

Are “Digital Immigrant” Teachers’ Effective In Teaching “Digital Natives”? Need for Shift!

Dr. John M. Zamen

Lecturer and Tutor in Economics, Diploma of Business
 Monash College, Melbourne, Australia.

Email – john.zamen@monashcollege.edu.au, johnzamen@gmail.com

Abstract: *As an educator for over 30 years, I have had an opportunity to teach at numerous secondary and Higher Education colleges around the globe. I love teaching and fortunate to have experienced interacting students’ from diverse cultures and traditions. As well as I continually strive to understand the expectations of the new generation of learners and strive to adjust my teaching styles to make their learning experience a richer and more meaningful.*

The newest generation at the Higher Education campuses are the Millennials, a distinctive generation of young people who have brought along with them a phenomenal change in the learning environment and at work places. Born in 1982 through 2000, they are the most diverse and dynamic generation to teach having characteristics unique to the digital age.

Objective: *Teaching and learning has evolved over the years and today learning focuses on student learning (student centred) rather on teaching delivery (teacher centred).*

This paper attempts to investigate and explore the differences between the generations with respect to the use of technology, learning styles and attitudes towards learning relating to Millennials and Baby Boomers.

Keywords: *Digital immigrant teacher, digital native learner, millennial generation, baby boomer, learning styles.*

1. INTRODUCTION:

Many of today’s Higher Education campuses are being attended by students of Millennial generation. Millennial student are the most diverse generation and different from their predecessors who attended college earlier than them a decades ago. It poses a huge challenge for Higher Education and it is crucial that content delivery is adapted to the Millennial learning style. The Baby Boomer teaching faculty must develop instructional methods and delivery styles that will attract and produce effective learning outcomes of the Millennial student.

2. GENERATION DEFINED:

Years Born	Name	2018 Ages
1925 – 45	Silent Generation or Traditionalist	73 - 93
1946 – 64	Baby Boomers	54 - 72
1965 – 80	Generation X	38 - 53
1981 – 99	Millennials or Generation Y	19 - 37
2000 – 2009	Generation Z or Digital Natives	< 19
2010– present	Alphas	> 9

Generational identities from Baby Boomers to Millennials (Generation Y) and their role in shaping today’s society

The Baby Boomers, aka flower children

Perhaps the most influential generation in history, the “flower power” generation known for their pivotal roles in the civil rights movement, Woodstock music festival and the Vietnam War. The term “Baby Boomers” was derived due to dramatic rise in birth rates following World War II, when soldiers returned home from the War and had more time in creating babies, resulting in surge in current population and in future work force.

Baby Boomers play by rules, putting their work life first and living a true common man’s dream, which encompasses kids, 9 to 5 work career, house and simple living.

Generation X, aka the lost generation

Known as the “Sandwich”, generation as they are lodged in between the two big prominent generations, the Baby Boomers and the Millennials. Generation X are considered as the first “day care” generation, as many were raised by two working employed parents who worked or by a single divorced parent. This generation delayed marriages and child bearing to focus on academic and professionally developing themselves first.

They are the first generation to value work- life balance, possibly in response to experiencing the consequences of their parent’s work alcoholism and broken homes.

The Millennials, aka the narcissistic tech gurus

The first generation to reach adulthood in the new Millennium, the Millennials are the technology gurus that thrive on innovations, start- ups and working out at cafés. The youth between 20 to early 30 years old have redefined learning and workplace environment. Time magazine called them “The Me Me Me Generation”, because they want it all.

This tech savvy generation are raised by parents who were not authoritative but saw themselves as partners to this generation. The Millennials grew up making the rules rather than having their parents tell them what is right. They are known to be confident, entitled and depressed. Their lives are run by Smart technological digital gadgets that has nearly ruined their interpersonal skills, and as a result, depression is rampant in this generation.

