

Generation Z goes to College¹

By Corey Seemiller and Meghan Grace (Jossey-Bass Publisher, 2016)

The authors

Corey Seemiller has worked in higher education for more than 20 years in faculty and administrative position. She is currently Assistant professor in the organizational leadership program at Wright State U. She has previously been director of leadership programs at the University of Arizona.

Meghan Grace has received her master's degree in education from the University of Arizona where she taught courses in social entrepreneurship, event planning, leadership and career readiness. She currently serves as the new member orientation director for Sigma Phi Epsilon fraternity.

Both are former student affairs professionals.

Introduction

Gen.Z: born after 1995. These students are driven by different motivations, learning styles, characteristics, skills sets and social concerns than the previous generation (Millennials). And they are already in college. For universities and colleges it is relevant to learn to adapt their courses, programs, processes, environment and initiatives to meet the needs of these students.

The study

This book is based on a new study (2013-2014) of more than 1.100 US colleges and on recent research (data from 295 sources). A survey was sent to 1223 students and is based on 613 questionnaires. The goal is to learn the styles, motivations and perspectives of Gen.Z students to better understand them and better work with them.

Questions

- What social issues do students in Gen.Z care most about?
- What motivates them?
- How do they prefer to learn?
- What technology do they use?

Gen.Z students grew up during a recession and a world at war. They have no illusion about their prospects for employment after college (no belief in the American dream). They are skeptical about the escalating cost and value of higher education. They tend to be entrepreneurial, innovative and independent learners. They are concerned with social changes.

Definition

This group has energy for learning, they are intelligent, motivated to make a change in the world, innovative, driven, responsible, caring and understanding. As opposed to the Millennials (the « Me » generation), Gen.Z is called the « We » generation.

Also called the « Digital natives » or the « Net generation », they grew up in a world shaped by Internet (one device can do everything).

They are the most racially diverse generation to date. They always lived in a virtual AND physical reality.

They describe themselves as loyal (85%), thoughtful, compassionate (73%), open-minded (70%), determined (74% « Hard work is part of life ») and responsible (69%).

Gen.Z is predicted to be the last generation in which Caucasian are in the majority (only 55 % of Gen.Z are Caucasian) which help them welcome difference with an open mind.

¹ Review by Sylvie Koneski (USC Paris)

An unlimited access to information helps them feel compassion for others and being exposed to many different cultures, identities and ways of living.

They are politically moderate to left.

Being constantly connected to a screen implies a more sedentary lifestyle than the previous generations (quadrupling of adolescent obesity rates over the past 30 years).

- reduction/elimination of Physical education (playing video games and surfing the web)
- decline in organized team sports

¼ of Gen.Z students are not motivated by public recognition, acceptance by others, competition with others or the idea that someone will return a favor.

They are more motivated by relationships and the ability to work toward something they care about than financial advancement.

Understanding what motivates them can be critical in empowering them to act.

Gen.Z sees the world through multiple screens but as evidenced by their we-centric attitudes.

Beliefs and perspectives

Students come to class digitally connected (laptops, tablets, smart phones). They want a new type of learning environment: one in which they are connected to more information online than the instructor could even know and teach the class.

They expect to find the information they need quickly and with little effort. But this leads them to procrastinate and to have less or no time to critically examine the situation. The ease of access to information has deadened people's curiosity. The online information is not always accurate.

They believe they need to be connected 24/7 and this makes them believe that everyone else is and should always be available (middle of the night or after hours messages to instructors or supervisors): culture of « get it when you want it » (video streaming services, Netflix, opportunity to engage in binge watching) and instant gratification.

How does the ability to be constantly connected shape the perspectives and beliefs of this generation?

« FOMO »: Fear of Missing Out. Gen.Z wants to be in the know.

Time and space are more fluid:

- they don't need to be tied to a specific space to get their work done
- flexible scheduling
- being able to work across time and space
- creative entrepreneurship: Companies like eBay, Airbnb, Uber... have put people at the helm of their own entrepreneurial initiatives (buy, sell, serve others without having to own a business)
- emergence of the sharing economy
- desire to be your own boss

Gen.Z students may see acquiring a career as an opportunity to create the jobs they want.

