

UNDERSTANDING GENERATION Z STUDENTS TO MEET TARGET’S LEARNING PREFERENCE IN THE INTERNATIONAL INTEGRATION AGE

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ABSTRACT: The paper gives a clear idea about the Generation Z who will supplant the Millennials in the college and university then flood like a tsunami to the labor force in the future. They are self-directed learners and rely on technology. This generation has attention span shorter than others generations because Generation Z has used smart boards, e-learning, webinars, YouTube as well as smartphones since they were children. Generation group Z are thinking similarly and ask: what to do in specific situations for achieving the best results and how to learn more effectively in less time. In learning, they prefer to work alone, it leads to traditional lecture-format classes may not engage students and old style assignment may not be suitable as previous generations. Therefore, teaching Generation Z students will challenge instructors to adopt new methods. Today teachers must interact more, lecture less as well as provide an exciting learning environment for Generation Z which will require creative methods that combine technology, social interactions, and projects that simulate real-life work situations or are community outreach assignments. Moreover, for life long study of Generation Z, the lecturers also need to teach students how to use different learning strategies and learning styles.

Keywords: Generation Z, learning styles, teaching methods.

I. INTRODUCTION

We have heard a lot about the generation Z, but why do we need to know about them? and how much do we know about this generation, I’m sure you have heard about Baby Boomers (1946-1964) (Gursoy, 2013, p. 41), Generation X (1965-1980) (Goh & Leh, 2018, p. 21) and Generation Y (1981-1996) (Gursoy, 2013, p.42). Let me introduce you to Generation Z, born roughly between 1997 and 2012. At the moment, their age ranges from 7 to 22 (Figure 1) (Dimock, 2019)

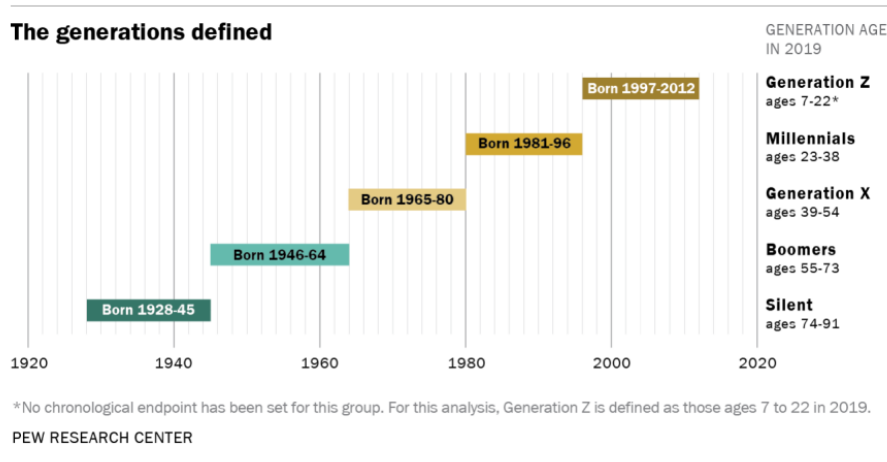


Figure 1. The generations defined (Pew research center, 1999)

According to Dimock (2019), the uprising generation are just turning 22 in year 2019, and most are still in their younger or teenagers. A name – The Homelanders, iGeneration and Generation Z were some early chosen by the author. Over the past year, Generation Z are very popular in paper, we can look for the definition of “Generation Z” in any famous dictionary (Oxford, merriam-webster...) is the generation that follows Millennials. And Google Trends data display that “Generation Z” is searched much higher than other names.

Each generation grew up with different economic and cultural background and has different styles and expectations as learners. Rothman (2014) demonstrated for the differences of Generation Z with the other generations with two examples:

- Other generations say “When the going gets tough, the tough get going.” Generation Z says “When the going gets tough maybe you should try another route.”
- Other generations say “If at first you don’t succeed, try, try again.” Generation Z says “If at first you don’t succeed maybe you shouldn’t be here.”

As early as 2016, a lot of Millennials moved to the workplace, leaving Generation Z to take their place in the colleges and universities. Then Gen Z will have flooded the workforce like a tsunami by the year 2025 when Baby Boomers retire in

huge numbers. This generation is more uniquely diverse than any previous groups of college students. Biracial and multiracial children are the fastest growing populations. Many are grown up in the families which are not always made up of parents of different sexes. With the different cultural perspectives, it makes this generation be more accepting and open-minded of differences than any previous generation (Pew, 2014). Therefore, Generation Z has different styles and expectations from learning.