3. WHO ARE THE MILLENNIAL LEARNERS’? Understanding the newest generation at the HE campuses

The generation is variously referred to as Generation Y, the Digital Generation, Internet Generation, N – Geners, the Nintendo Generation, the Sunshine Generation, Generation Google. According to Kaiser Family Foundation Study on average they spend 6.5 hours each day saturated in print, electronic, digital, broadcast and news media. They listen to and record music; view, create and publish internet content; play video games; watch television; talk on mobile phones; instant message and interacting with peers every day.

Cassandra’s Report (2005) identifies the following characteristics:

- Be in control: Millennials do not want to be bound by traditional schedules, and they do not necessarily want to be constraint to one place (whether classroom to learn or in a office to work). Instead, they prefer to use technology to study at anytime and anywhere. They define “balance” in their own individual ways.
- Like choice: Millennials use technology to complete tasks in new and creative ways. Their need for alternative methods to complete tasks presents challenges when using traditional measurements to define productivity.
- Group oriented and social: Millennials are socially connected with other individuals, communities and associating with peers around the globe. They are highly collaborative to share their learning with other peers.
- Inclusive: Millennials are tolerant towards all races, religions and sexual orientations. They are not limited by the information available locally. Instead they use world wide web (www.), the internet to search for information and use hyper texts links to divert from original searches and learn about more diversified subjects.
- Excessive practical users of digital technology: Digital technology has been a part of millennial lives and it provides support to their learning. Millennials can execute more functions with mobile phones, hand held devices and other wireless equipment than they can with traditional computers. They have developed their own language consisting of acronyms like “LOL” (Laughing Out Loud), “ATM” (At The Moment), “BTW” (By The Way). Technology has allowed Millennials to voice their opinion and concerns through social media that were not available in the past.
- Think differently: Millennials find technology simple, adapt to it and use it. They use technology only as a tool to find the information and to assist them in their learning but are not concern how it works. For example to do research they simply use “Google” as tool but not concerned to know “What is Google” and how it works.
- Risk takers: John, C.B. and Mitchell W. (2004) states Millennials have a common mentality, “If this doesn’t work out, we’ll try again” and on the contrary different to their parents who were less likely to take repeated and similar risks.
- Value time off: Millennials view life as uncertain and differently as they have viewed tragedies of shooting and terrorist attacks on television and Medias. Millennials want their own free time dictated according to their own terms. On the contrary, their Baby Boomer parents worked hard in anticipation of earning a certain status and financial back up before taking a break.

According to Howe and Strauss the Millennials are:

- Special: Millennials from early age are taught that they are “Special”, and they can be “anything they want to be”. The feeling of Specialness usually contributes to their strong relationship with their parents. Parents are

primary role models and there is a strong bond between Millennials and their parents particularly with their mothers. They stay connected via mobile phones, instant messages with their parents and look forward for their advice. Millennial parents have often been referred to as “helicopter parents” because they hover over their children and have been involved in virtually every aspect of their lives, thus over sheltering the children. Lowey (2001) refers this student-parent sharing relationship as a co - partnership.

Receiving awards participating in extra - curricular activities has enhanced this feeling of being Special. This generation have been taught, “all are winners” just for participating. Tolbzie (2008), called them the “Trophy Generation”, because they are used to being rewarded for participating.

- **Sheltered:** Millennials are the most protected generation in terms of government regulations on consumer safety. “Baby on Board” and safety locks exemplifies this generation. Millennials expects rules and regulations along with their enforcement.
Their lifestyle schedule are parent driven with little “leisure” time during childhood shuttling and accompanied from one activity to another.
- **Team oriented:** Millennials are less comfortable working independently. According to Coomes et al (2004); and Chickering et al (1987), independent work has a higher risk of personal failure and therefore they are not as confident working alone. Millennials are social learners and work best cooperatively on projects and participate within collaborative group settings.
- **Confident:** Millennials are highly optimistic. They have big dreams and expectations and are confident to attain them. Their ability to multi task with various forms of technology also enhances their confidence. They are mobile nomads, connected by mobile devices: phones, lap tops and have total access to each other and information commonly referred as 24/7 according to Prensky (2000).
- **Pressured:** Millennials feel pressured to constantly achieve high levels of learning outcomes and good performance. They are the generation that yearns for constant feedback, often feel handicapped and unable to proceed without proper feedback and direction.
- **Achievement:** Millennials have a strong desire to achieve. Throughout childhood they have been treated as Special and are told they can achieve great things according to Coomes et al (2004).
- **Conventional:** Millennials respect cultural differences, are socially accepted, and are part of a large spectrum of cultures, religion and sexual orientations.