Disasters and Tragedies

- Post-September 11
- US involvement in ongoing wars and conflicts
- Great recession (2007-2009)

- National and global devastations (Hurricane Katrina, Superstorm Sandy, tsunami in Japan, earthquake in Haiti, swine flu, bird flu, terrorist acts around the world, school shootings...)

One click on a website make the events feel even closer to home and even more frightening.

How Gen.Z sees its future?

60% are optimistic (as opposed to 89% of Millennials)

It is unsafe to go out BUT the online world can be scary too (hackers, identity thieves, sexual predators, bullies...).

Growing up on what seems to be a dangerous world, Gen.Z students are no risk takers and pragmatic.

Beliefs about Diversity and Social Justice

These beliefs are influenced by their exposure to a wide range of people different from them (see change in racial composition in the US):

- Since 2000 percentage of white people decreased (from 75% to 72%)
- The Hispanics population increases/ becomes the largest minority group
- More diversity in high profile roles

Gen.Z lived during a time in which the Civil Rights Act, Voting Right Act, Fair Housing Act, American with Disabilities Act were part of the fabric of society. Other equity and equality issues are still debated today (anti-discrimination, women and fair pay, hate crime prevention, marriage equality, work permits for immigrants, minimum wage increases...).

Gen.Z students believe in equality and are supporters and allies of social justice: 56% are concerned about racism / 56% about sexism / 61% about poverty

Religion

- 47% participate in organized religions
- 41% attend weekly religious services
- 78% say they believe in God (47% identify as religious and 31% as spiritual)
- 22% endorse no religion

Politics

Gen.Z is liberal to moderate on social issues (80% are in favor of marriage equality) but when it comes to financial issues, they are moderate to conservative (saving and conservative spending). They are more independent politically and a generation disconnected from the two-party political system.

Communication platforms and preferences

Internet has changed the way people behave: shopping, travelling, gathering information... Will Gen.Z know how to properly communicate and build relationships?

With constant connectivity and real-time access to information, Gen.Z has the ability to engage in quick, frequent and succinct communication. But with the tendency to jump from screen to screen and conversation to conversation, they may have short attention spans.

- **Texting:** prominent mode for communication (around 3000 text messages a month/ 100 a day) with its own language and emoticons.
- 65% dislike making voice phone calls. ¼ don't like e-mail. Phone calls and e-mail take too much time between responses and are more formal.

- **Face to face:** most of their communication is done through technology but 83% prefer face-to-face communication and still find in-person communication valuable.

Social Media:

Likes, Tweets, Follows and Pins: the "what" of social media.

Gen.Z is connected or on-line at least one hour a day and up to 10 hours a day. They spend 41% of their time outside the classroom on a computer or mobile device (to be connected with friends, stay up to date on news or research topics of interest and lifestyle information). 1 in 4 like social media for its speed and ease of use. Preference in multitasking and use of multiple screens to connect and communicate.

Gen.Z likes Facebook: incorporates a little bit of everything (follow, post, keep up, chat) all in one place. Facebook is changing: not hip and cool anymore (50% of adult Internet users older than 65 are using Facebook !!!). But Facebook's utility is due to its wide integration with other platforms, websites and apps (Instagram, Snapchat).

Twitter: preferred form of social media (quick and easy). Allows students to stay informed of what is going on in the world (or worlds) of their choosing while easily filtering out the world(s) they don't want to learn about. Stay up-to-date by the second on any topic.

Facebook is for family, Twitter is for friends.

Gen.Z students want to keep up with others more than to share about themselves: they want to have a window into the lives of others.

Internet: Taking in new information in words only doesn't appeal to Gen.Z. Watching Youtube videos is their preferred form of social media.

The multimedia nature of videos allow students to go beyond just reading about a concept and instead witness and virtually experience it. Youtube videos can supplement their academic classes. They want to learn by combining visual, audio, linguistic, spatial and musical strategies as well as to select and organize words and images and integrate them with prior knowledge. 33% watch lessons on line.

