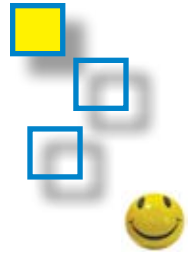


White Board



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Understanding Millennials

The Millennial Generation has introduced some interesting, and surprising, dynamics, and the educators who are willing to adapt might have a head start in ensuring their students are successful.

NO MATTER WHAT YOU CALL THEM – Generation Y, Generation Next, The Millennial Generation – the current generation of high school and college students is different from previous generations in many ways, which can make teaching and guiding them a challenge. But if you understand more about this generation and how they tick, you'll be better equipped to create a plan that will help you guide your students to success.

So who are the "Millennials?" Generally speaking, Millennials are people who were born between 1981-2002 (though some researchers believe that Millennials are still being born) and are the children of Baby Boomers and Generation X. Over 90 million Americans are a part of this generation, which makes it the largest generation since the Boomers.

Millennials are defined by more than just when they were born. The world they live in and the people who surround them shape all aspects of their lives, including how they learn and how they communicate. A lot of research has been done to try and understand this generation a little better, and several characteristics have been identified as most common in Millennials.

Special

Those born in the Millennial Generation have been described as the most "wanted" generation in recent history. Many Millennials' parents went to great lengths to have children and have instilled in their children the idea that they are extremely important and vital to the future of the nation.

Possibly because of this feeling of specialness, Millennials are very close to their parents. They trust their parents' judgment and tend to make decisions with their parents about

aspects of their life such as which college to attend or what career path to follow. One challenge many educators say they have encountered because of this closeness is "helicopter parents." These parents tend to hover over their children, involving themselves in every aspect of their child's life and education, sometimes to the point of being overbearing.

Sheltered

Millennial children are very protected by their parents. They have been carefully watched over since they were babies, with more parents investing in products to protect their children from danger. Incidents such as Columbine and 9/11 have made youth-protection an even larger concern for parents in the past decade. And Millennial students don't seem to mind. They are used to structure and supervision and are likely to function better with it than without it.

Confident

Millennials are an optimistic generation. They tend to believe that they and their children will be successful. They have been told since they were young that they can do anything, that there are endless opportunities for them and that they can succeed in whatever they choose. And they believe it. But their idea of success centers less on one life goal and focuses more on having a well-balanced life. They are less concerned with being wealthy and more concerned with contributing to society.

Team-Oriented

Millennials are more reliant on their peer networks than previous generations. They value their friendships and their peers' opinions, which can lead to a social world that is more "clique-ish" and rule-centered. This tends to be true in their offline and online lives, as Millennials value the friends

On April 17, 2009 Amber Morgan, Instructor of Economics at Lander, led an interesting discussion on who Lander's students are as a group and what this means for educators. This issue of the White Board will provide some background information on the "Millennial Generation" as this group has been labeled.

they have on MySpace or Facebook as much as they do their friends at school or in their neighborhood. When faced with a problem, Millennials usually turn to their friends first, IMing or texting to ask for advice and support.

Millennials like group work, both in the classroom and outside it. They enjoy volunteering and a large number of them have dedicated many hours to community service by the time they get to college. In the classroom, they are accustomed to team-based teaching and grading and more frequent group projects. They are also more likely to seek the help of their peers on non-group assignments, which can lead to more instances of cheating.

Conventional

Millennials like rules. Many Millennial students report that bad manners, bad discipline and lack of respect are major problems in schools today. In the past, peer pressure has tended to be associated with breaking the rules, but Millennial students

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Millennials - Who are They?

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use peer pressure to bring order to their lives.

Millennials have also been accused of being a generation of followers, willing to be led and accepting rules and restrictions more easily than the generations before them. Because of this, many educators have noticed a lack of willingness to take risks and step "outside the box" in their school work. As a whole, they are less concerned with standing out or being creative and more concerned with fitting in and doing what is expected of them.

Pressured

Perhaps because they are placed on high pedestals by their parents, Millennials face incredible pressure—to get good grades, score well on standardized tests, get into college, get a good job. These days, more high school students feel pressured to get good grades than to do drugs. Consequently, Millennials tend to be very stressed and over-extended. They have more to do, between school work, extracurricular activities, family obligations and social activities, and less time in which to do them.