4. WHAT IS THE MILLENNIAL LEARNER’S LEARNING STYLE?

- **Desire experimental, interactive and authentic learning experiences and prefer to learn by doing:** According to Dayna (2012), authentic learning involves open – ended, real world questions that promote critical thinking. Traditional instruction focuses more on teaching theory whereas authentic experience focuses on learning and experiencing real life problems. Starlink (2004)
Mangold (2007 pg. 21) states generally Millennials, “a group wants to know the “what” and “how” before learning the “why” in a new situationThey are more process oriented than outcome oriented”.
- **Impatient with linear thinking:** The trial and error approach is inherent to the Millennial generation which is borne out of a video game culture, “where persistence attempts pays off and reading the manual is not very helpful” states Mangold (2007). When playing computer games, according to Oblinger (2003) “losing is the fastest way to mastering a game, because losing represents learning”.
This is distinctively contrast with the earlier generation’s approach, which typically involved logic and rules according to Oblinger (2003). Despite the characteristics, Millennials appreciate activities that are structured and include clear instructions as well as guidance, according to McMohan & Jung (2011).
According to Wilson and Gerber (2008), they desire quick and prompt feedback on their performance.
- **Prefer to work and learn in teams:** According to Wilson and Gerber (2008 pg. 31), “Millennials have long worked in tasks groups and are skilled in collaborative effort”.
- **Technological literate:** Millennials see technology as a necessity as they’ve always been digitally connected. Computer are not perceived to be technology, but rather as tools and devices that are imperative for functioning in every day life.
According to Sweeney (2006), Millennials are adaptive, open to inter disciplinarily, are team workers and are ‘native of this new digital, consumer driven, flat, networked, instant satisfaction world. While some in the older generations may adopt quickly but they will always be “digital immigrant” and will never be as competent, resourceful or “natural” as the Millennial “natives” born into this new culture. Additionally, the Millennial generation are more engaged and motivated to learn in connected ways, ‘authentic learning experience’, or ‘real world’ contexts rather than sitting, listening to the educators’ lecturing the facts and theory to them.

5. HOW TO DESIGN MILLENNIAL LEARNER'S TEACHING INSTRUCTIONS?

The complexities of the Millennials' learning needs require us to 'repurpose' and 'redesign' teaching practices, and expects educators to approach classroom with new and inventive ways to impart learning. This new approach to teaching, applies many challenges to the Baby Boomers approach to teaching. In a traditional classroom, student sit and listen to the instructor, complete worksheets or take notes with a pen and paper and engage in other solitary activities according to Rosen (2011). Given the preferences and experiences of Millennials, this environment is likely to be undesirable, unsuitable and meaningless for this Millennial generation. The teaching design should include:

- **Incorporate active learning strategies:** Millennials learn by doing and interacting, so class time should be used for interactivity, demonstration and peer learning.

Active learning strategies are those that engage students in meaningful activities and require them to mentally engage in what they are doing, according to Prince (2004).

According to Sweeney (2006), active learning activities that require deeper engagement are particularly ideal, as this generation needs learning experiences that hold their interests.

- **Include real world, relevant examples and problems:** According to Prince (2009 pg.5). Millennials "do not typically value information for information's sake". Instead, they want to see how the learning affects them in their future career.

According to Keller (1987), establishing a clear connection between a course work and the "real world" can lead to increased motivation. Prince (2009), suggest strategies to connect course content to current events, using case studies, role-plays or taking field trips.