Question: How best to communicate with this generation? Should higher education administrators, staff and faculty invade students' « authority-figure-free zone »? Or should they let Gen.Z students have their online freedom in their platform of choice and capitalize on the platforms in which their presence is welcome?

Friends, Family and Romance

New Technology brings new opportunities, challenges and boundaries in managing relationships.

Friends and Followers: Shared values and hobbies are the most important factors for Gen.Z in making friends or sustaining friendships. Physical appearance is less important to them (most diverse generation/open-minded/embrace diversity). Difference in culture and background play a minimal role. It becomes less important to live near friends: technology has provided ways to fill that gap. They create on-line relationships.

Family: With increase rates of home schooling, Gen X has taken an involved approach to parenting, instilling the value of close family relationships with their Gen.Z children.

86% of Gen.Z students feel they are extremely close to their parents whom they see as playing roles more like friends and advisors (except on Facebook).

Parents/family are sources of emotional and financial support and role models. Gen.Z students have a high regard for their parents. More than half take the opinions and perspectives of their family into consideration in their decision making. Like Millennials, Gen.Z students value their close family relationships and call, text and connect often with their parents.

Romance: Online dating has rapidly grown in popularity and accessibility (65% of Americans). A way to meet more and a wider diversity of people but encourage moving on to another prospect quickly (there is always another option available).

Online dating reduces the stigma of blind dating, reduces the anxiety of showing up in a restaurant looking for the person with the red shirt. It's less intimidating.

But technology and social media have given users more access to view the lives of their friends and followers (ability to see where the others are, with whom and what they are doing and monitor the social media behavior of their partners). This transparency creates new issues for Gen.Z's romantic relationships. Whether they see too much or too little, technology and social media will have an impact on romantic relationships.

Less than 20% ask someone out or break up on line.

Technology cannot be a replacement to forging authentic relationships with friends, family and romantic partners.

Cares and Concerns

For Gen.Z the most important issues are: education, employment and racial equality

Education: For Gen.Z education is...

- the foundation for individual success and societal prosperity
- leads to future personal success
- is an investment in America's future
- an educated society is a better society
- America's education system is declining
- There is a limited access to quality education

In the past decade, tuition rose more than 80%. Gen.Z feels anxiety over being able to afford a college education (80% concerned about higher education costs) and accumulating a debt they cannot pay off. Gen.Z students have an idea for how to address the rising cost of college: having a limited college experience. This includes access to courses and faculty but leaves the extras (residence halls and athletics). Despite the growing cost of college, 2/3 of Gen.Z students believe that the benefits of a college degree outweigh the costs. 3/4 believe that having a college degree is essential to having a career.

Employment: Gen.Z students know that there is no guarantee that a college degree leads to employment and that simply having a job doesn't ensure indefinite employment.

Half expect to become their own bosses during their careers. Self-employment is predicted to grow at a rate of 6% for the next years.

Entrepreneurship is an even more viable option for this generation to make a living. Work must be meaningful for Gen.Z: it's not a job, it's a passion.

2/3 want their careers to have a positive impact on the world.

40% plan to invent something that will « change the world ».

In practice Gen.Z graduates will create their own employment opportunities that suit their styles and passions.

Financial security: The Great recession has made Gen.Z very attuned with money. 3/4 are already concerned about their financial security. Some fear not to be able to afford college now and fear not to have enough money to take care of their families in the future.

They save money rather than spend it.

Other concerns:

- limitations on personal freedom (Patriot Act)
- violence (for 25% violence is the biggest social concern)
- human rights
- political dysfunction

- war
- bullying
- immigration: some are DREAMER or know one (DREAM Act designed to grant legal status to immigrants who were brought to the US as children). 50% believe that everyone should have the right to US citizenship (as opposed to the Millennials: 60% of them believed that undocumented immigrants should be deported).
- Climate change (1/3 have made changes to support environment ; 40% plan to go green)

Gen.Z students want to make the world a better place: we can already see a lot of young inventors, researchers, philanthropists and activists).