II. CHARACTERISTICS OF GENERATION Z

Generation Z, who considers themselves as humorous people and self-confident, relies on internet, social media and cell phone. Generation Z will not show their feeling, even if it will be their personal interest (Mohr and Mohr, 2017). Another characteristic for the generation Z is that personal contact is inhibited by communication through modern technological devices (Jurenka et al., 2018). Generation Z want technology that is easy to use and solve their problems, they have never had to search through shelves or use a library card catalog to look for a specific book, people belonging to generation Z are often called as "digital people". Instead of reading an article, they prefer to watch a video (Youtube) that summarizes it, they also adapt to new environments or new cultural organizations quickly (Rothman, 2014). Tulgan (2013) finds that generation Z especially responds to clearly defined and directly allocated rewards that are rewarded proportionally to the amount of time spent at the workplace. Generation Z always creates relationship and puts into proportion: time spent/performed tasks. The most effective way on how to keep and manage the existing good working relationship with the generation Z is to transparently reward them on their real performance. Schawbel (2016) also defines that Generation Z desires of striving their career path by working in many nations. Among instructors there is some agreement that the attention span of this generation is more limited when compared to earlier generations (Rothman, 2014) because Generation Z has contacted since grade school with YouTube, e-learning, webinars, smart boards as well as smartphones which may have created their shorter attention span (Nicolas, 2020). The average student's focus duration is seven to ten minutes in the classroom; but it is now just eight seconds online. Hypertext which will be very helpful encourages learners to point or click on a link to get the required information without reading all material. Therefore, a preferred strategy to detect required information of Generation Z is "Keyword spotting". Otherwise, two seconds is the time spend while searching for the average persons per website. To sum up, In the book of Annamária Tari (2011) entitled Z generation, she defines Generation Z as follow:

- Kids nowadays do not have strong family relationships as it was in the case of the previous generation.
- They are smart, but their emotional intelligence is significantly underdeveloped, "They process information if they understand it but they are unable to process it emotionally".
- Due to apps that do multitasking (having, doing several things at the same time), being precise, or being able to concentrate, memorize something has become more difficult in long term.
- The personality becomes more narcissistic: the main goal is to leave their "digital footprint" for others – using only the global interest.
- What will be the effect of the rudeness of virtual games with little morality, lack of empathy and valued in TV shows on children psyche?
- The opinion of peers is overrated and becomes the most important.
- Visual thinking is dominant, so imagination and creativity are on the second place – Avatars, Second Life world are among the typical roles.
- Many representatives of the Z generation are suffering from chronic sleep deprivation because they do not want to miss anything (Facebook, etc.).
- There is the possibility of living a happier life but with less value.
- Thanks to media, role models, celebrities and stars have a stronger impact on them.
- New ways of corporations and sexuality appear.

Moreover, Nagy & Székely (2012) finding about characteristics of Gen Z (See figure 2) is similar to previous finding of Annamária Tari and they also compare these characteristics with those found in the other generations. From the differences characteristics between them, it leads to their learning styles and preferred teaching methods will be also somehow different from the other generations.

Table 1. Characteristics of generations. (Based on Nagy & Székely, 2012)

Baby Boomers (great generation)	X generation (digital immigrants)	Y generation (digital natives)	Z generation (nation of Facebook)	Alfa generation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They were born after the II WW • Motto: “war never again” • Several social changes: equality in women’s rights, Vietnam War • Increasing consumption • Competitions and idealism • First time they meet PCs as adults • PC is not the main way of communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They were born at the end of the 60s, beginning of 70s • Number of divorces, economic uncertainty are increasing • age of Disco and hip-hop culture • Age of TV and videogames • Start of individualism • They met PC when they were young • Witnesses of the development of information technology and then information society • They use internet more or less 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They were born in the 80s and 90s • Increasing number of conflicts • The spread of digital technology: e-mail, sms • Optimism, are not afraid of the technology • Loyal to brands • They met internet when they were children • Dependent on media • First digital citizens • Social relationships are doubled: they have virtual and real ones • They are interested in cultural contents • They accept their parents’ values • They like social activities • They prefer visuals and audios instead of texts • They want to achieve their aims as soon as possible and often want to fulfill their wishes • They prefer games to hard work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They were born around the millennium • They do not know the world without internet • Use internet and social networks • “Global Connectivity”, flexibility, being smart, tolerant of different cultures • Social network sites are the main platform for communication • Information consumers and providers • Very good device skills • Thousands of online contacts • Multitasking (blogging, listening to music, writing emails) • Quicker decision making • They are not stuck to a place • They learn, make friends, have fun differently • There is no legal sensitivity on downloading, changing files • Emotional incompetency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growing economics • New expectations, educational trends, materialism

There are many external factors influence to the Generation Z which affect negatively their final learning result (Hrubý, M. & Hasilová, K, 2018). Those disadvantages can be eliminated by using the learning-based competencies and specific learning styles.

III. GENERATION Z STUDENT’S LEARNING STYLE AND PREFERRED TEACHING METHOD

Table 2. Traditional and new reading strategies. (Fenyő ,2011)

“Traditional reading”		“New reading strategies”
Verbal: based on language elements, words, sentences	Text reception	Simultaneous: plenty of information at the same time
Linear	Direction of reading	By leaps
Global, full understanding	The aim of reading	Focus on unique elements
Structured thinking	Expectation from the reader	Starts with pictures, the text is on the second place
Information elements in structures, finding and understanding the meaning	The process	Focus is on the reader not on the writer
Deeper, slower	Reading speed	quicker

Csobanka (2016) states that the reading habits of the Z-generation students are as follows: they do not read less, but they read different things and in different ways. Fenyő (2011) describes the thesis about the altered Hungarian reading habits, in which he compares the characteristics of the “traditional reading” and the “new reading” strategies. This finding shows the way of using learning material of Gen Z which is much different from the previous generations.