- **Utilize technology to enhance good teaching, not to replace good teaching:** One way to integrate technology as a learning tool, not as a replacement for effective teaching, is a good option for Millennials learners, given their flair and skill with it. According to Roberts, Newman and Schwartzstein (2012), besides technologies like smartphones, computers and the internet, this could include blogs, discussion boards, podcasts, video, e-learning or clickers or other quick response systems. Tucker and Courts (2010 pg. 37) suggested, the use of "multimedia" items, such as animation, slide shows, announcements, blogging and even instant messaging, when designing the lesson plan.
- **Allow student flexibility to do task in their own way:** Prensky (2010 pg. 185), made a forecast that "the future will no doubt bring something new, including, perhaps students learning totally on their own and in virtual groups of their own choice".

According to Oblinger (2003), Millennials enjoy learning through exploration, trial and error.

Millennials like to communicate through text messages and instant messaging, educators can create active learning environment in which student can use these communications methods at any time suggested by Watkins (2009).

According to Papp and Matulich (2011), Millennials favour online lectures, assignments, and test because they prefer "anytime, anyplace" rather than scheduled classroom activities..

- **Provide opportunities to work in teams and work collaboratively:** Many teachers especially the Baby Boomers learned by lectures and readings, on the contrary Millennials prefer interaction, active involvement, and demonstrations according to Papp and Matuchi (2011).

According to Oblinger and Oblinger (2005), Millennials value "learning through social interaction and are accustomed to working in teams."

They prefer self-paced, collaborative, team based and experimental learning according to Ca, Griffin and Bai (2009); Twenge (2006).

Papp and Matulich (2011), suggested teachers should use collaborative activities, case studies, discussions, role playing, simulations, brainstorming and group projects.

- **Deliver, knowledge in small doses:** Millennials process information differently than their Baby Boomers (teachers) according to Twenge (2006), they need to receive information in concept maps, which may foster retention. They are usually turned off by lectures, they can learn more by reflection and building concept maps outside the classroom, according to Papp and Matulich (2011). They also suggested breaking the class lesson in small 'chunks' of 10 minutes each using different learning techniques, giving them time to reflect and interact, and using relevant experiences that will be meaningful to them.

Due to student's short attention span is around 15 minutes during a lecture, breaking up a lecture with active learning activities can help students remain engaged in the learning process, according to Prince (2004).

Therefore, teachers should continuously improve and re design to enhance their courses, catering to students' needs and learning styles.

The physical environment As well needs to be given attention in which students learn since they prefer "any time, any place" an informal learning spaces to more formalized ones. Since the excessively use technology, they demand a wireless environment where they can connect to the Internet and share information in the form of email,

instant messaging, blogs and the ability to search for information on the web. Flexible classroom with moveable chairs and even walls help to diminish the visual barriers and enable group interaction as suggested by Skipton et al (2006).

6. NEED FOR SHIFT! IN TEACHING MILLENNIAL LEARNERS'

Millennials are “any time, any place”, learners and prefer an online environment from lectures to assignments to homework to testing, faculty need to incorporate such learning into their course, suggested by Latchem (2009); Conrad (2008). To accommodate the Millennials’ learning styles, all course materials should be posted and accessible online and preferably in portable formats according to Lonn and Teasley (2009).

For Millennials the ability to access course materials when they want and not only limited and restricted when class is in session.. The Learning Management System (LMS) is an online environment such as Blackboard™ or Moodle™, make it easy to communicate with students who prefer accessibility of information on their terms as stated by Cao et al. (2009). Learning Management System allows any organization to develop electronic coursework, deliver it with unprecedented reach and flexibility, and manage it’s continued use over it.

An LMS allows users to:

- **Create** eLearning content
- **Organize** the content into courses
- **Deliver** the content (either internally or to wider internet audience)
- **Enrol** students in course
- **Monitor** and **assess** students (e.g. attendance, grades)

Online lectures free up classroom time for debates, discussions, presentation, and other inter activities. Student report higher satisfaction with out of class or online lectures, as they can watch or listen to them when they want anytime and anywhere. According to Matulich et al (2008), these student learn visually. They like to “rewind” and repeat portions of these lectures an option which is unavailable in a live classroom.