Politics: In the 2008 presidential election, 49% of 18 to 24 years old turn out to vote. But in the Gen.Z, some are not engaged or knowledgeable enough to care. 56% are registered to vote but only half indicate there is a chance that they will vote in an election. Only 21% believe that influencing the political structure is essential. There is a distaste for politics in America. Gen.Z has the desire to create social changes outside the political process.

1/3 have the goal of taking on some kind of leadership role in the community: fundraising (collect money from family and friends to support social causes). They are financially concerned: they may not give their own money but could serve as coordinators to raise money from others.

Community engagement practices: Millennials had very high rates of volunteerism (tutoring, serving soup, fixing up a playground).

Gen.Z: 90% indicate having frequently engaged in community service in high school... 50% however indicate that this service was required as part of a class !!!

1/3 think it's a good thing to participate in community service but only 6% volunteer.

Is this a lack of interest or do they prefer to address the root of the problems rather than the symptoms?

Leadership styles and capacities

What kind of leaders will Gen.Z students be?

Definitions:

In 2000: « Leadership is the process of influencing others to understand and agree about what needs to be done and how to do it, and the process of facilitating individual and collective efforts to accomplish shared objectives » (Yukl, G (2006). Leadership in organizations. 6th Ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall).

According to the National Association of Colleges and Employers, 80% of employers seek graduates with leadership skills and the ability to work on a team.

For Gen.Z, it is essential to develop the skills necessary for post-college employment (all are concerned about getting a job after graduation).

Strengths-Based leadership (back to the late 60'): In the mid-2000' strengths have become mainstream (Don Clifton and programs like Gallup's Strengths Finder/Strengths Quest/Strengths Explorer). This approach focuses on polishing talents into strengths rather than trying to fix deficits or improve weaknesses (used by 12 M people). Gen.Z is growing up in a era in which the strengths-based approach has nearly always existed. They have been exposed to it in middle and high schools and they are bringing with them to college a philosophy of strengths. This will affect the way they view and practice leadership. Gen.Z will define leadership from a lens of strengths rather than one of deficits.

Leadership today, in a complex world, involves complex thinking, adaptability and inter-dependance. Problems no longer requires one answer. Diversity of experiences, perspectives and cultures highlights the importance of connection and collaboration. Gen.Z will have to focus on a variety of global issues (international business, trade, crime, disasters, epidemics, global warming, terrorism, money and

currency, military intervention ...). With their determination, open-mindedness and sense of responsibility, they will have « to be creative to solve the problems of the past generation ».

Role Models for Gen.Z

Parents: Gen X: the « latchkey generation »

Millennials: « helicopter parents »

Gen.Z students like their parents. They are trusted mentors. 88% are extremely close to them.

Parents are guides rather than enforcers or influencers.

More than 50% consult their parents on important matters. 50% are influenced by their parents.

The reason is that their parents have displayed honesty, trust and openness early in their lives.

More than 90% of Gen.Z parents trust their children when using social media.

For 69% of Gen.Z, their parents are their #1 role model (over teachers, political leaders, celebrities and athletes). As opposed to Millennials (54%) and Gen X (29%).

Teachers: Many recall a teacher who made a difference in their lives (doesn't typically involve a lesson plan or class assignment but rather the guidance and mentorship).

For more than 50% their role models are teachers.

Coaches: Coaches who do not yell, remain calm and encourage their players and involve the team in decision making.

Peers: Gen.Z seeks out information and advice from their friends. With abundant access to technology, they can reach each other any time of the day for guidance and support.

Fictional characters: The way they behave in the story can be inspirational and motivating. Gen.Z's favorite books: Harry Potter, Hunger Games, Twilight, Diary of a Wimpy Kid, the Hobbit. Each showcases a teen overcoming obstacles and persevering as leader (collaboration and optimism help the leader to achieve the impossible).

Gen.Z students are confident in their ability to succeed. They are collaborative team players and optimistic about their place in the world and believe they have great determination.

Who are not leader role models?