Jurenka et al. (2018) find that the representatives of generation group Z are thinking similarly and ask: what to do in specific situations for achieving the best results and how to learn more effectively in less time. Rothman (2014) states that

some research has shown that the brains of Generation Z are structurally different than those of earlier generations. This is not related by genetics, but this is just how we use our brains to respond to things in our environment. The brains of Generation Z have become strengthened to sophisticated, complex visual imagery because the part of the brain in charge of visual ability is far more developed, making visual forms of learning more effective. Therefore interactive games, collaborative projects, advance organizers, challenges, and anything that they can try and see are suggested. On the other hand, auditory learning such as lecture and discussion is very strongly disliked by this age group. According to Nagal (2013), Gen Z students want to have exact directions guiding their work and were least interested in creative assignments.

IV. RECOMMENDATION

Jurenka et al. (2018) research suggests that teachers should be necessary to try to draft lessons with the emphasis on the spoken word, but at the same time teachers should engage elements of practical examples. Only by this way of teaching could be offered to the students the possibility of manual and practical experience during the educational process. Furthermore, the active learning style could be associated with the kinesthetic learning style that was the dominating learning style in the Gen Z.

Moreover, Mohr and Mohr (2017) also show that lecturers adjust current assignments to enhance effectiveness, ease grading and keep students involved. It is essential to prepare the skills and attitudes that will help the Gen Z students to function in job-related roles in the future. Sources, time-spent, goals, evaluate the content and ways to collect information should be very clear to the students in the assignment type that require students to access information online. And it is important to provide strict guidelines for segmented assignments, online searching and viewing because it could help students prevent the binge mentality that can make them lose focus and consume time (Nicolas 2020).

According to Seemiller & Grace (2016) Gen-Z students prefer flipped classroom and using YouTube as an important source of self-instruction. They prefer to work alone and see themselves as problem-solvers, therefore they may like puzzle formats in which students find out information online individually to contribute specific components to a big project. So that the lecturer need to devise shared projects to which individual students contribute portions, while still focusing on problems that they face personally.

Shatto & Erwin (2016) provide some teaching tips for Generations Z as following:

- Using mobile technology and apps when possible
- Use readings on tablets or smart phones
- Encourage collaboration through use of social media sites such as facebook, tumblr, twitter, blogs and discussion groups
- Reinforce concepts with youtube videos
- Use interactive games in classroom
- Integrate workshop skills into the actual classroom
- Videotape giving report and have students practice taking report; at the end of the class, have students' videotape themselves giving report and have them reflect on their presentation of the pertinent material
- Limit readings to include only necessary information
- Include discussions on inclusiveness and tolerance; group work should focus on varying viewpoints; the use of narratives and storytelling is especially helpful when teaching students from diverse backgrounds.

Nowadays, the classroom challenge is that many instructors (digital immigrants) are still analog but the learners are digital, they teach and place information into students' heads instead of being a facilitator of learning. Instructors will be at a disadvantage because they are not familiar with technology as their learners. Instructors will be at a disadvantage because they are not familiar with technology as their learners, and they must be prepared to teach the "content of the future" using digital, technological, software, hardware, and social media. Provide meaningful, tech-focused, professional development should be delivered for instructors as they change from a traditional learning model to one that is transformational (Rothman, 2014)

There are new trends currently that expect from teachers to educate their pupils how to use different learning strategies and learning styles. This knowledge could help them with lifelong learning and education. The biggest advantage by using this knowledge will improve their ability to effectively receive different information and achieve better learning results. Last but not least, the tasks of education are as follows: effective teaching methods, motivation, putting reading on the second place, the importance of physical activity, new roles of teachers supporting "independent learning" styles and the pursuit of cooperation (Jurenka, 2018)

V. CONCLUSION

The Generation Z students will replace the majority of Millennials in colleges and universities in the future because large amount of Millennials will have moved to the workplace soon. Generation Z students rely a lot on technology and they have self-directed ability. Therefore, the traditional teaching methods may not make them participate in the lessons and the assigned readings may not be successful as with previous generations. To effective teaching Generation Z students, the

instructors should accept new teaching methods. Today's educator must interact more and lecture less in the classroom to create the good learning environment. Lecturers need to provide an exciting learning environment for Generation Z which will require creative methods that combine technology, social interactions, and projects that simulate real-life work situations or are community outreach assignments. Lecturers also need to teach student know how to use different learning strategies and learning style to assist their lifelong learning. Faculty development to learn methods and new technology platforms may be required for teaching Gen Z (Teaching Generation Z, 2015-2106). Genuine interests in educating students to become effective learners will always be a critical factor.

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