Role play is another way of engaging student. Discussing a topic and use of a simulation where student explore and learn by doing.

According to Black (2007); Borja (2005); Krause (2005), they frequent online discussion boards and engage to blog or write in web page or journals. Most popular learning environment today involve the use of Wikis (online editable web encyclopaedias) and Blogs according to McGee et al. (2007); Jakes (2006). Most Learning Management System have Wiki and Blog features, encourage Millennials to discuss topics in class using Blogs and Journals.

Millennials need time to digest the information they are processing. Online Learning Management System is an excellent way to provide for reflection as an online discussion and forum which can begin before the class session and/or continue long after the class is over, according to Cao et al (2009); Cragg et al (2008); Jones et al (2005). According to Chen (2005); Peltier et al (2005), these students learn by building concept maps that they may not “get it” in the classroom, but rather later on after they have reflected on it. Blogs are an excellent reflection tools.

Millennials have grown up with technology and it’s part of their everyday life. We as instructors need to become more comfortable with technology and incorporate it into the classroom and into their courses. Course delivery methods should employ technology where appropriate and offer the student several learning options.

We should look forward to update ourselves with newest technologies; attend workshops and conferences to learn about the new and latest technologies. Modify our teaching practice; “a multidimensional approach is key to success”.

I teach at Monash College, Melbourne, Australia, to meet the needs of this new generation of students a variety of technological tools are used to deliver resources that can be accessed anytime and anywhere. It gives teacher to create and deliver content, organise courses, manage users, and monitor the progress of multiple users all with relative ease. Such as

Moodle: The Learning Management System, which offers various features to fulfil the current learning needs of Millennials:

1. Social Learning
2. Adaptive Learning
3. m Learning
4. Cloud hosting
5. Micro Learning
6. Gamification
7. Analytics
8. e Commerce



Echo360: The Echo360 Active Learning Platform helps teachers' to engage students before, during and after class and gauge their progress along the learning journey through learning analytic anytime, anywhere to help keep students on the road to success.

The Echo360 Lecture Capture system allows instructors to record, edit, and publish live lectures and screencasts. Echo360 Classroom Lecture Capture records everything that happens in a live class, including audio, video, and any slides or software displayed on the classroom projector. Completed recordings are automatically uploaded to the Echo360 cloud service and converted to streaming video. Your recording can be edited if you wish using Echo360's editing tools and publish it to your Canvas or course site.



7. CONCLUSION:

The educator's role has evolved from being the content expert, to a developer of life-long learning as well. The Millennial generation is no longer the type of student's our educational system was designed to teach. The traditional teaching method, such as "sage on the stage" is not a popular approach teaching the Millennials. By understanding the Millennial student, how they learn, the educator will be more successful in creating a learning centred environment. The Millennial has brought changes to teaching and learning in three aspects: who they are, what they like, and how they learn. The Millennials are very flexible, and can be described as having a high esteem. They like highly connected with their peers and the world. Millennials learn better in groups and prefer to use their portable digital devices. They use audio/visual/kinaesthetic learning styles and prefer to learn practical knowledge and skills. Therefore to take advantage of these changes and be successful, today's teachers and especially Baby Boomer teacher's should reposition themselves by (1) changing the way they can foster curiosity and passion to learn and (2) by changing their approach to teaching and learning to Millennial students. Firstly, curiosity and passion to learn can be achieved by using technology, online activities, multi- media, social network, allowing them to learn on their own terms, using interaction, active involvement and demonstrations and giving information in small concept maps. Secondly, to be an effective Millennials teacher (1) Millennials are excellent team players according to Krader (2010), so student should be encouraged to work in groups. (3) Teachers should allow students to learn through experience and to reflect on learning experience according to Cao et al (2009); Parker (2012). This generation is a collaborative and social generation that has a focus on understanding and building their knowledge through various forms of medium to discover the information and answer to the query, which can be supported by LMS such as Moodle a competent learning platform enriching learning experience for the Millennials. It is for the educator to provide an area for engagement and discovery as well as be a content expert and mentor.

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