other resources of information for this report include:
- The CEHSP Online Advising Module survey results. This survey was conducted Fall semester 2017. All incoming students were surveyed as part of this advising module by the Advising & Academic Services office.
- Observations and conversations with colleagues across campus on what behaviors and characteristics we are witnessing with this new generation.

CEHSP ADVISING MODULE SURVEY RESULTS: 584 responses from our 1st year students
Which of the following did you/will you base your choice of major upon? Check all that apply:
95% My Interests
83% Potential for a career I would enjoy
72% Potential for a career where I could make a difference
55% My values
54% My talents
27% Potential for a career with a high salary
6% The opinion/wishes of a family member(s)
< 1% What my friends are majoring in