Because of this, Millennials are a generation of preparers and planners. They rely on their day planners and calendars to get them through the day. And unlike Gen Xers, who

are quick on their feet and do well with short-term challenges, Millennials tend to have five- and ten-year plans for their future. Many Millennials start thinking about college and career their freshman year of high school and are very careful in how they plan. They consider getting into the best college to be extremely important, and they believe that taking the wrong first job could be detrimental to their success down the road.

Achieving

Millennials are a generation of over-achievers. Academically, they are achieving higher test scores, getting better grades and are more proficient in math and science than previous generations. However, they are less likely to be creative and take risks for fear of failing. More Millennial teens want to get four-year college degrees than previous generations and are working harder to beat the enormous competition they face to gain admission to their first-choice school.

Tech-Savvy

This is often the first thing mentioned when older generations think or talk about the Millennial Generation. There's no denying that technology is a key factor in their lives. For Millennials, everything is a click or text or IM away. Most of them have never experienced life without computers, the Internet and cell phones. And they are usually more knowledgeable about the latest technology than their parents and educators.

Millennials are an online generation, spending more time online than reading or watching television. Where Gen Xers did their homework at the library and hung out with their friends at the mall, Millennials are more likely to use Wikipedia or SparkNotes to help with an assignment and hang out with their friends through Facebook or MySpace. They expect technology to be integrated in every aspect of their lives, and are eager to offer their opinions on how to make that happen.

Interacting with any generation presents challenges. The Millennial Generation has introduced some interesting, and surprising, dynamics, and the educators who are willing to adapt might have a head start in ensuring their students are successful. So what's the best way to work with Millennial students? There is no one right answer. Every student is different and it is best to consider your school's population and your students' individual personalities as you work with them. Hopefully, a broad understanding of their generation and its unique experiences will give you a stronger foundation as you guide them toward the successful, well-balanced and meaningful life that they fully expect to have.

Unknown, *Making it Count.com*

[<http://www.makingitcount.com/educators/article/view.asp?articleID=200>]

April 21, 2009

If you can't remember a time when the world was not wired, you are a member of the Millennial Generation — the 33 million Americans between the ages of 15 and 25. Tom Tresser (July 2007), *Conscious Choice.com*

BRAINIAC'S GUIDE TO AMERICA'S RECENT GENERATIONS

- 1884-93: (Lost Generation) **The New Kids**
- 1894-1903: (Lost Generation) **Hardboiled Generation**
- 1904-13: (The Greatest Generation) **Partisans**
- 1914-23: (The Greatest Generation) **The New Gods**
- 1924-33: (The Silent Generation) **Postmodernist Generation**
- 1934-43: (The Silent Generation) **Anti-Anti-Utopian Generation**
- 1944-53: **Baby Boomers**
- 1954-63: (Baby Boomers) **OGX (Original Generation X)**
- 1964-73: (Generation X) **PC Generation**
- 1974-83: (Generations X/Y) **Net Generation**
- 1984-93: **Millennials**
- 1994-2003: (Millennials) **TBA**

Brainiac/Joshua Glenn, *Boston.com*, April 16, 2008

[http://www.boston.com/bostonglobe/ideas/brainiac/2008/04/the_millennials.html]

April 21, 2009



ONE of the most widely observed, yet least understood, attributes about the emerging Millennial generation is their ethnic and cultural heterogeneity. While they represent the most ethnically varied cohort in American history—far more than any previous U.S. generation—few social commentators actually agree on what this remarkable demographic detail really portends. Will Millennials usher in a new post-ethnic America—or simply reconfigure some different version of identity politics? Will they carry on the mantle of the civil rights movement—or eliminate antiquated racial-ethnic categories altogether? Are they even cohesive enough as a group to assert any meaningful, broad-based cultural agenda?

Whatever paths they pave, one thing is certain: Millennials are poised to fundamentally reshape the way America has historically thought about race—and, as a result, will likely reconceive our nation's own ethnic and cultural self-identity in the process.

Thomas Tsen, *NewGeography.com*, July 30, 2008

[<http://www.newgeography.com/content/00137-millennials-key-post-ethnic-america>]

April 21, 2009