Bosses: Gen.Z may plan to work for themselves. The relationship with a boss will be highly transactional. They are not engaged in a mentoring relationship with a boss and are not really motivated by a boss (even a good one).

Religious leaders: 41% of Gen.Z students attend religious services regularly
50% participate in organized religion. Local, national, international religious leaders can be prominent figures. But only 8% see religious leaders as role models.

Professional athletes and Celebrities: Only 5% rate celebrities and only 4% rate professional athletes as their #1 role model. 30% rate celebrities as their last choice of role models.

Political leaders: Gen.Z has witnessed political leadership filled with contention, scandal and defiance rather than collaboration and integrity. 50% are concerned about political dysfunction. They think there is little to admire in politicians: they see them as argumentative, dishonest and selfish.

Only 3% identify political leaders as their #1 role model. 27% would choose political leaders last.

Maximizing learning

How to create learning environments that maximize these students' capacity to learn? Advanced technology plays a role in learning but technology and learning are not necessarily synonymous for Gen.Z.

Instantaneous, accessible, abundant information

The instant access the Internet and technology provide has made a difference in learning and education in general. Students do not need to wait to learn

Powerful online search engines give a multitude of answers in just a few seconds

Students access educational resources on demand (tutoring sites, practice tests, how-to videos): reference materials are just a click away.

Gen.Z as learners

90% of online content has been created in just the past 4 years.

Logic-based approaches, experiential learning, make sense of information through trial and error and then apply this information to a real problem.

Gen.Z demands an education that will be useful and relevant in getting a job after graduation, a learning that will help fill the toolbox with applicable knowledge and skills for the workforce, an education that will be a utility toward their eventual career (in the « real world »).

Therefore they have a preference for experiential learning and will seek out courses that teaches the critical skills employers want.

Imagination is imaginary

Creativity is the most sought after attribute by employers in recent college graduates.

IQ has increased with each generation BUT the creativity quotient of America's youth has decreased since 1990.

For Gen.Z: imagination is the least preferred approach to looking at problems.

Why: With the No Child Left Behind Act, less and less time was/is allocated for visual arts, dance, theater and music (classes associated with creativity).

84% of parents and 79% of teachers believe that not enough time is allocated in school to help students develop their creativity. Too much time is spent in standardized testing (federal, state, end-of-course and graduation assessments means a significant amount of time is spent taking tests.

Learning alone

For Gen.Z: most preferred learning method.

They like to learn independently and at their own pace before coming to the group/class. They prefer learning methods that requires self-reliance (85% engage in online research for assignments). No need for interaction with others.

How do they view their instructors, peers and learning environments?

While they prefer an intrapersonal learning, they also enjoy working in group settings.

Educators play a large role: Gen.Z students call for engaging and passionate instructors.

They do not like to be lectured at so the instructors are facilitators of learning rather than talking heads.

The myth of multitasking

Research has found (see Vidyarthi, N (2011): « Attention spans have dropped from 12 to 5 m: How social media is ruining our minds ») that as Internet accessibility has increased over the years, the average attention span has decreased by half. Some suggest that technology is leading to the rewiring of human brain.

Because the Internet can satisfy the need for instant gratification, some health experts believe it may contribute to the development of attention difficulties. Being able to multitask effectively: a Myth?

Group work

Millennials could divide up tasks using social media and text messaging without feeling the need to meet in person to work on a project.

Gen.Z's approach is different: in capitalizing on their need for both intrapersonal and social learning, group projects might entail having the group meet (might work independently next to each other on the same google doc !!!).

Tools for school

Traditional school work models using paper and books is rapidly being replaced by online work modules, instructional videos and handheld learning devices (smart phones, tablets). The instructors need to be able to use these effectively.

Gen.Z students view their choice of an educational institution as a major and worthwhile investment that will help them achieve their goals. An institution where the price is right and the path to a job looks bright.

For more than 50%, location and campus facilities are important in their college choice (buildings brought up to today's technology standards/creating innovative learning spaces). Gen.Z seeks flexibility in their program of study.

More than 70% think it is important to be able to design and built their own course of study or major. They prefer to learn on their own time and in their own way.

