

TEACHING ELEMENTS TEACHING MILLENNIALS

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WHO ARE THE MILLENNIALS?

The "Millennial Generation" refers to the demographic of individuals born roughly between 1980-2003 (Wilson & Gerber, 2008). Millennials are the most racially and ethnically diverse group out of all other generational groupings (Keeter, 2010). Raised during a period of exponential technological development, individuals within this demographic are also considered to be the most technologically-oriented out of all other generational cohorts (i.e., Gen-Xers, Baby Boomers, etc).

WHAT DOES THE RESEARCH SAY ABOUT MILLENNIALS?

The research and literature offer varied perspectives on the Millennial generation's characteristics. For example, whereas Neil Howe and William Strauss (2000) have described the Millennials as "the next great generation" and very socially conscious, Jean Twenge (2006), through her own research, finds that they are predominantly individualistic with a sense of entitlement. Gwendolyn J. Dungy and her co-authors of *Diverse Millennials in College* emphasize how other factors such as race, gender, sexual orientation, class, and culture also have a significant influence on the "multifaceted identities" of the individual born during the "Millennial" time frame (2011).

- Howe and Strauss (2000) identified seven distinguishing characteristics of the Millennial generation. These traits were special, sheltered, confident, team-oriented, achieving, pressured, and conventional.
- Twenge (2006) suggests the same factors (i.e., parental style, mass media and culture, social climate, etc.) that have contributed to the Millennials' tendency to be individualistic and self-important are some of the same factors that have also influenced their predominant belief in equality among people despite differences such as race, gender, and sexual orientation (2006).
- Through informal conversations Gwendolyn J. Dungy conducted between 2009 and 2007 with college students and new professionals across the U.S., Millennials identified the following as the "defining moments of their time: 1) September, 11, 2001; 2) Reality television; 3) Mobile phones and social networks; 4) Virginia Tech and Northern Illinois University mass killings; 5) YouTube; 6) Recession of 2008; 7) Wikipedia and mass collaboration; 8) Election of Barack Obama (2011, p 7)."

"MILLENNIAL TEACHING" IN ACTION

Cultivating an Effective Learning Environment for Millennial Students:

- In her own qualitative analysis, Price (2009) found that Millennial students prefer a learning environment in which 1) the instructor is "relate-able" and shows an interest in getting to know the students; 2) the instructor incorporates a variety of teaching methods, and 3) regular and frequent opportunities for assessing their learning and obtaining instructor feedback are established during the semester.
- According to a small survey conducted by Wilson and Gerber (2008), approximately 50% of Millennial respondents felt smaller teams consisting of 2 or 3 people were effective, in part, because members were less likely to slack off and not do their share of the work.
- Although meaningful and relevant use of technology is important to Millennials within the context of learning, a need to feel connected and interact with instructors and peers takes precedence. Nicoletti and Merriman (2007) suggest, "*It's not about the technology — Millennials don't think in terms of technology, they think in terms of the activity that the technology enables* (p31)."

For more information on effective teaching strategies, go to the downloadable pdf, [Effective Teaching and Technology Use With Millennials](#).

WHERE CAN I LEARN MORE?

Websites:

- [Pew Research Social and Demographic Trends](#)

Articles:

- Bennett, S., Maton, K., & Kervin, L. (2008). The 'digital natives' debate: A critical review of the evidence. *The British Journal of Educational Technology*, 39(5), 775-786. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8535.2007.00793.x>
- Hoover, E. (Ed.). (2009, October 11). The Millennial Muddle [Online article]. Retrieved May 7, 2014, from The Chronicle of Higher Education website: <http://chronicle.com/article/The-Millennial-Muddle-How/48772/>.
- Twenge, J. M. (2013). Teaching Generation Me. *Society for the Teaching of Psychology*, 40(1), 66-69. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0098628312465870>.

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- Bonner, F. A., II, Marbley, A. F., & Howard-Hamilton, M. F. (Eds.). (2011). *Diverse Millennial Students in College*. Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing.
- Howe, N., & Strauss, W. (2000). *Millennials Rising: The Next Great Generation*. New York, NY: Vintage Books.
- Keeter, S. (2010, February 24). Millennials: A Portrait of Generation Next. Pew Research Center. Retrieved August 4, 2014, from Pew Research Social and Demographic Trends website: <http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2010/02/24/millennials-confident-connected-open-to-change/>.
- Nicoletti, A., & Merriman, W. (2007, April/May). Teaching Millennial Generation Students. *Momentum*, 38(2), 28-31.
- Price, C. (2009, August/September). Why Don't My Students Think I'm Groovy? *The Teaching Professor*, 23(7), 7-8.
- Tenge, J. M., Ph.D. (2006). *Generation Me*. New York, NY: Free Press.
- Wilson, M., & Gerber, L. E. (2008, Fall). How Generational Theory Can Improve Teaching: Strategies for Working with the Millennials. *Currents in Teaching and Learning*, 1(1), 29-44.