

The Millennial Generation & Today's College Students

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Generations

- Generations are shaped by:
 - Common Experiences
 - Defining Moments
 - History
 - Demographics
 - Economics
 - Culture
- The Veterans (1922-1943)
- The Baby Boomers (1943-1960)
- The Generation Xers (1961-1980)
- The Millennials (1980-2000)

Mosier, 2001

What are...

common experiences
defining moments
history
demographics
economics
culture

...that shape your generation?

Background on Generations

- Veterans and those born during the war years (the Civic Generation and the Silent Generation) faced rich opportunities until the 1980s with the increasing competition from Japanese productivity.
- Baby Boomers had many career choices, with an emphasis on life, work, and team as interchangeable terms.
- Generation Xers are the most highly educated, technologically savvy cohort group to enter the workplace in significant numbers. However, they exist in a workforce of limited upward mobility that none of the preceding generations can comprehend.
- Generation Xers feel the need to be flexible and spontaneous with opportunities, since the economy and job market have experienced such rapid changes. This has presented challenges with more limited career opportunities, with the exception of the areas of technology.
- Millennials are now entering college as the arrival of the latest generation. They see their future as unlimited opportunities, with an emphasis on team work, a common sense of purpose, and trust in the group. They have experienced a positive economy while moving through their school years.

Mosier, 2001

The Millennials (1980-2000)

- The Millennials came of age in the 1990s when the technology revolution was expanding; the oldest are now beginning to enter college. They are characterized by: support and protection from parents; optimistic; civic minded; barriers of time and space appear to be less absolute for them (i.e. emailing internet pen pals in Asia); "good scouts"; willing to work and learn; and are recycling back to the Veterans and the Civic Generation.

Mosier, 2001

Millennials' Generational Personality

- Seven Distinguishing Traits:
- Special: feeling of being vital to the nation and to their parents' sense of purpose
- Sheltered: kid safety rules, lockdown of public schools, sweeping national youth safety movement
- Confident: high levels of trust and optimism
- Team Oriented: classroom emphasis on group learning, school uniforms, tighter peer bonds
- Achieving: accountability and higher school standards
- Pressured: pressure to excel in many different areas
- Conventional: social rules can help; comfortable with parents' values

Strauss and Howe, 2000

Characteristics

- Technological sophistication: can process large amounts of visual information; advanced motor, spatial, and strategy skills via game technology
- Positive expectations
- Apparent bent for collective action
- Emphasis on civic duty
- Confidence
- Achievement oriented
- Sociability
- Morality
- Street smarts: knowledge about the dangers of gangs, guns, aids, anorexia, etc.

Zemke, Raines, and Filipczak, 2000

Characteristics

- Diversity
- "Soccer moms" as involved parents
- Feel more comfortable with style of the Veterans, not the Gen Xers or the Boomers
- Look like a modern, new version of grandparents and great-grandparents: belief in collective action; optimism about the future; trust in centralized authority; a will to get things done; and a heroic spirit in the face of overwhelming odds
- Have a stricter moral code/center

Zemke, Raines, and Filipczak, 2000

Millennials' Pace of Life

- "America's upwardly mobile, ultra-goal-oriented mindset has made teens feel more stressed than previous generations". The New York Times
- "At the start of my freshman year at the Madeira School, the dean of students told everybody that there supposedly was a difference between stress and pressure- that stress was bad and pressure good. He said that our school only causes pressure, not stress, which became the joke for the entire student body." Isabeau Strauss, 17

Strauss and Howe, 2000

Millennials' Community Emphasis

- "Schools have started programs to make freshmen feel more connected, as opposed to simply bewildered." Abraham McLaughlin
- "I think the thing that makes up a good community is having unity and working together. The bad thing is not working together, working against each other. That's not gonna make any kind of progress." Julia Dotson, 13
- "We do good things for the community; such as: picking up litter, tutoring younger children, collecting donations for children's shelters, bake sales, entertaining for community events, helping at animal shelters, making cards for the sick, planting flowers, and so much more." Lauren Lucas, 17, describing Kids, A.C.T., a group she formed in 1993 when she was 11 years old

Strauss and Howe, 2000

Millennials' Rising Standards

- "I just got off the phone with the mother of a 9-year-old who's a wreck because he can't remember his Shakespeare lines." Dee Shepherd-Look, Psychologist
- "My friend came home the other day bawling. When I asked her what was wrong, she said that she was getting a B in physics." Katheryn Wright, 17
- "It was one of those things a high-school senior could depend on: maintain a B-plus average and waltz into a major public university. Not any more. These days, even a perfect 4.0 grade-point average doesn't guarantee admission." Washington Post

Strauss and Howe, 2000

Millennials' Heroes

- Michael Jordan
- Princess Diana
- Mark McGwire, Sammy Sosa
- Mother Teresa
- Bill Gates
- Kerri Strugg
- Tiger Woods
- Christopher Reeves

Strauss and Howe, 2000

Seminal Events and Trends for Millennials

- Child focus
- Violence: World Trade Center, Oklahoma City Federal Building, Columbine High School
- Technology
- Busy, overplanned lives
- Stress
- Morality questions - Clinton/Lewinsky

Strauss and Howe, 2000

Today's College Students

The Millennials

- Gravitate toward group activity
- 8 out of 10 say "it's cool to be smart"
- Focused on grades and performance
- Busy with extracurricular activities
- Identify with parents' values; feel close to parents
- Respectful of social conventions and institutions
- Fascination for new technologies
- Racially and ethnically diverse