2/3 believe that preparation for life in the working world is a joint responsibility between the institution and the student.

Working with Gen.Z

1) Relational strategies

Before reassessing and redesigning programs, processes and institutional priorities, it would be best to start with how to relate to them as people.

- make time for face time (something Gen.Z students crave and value)

- be transparent: they are realistic problem solvers who appreciate honesty and authenticity from those who lead them. They do not want to be protected from problems and want to be consulted in decision making.

Understanding Family roles: With the Millennials and their «helicopters parents », institutions had to find ways to creatively integrate these parents into the fabric of the institutions (parents newsletters, services or programs).

Gen.Z: a different role for parents: copilot. They value family input in their decisions and see their parents as their primary role models. They make their decision but seek their parents' thoughts and advice (on just about everything).

Building strong relationships with Gen.Z will also include building strong relationships with their parents.

2) Operational strategies: designing a campus that fits

Choosing a college is far more than the academic offerings.

Is the environment welcoming and safe? Live on campus or commute? Where to exercise?

What services are offered?

Enhance safety : Gen.Z students are highly concerned about violence (especially school shootings). Creating more robust and transparent policies and practices around campus safety, safety presentations, having students participate in an active shooting training. Issues about acquaintance and date rape on campus. Consider creating a campus wide hashtag that empowers everyone to report incidents of violence and harassment.

Ensure an inclusive and affirming environment: Gen.Z students are concerned about equity, access, inclusion and oppression. Does the campus have safe spaces for students of color? Women? LGBTQIA students? Veterans? Students with disabilities? Do programs and events reflect the diversity of the campus? Are support services available to first generation and low-income students?

Support mental health: Gen.Z: exposed to many large high-stress events which contributed to personal fear and anxiety. An increasing number of students are coming to college with mental health issues (Fall 2014: 12% intended to seek personal counseling).

Help students access funding: With the cost of higher education skyrocketing, Gen.Z students will need to be able to access funding or not go to college. Consider centralizing all external scholarships in a database so that students can easily find funding opportunities they are eligible for.

Reconsider housing arrangements: Because the package of higher education costs (tuition, fees, books and living expenses) students might opt out of some of the non essentials of the college experience, like living on campus.

45% of first-year students in 2014 picked their college due to the cost.

14% were unable to afford their first choice.

Make healthy food the norm: Gen.Z students care about what they eat (prefer an organic and fresh diet). In addition, vegan, vegetarian, gluten-free, lactose-free diets have been accessible to them. May be important in the choice to live on or off campus.

Offer expanded services: These students are used to having 24/7 access to resources. They know only a world in which immediate access to a human being who can help is always available. The institutions cannot make every services available 24 hours a day, yet there are some critical services that might be helpful for students to have greater access to (expanding hours so they can access academic advisors, financial aid specialists ...).

3) Instructional strategies: designing learning environments

Learning environments should be vastly different from those of other generations. Education is less about the transfer of knowledge from teacher to student and more about helping students make sense of the overabundance of information available to them.

Align learning outcomes with industry standards: Gen.Z students still feel there is a value in college degree but if priced out, struggle with a student loan debt or think there are not adequately prepared, they may stop enrolling. Challenge for many institutions: working with industry partners to develop outcomes that match associated career fields is essential.

Integrate a socially conscious curriculum:

- bring in speakers on particular social issues
- use case studies of social issues of interest
- consider designing academic programs to be problem-based learning experiences using social issues as the context

Gen.Z students want to learn, not for learning's sake but because they can use that learning to create social changes.

Help students effectively research: Internet/online information: a double-edged sword. Access to useful and relevant information AND access to false and non-credible information.

Teach them how to use the Internet and informative literacy. They must learn how to critically evaluate the information (credible, useful and appropriate). Information literacy is both an academic skill and a life skill.

Teach with, not at: Gen.Z students want to be involved in the learning process with the instructor and not just be the recipient of knowledge: a more facilitative rather than authoritative approach to teaching. Lecturing may still have a presence in the classroom but instructors will do well to capitalize on the social learning nature of Gen.Z students to learn from each other.