Strauss and Howe, 2000

Freshman Experience Base

- Most students entering college this past fall were born in 1986
- Photographs have always been processed in an hour or less
- The U.S. has always been a Prozac nation
- There have always been PIN numbers
- Computers have always fit in their backpacks
- Stores have always had scanners at the checkout
- We have always been mapping the human genome
- They have done most of their search for the right college online
- Aspirin has always been used to reduce the risk of a heart attack

Beloit College, 2004

Learning Preferences

- Teams, peer-to-peer
- Structure
- Engagement & experience
- Visual & kinesthetic
- Things that matter

Learning Strengths

- Multitasking
- Goal orientation
- Positive attitudes
- Collaborative style
- Technology savvy

Raines, 2002

First Generation College Student

Parents Graduated from College

No	37%
Yes, Both Parents	29%
Yes, Father Only	17%
Yes, Mother Only	14%
Do Not Know	3%

MSU CIRP & CSEQ, 2002

Distance From Home

50 or fewer miles	15.50%
51-100 miles	41.10%
101-500 miles	40.50%
Over 500 miles	2.80%

MSU CIRP & CSEQ, 2002

High School Experiences

Bored in class	47.70%
Studied with other students	78.40%
Asked teacher for advice after class	21.80%
Overslept and missed class or appointment	38.90%
Came late to class	66.40%
Used Internet for research or homework	75.20%
Communicated via email	54.20%
Used personal computer	75.70%
Drank beer	54.00%
Drank wine or liquor	60.10%
Felt overwhelmed by all I had to do	25.10%

MSU CIRP & CSEQ, 2002

Time Spent in Typical Week

Studying/Homework	Less than 1 hour	21.90%
	1-2 hours	30.60%
	3-5 hours	25.00%
	6-10 hours	11.80%
	More than 10 hours	5.80%
Socializing with friends	5 hours or less	20.60%
	6-10 hours	11.80%
	11-15 hours	4.30%
	16-20 hours	1.00%
	More than 20 hours	0.50%

MSU CIRP & CSEQ, 2002

Time Spent in Typical Week

Partying	None	14.30%
	1-2 hours	17.70%
	3-10 hours	38.30%
	More than 10 hours	16.40%
Working for pay	None	14.40%
	10 hours or less	21.50%
	11-20 hours	35.80%
	More than 20 hours	23.60%

MSU CIRP & CSEQ, 2002

Financing Education

Do you have any concern about ability to finance college education

None	22.10%
Some	62.90%
Significant	15.00%

How much of your first year's educational expenses do you expect to cover from:

Family (other than self)	84.30%
Savings (summer work)	83.30%
Other savings	54.20%
Part-time job off-campus	44.80%
Part-time job on-campus	34.80%
Stafford Loan	57.50%

MSU CIRP & CSEQ, 2002

Implications?

Parents of Today's College Students: The Boomer and Gen X Parents

The Love Affair with Babies

- Older parents (late Boomers & early Gen Xers)
- Smaller families (over half of all Millennials today have one or no siblings)
- More firstborn children (higher achievement, identification with parental authority, aversion to risk)
- More parental education (1 in 4 Millennials have at least one parent with a 4 yr. college degree)
- Slowing down of family breakup (growth has slowed with fewer divorced moms and more never-married moms)
- Selection of unique and crafted names

Strauss and Howe, 2000

The Rising Well-Being of Babies, Kids, and Teens

- Increase in pre-natal care
- Death rate for U.S. births has declined
- Mortality rate for U.S. teens has declined
- Self-Inflicted accidents and suicide rate for teens has declined
- "Kinderpolitics"

Strauss and Howe, 2000

Increased Family Focus

- Focus on child friendly divorce
- Parents are making new work-life choices
- Other family members are offering kinship care
- Employers, schools, and government are helping out
- Institutional child care has advanced

Strauss and Howe, 2000

Parental Care

- Kids are getting more supervision
- Kids are spending more time with their parents
- Families still spend time/do things together
- Child abuse is on the decline
- Parents are still disciplining their kids, although differently than before

Strauss and Howe, 2000

Top College Student Parent Concerns

- Staying informed
 - I don't understand.
 - How can I find out more?
- Dealing with issues of health
 - Will/Has something terrible happened?
 - I've got to find out what's wrong.
 - Why didn't she/he tell me? What could it be?
- Dealing with issues of safety
 - Is my student safe?
 - Who would be there if he/she was in trouble?
- Academics
 - Will my student be successful?

Johnson & Schelhas-Miller, 2000

Top College Student Parent Concerns

- The Big Three: Drinking, Drugs, and Sex
- Drinking
 - I'm worried about all of the drinking going on.
 - Why doesn't the college crack down on the parties?
 - I thought alcohol wasn't allowed in the residence halls.
- Drugs
 - Is she/he doing drugs?
 - Should I confront him/her?
- Sex
 - My son is sleeping with his girlfriend. I don't even know this girl.
 - What exactly does "hooking up" mean?

Johnson & Schelhas-Miller, 2000

Implications?

Presentation Resources

Oblinger, EDUCAUSE Live, 2004

Howe and Strauss, Millennials Rising: The Next Great Generation, 2000

Mosier, Our Current Generation of College Students: The Millennials, The University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, 2001

Beloit College, Mindset List for the Class of 2008, 2004

Zemke, Raines, and Filipczak, Generations at Work, 2000

Raines, Beyond Generation X, 2002

Johnson and Schelhas-Miller, The Essential Parenting Guide to the College Years, 2000