Flip your classroom: Traditional classrooms are lecture based and incorporate homework as follow-up. On the contrary, flipped classrooms have students do their homework first and then focus only on the application of the content and not a rehashing of it in class. No need for a lecture that covers introductory information. By flipping a classroom, students learn foundational material on their own

before class, then can participate in discussions/activities that help them apply the content they learned before class.

Offer options for hybrid learning: Something between online learning and in-person class? Open up the option for students to do some learning on their own through multimedia and then meet periodically in person with the rest of the class.

Curb assignments binging: Culture of binge-watching television may exacerbate assignment procrastination. Instead of having a paper due at the end of the semester, make a portion of the paper due each week.

Reconsider group work expectations: Gen.Z students like to work independently yet collaborate on their own terms. A lecture followed by discussion might not be the best fit: consider using think-tank-share (independent work prior to discussing with others). This can make meaning of the content at their own pace and in their own ways.

Group project: instead of assigning a project and then collect the final version on a due date, it might be beneficial to require students to separate the assignments into relatively equal portions and each be responsible for a portion.

Integrate modern learning in the curriculum: Traditionally structured curriculum programs might not align with Gen.Z students anymore.

- using MOOCs rather than plan workshops or trainings (they can learn on their own time)
- consider bringing technology into the curriculum (blogs/apps/electronic badges as gratification tools).

4) Programmatic Strategies: creating real-world learning experiences

Offer experiential learning: Internships/Study abroad and community engagement. Expand the reach of leadership development. Gen.Z students are more interested in initiatives that foster sustainable and long-term social changes. Institutions need to consider offering programs that connect students to experiences that help them address social changes (policy work, entrepreneurial initiatives, technological innovations ...).

Internships: Opportunity for students to engage in experiential learning. Why not make it a requirement? Allow flexibility so that students engage in experiential learning that is meaningful to them. Could be required for graduation or be offered for academic credits.

Study abroad: Gen.Z open-mindedness and thirst for diversity. Experience another culture and make meaning of that experience for themselves. More than 1/3 of them believe « there is a very good chance they will study abroad ». 55% want to study or live abroad during their lifetimes. It is critical for the institutions to find ways to make these experiences financially accessible for all students.

Entrepreneurship: Offer social entrepreneurship courses for nonbusiness majors. 2/3 believe that colleges should offer courses on how to start a business (often offered to students in Business schools only). Gen.Z students are interested in working for themselves.

Help students engage in microfinancing: Online microfinancing platforms make it easy for students to connect with real entrepreneurs to provide short-term start-up loans. Consider creating a program of courses that teaches students fundraising strategies.

5) Developmental strategies: building students capacity

Desire for real-world preparation is echoed by more than 1/3 of business leaders who believe that higher education does not adequately help students develop critical skills necessary for the workplace. Colleges should focus more on preparing students to be effective members of the workforce and

contributing members of society: develop their professional competencies through learning and engagement opportunities.

Face it and embrace it: Gen.Z students are knowledgeable, skilled and reliant on technology.

90% are upset if they have to give up their access to the Internet.

3 in 4 are upset if they cannot use their phone or text their friends.

Try to embrace this technology as a learning tool for accomplishment (potential to build a relationship between educators and students reflective on trust).

Consider incorporating technology use into class time (by offering a topic and asking everyone to search online to find out as much information as they can to report it).

This will guide students' use of technology during class toward an intentional and meaningful learning experience and help them develop informative literacy skills.

Be wary of the « Do not enter » sign: « Creepy tree house »: when adults/authority figures enter the social networking space that was previously used for peers to connect with each other.

Do not be all platforms to all people: When connecting with Gen.Z, it may be helpful to choose one or two platforms that will align most with the purpose in using social media in the first place.

Facebook: ongoing individual messages / group announcement

Twitter: connect throughout the duration of one distinct event

Conclusion

In this study, the authors interpret and outline the implications of the data and offer higher education administrators, student affairs professionals and faculty members recommendations for program, process and curriculum changes that will maximize the educational impact on Gen.Z students.