

# Strategies for Educating GEN Y & Z

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## Abstract

Educating today's higher education student is a difficult and challenging endeavor. Society, government, the business community and parents all have needs and expectations they demand universities fulfill. The current economic reality, global competition, and demeanor of today's generation of young people all collaborate to derail the educational process.

Since the late seventies Universities have struggled with educating the Millennial Generation and now on their heels come Generation Z, individuals who have never known life without access to the Internet or connections through their smartphones. We have progressed from Digital Natives to Mobile Natives. This Special Session will explore the challenges and techniques of meeting the unique demands and needs of Generation Y and the aspects that can be tweaked and adapted to Generation Z.

Millennials were born between 1977 and 1994, a range that directly corresponds to the typical college student's age (Pew 2010). Their millennial label is a simple reference to the "first generation to come of age in the new millennium" (Pew, p.4). With numbers larger than their parent's baby boom generation, these young people have influenced the social, political, cultural, business and educational landscape with the impact of a nuclear weapon.

Howe and Strauss have written several books on the millennial peer group in which they specify seven vital traits, they include: sheltered, confident, achieving, team-oriented, conventional, pressured, and special (2007). According to the authors, understanding the relevance of these terms to the behavior of millennials is indispensable for effective communication and interaction. In her book, *Generational Learning Styles*, Julie Coates laments the growing mismatch between professors and students when it comes to instruction and learning and concludes by providing several learning strategies (2007). Williams, Beard and Tanner are the most recent experts on educating college students, and they have formulated

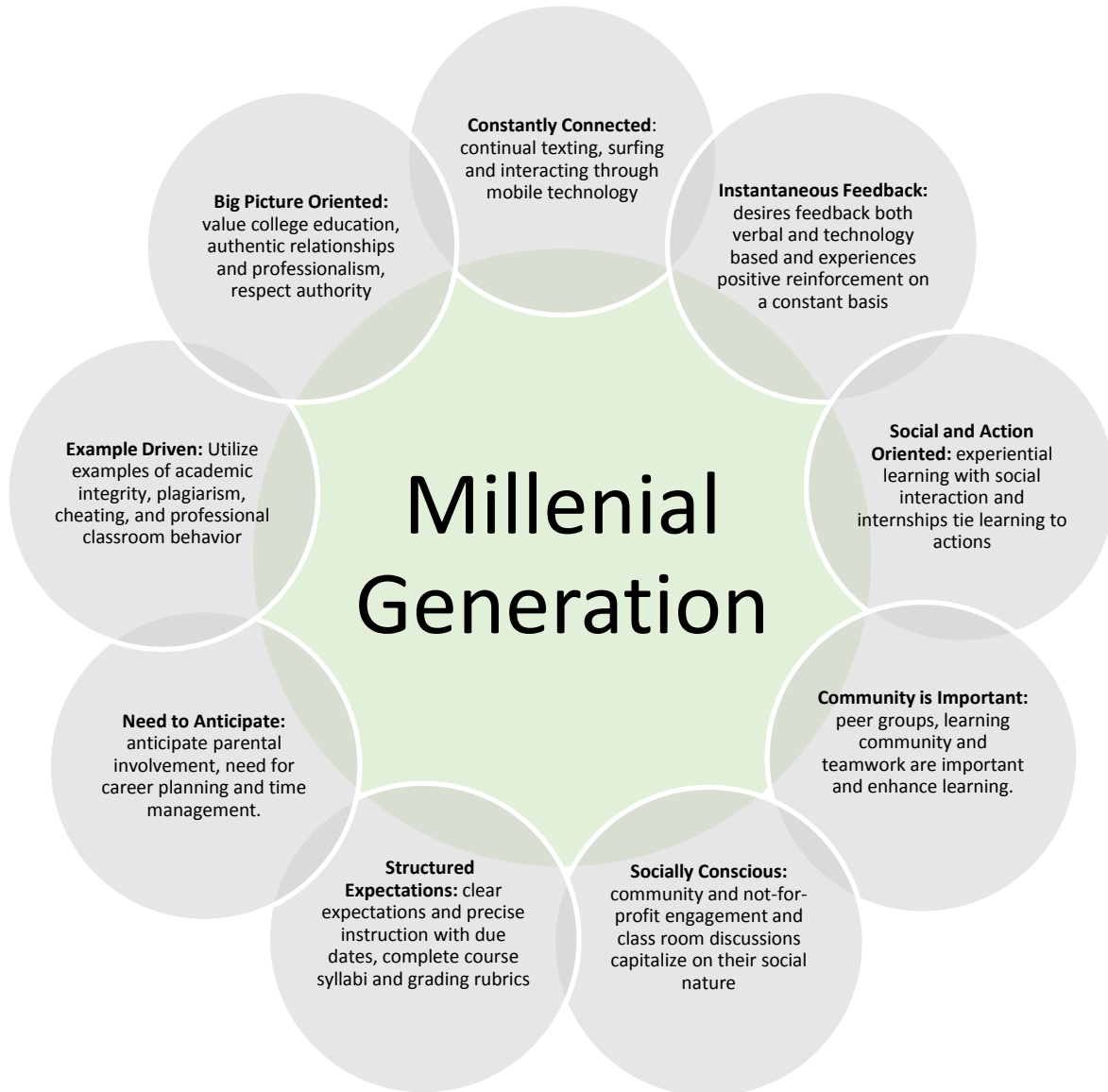
similar approaches (2011). Blending the suggestions of the previous authors the following key impressions of millennial college students emerged and is presented in Figure 1.

Generation Z members were born between 1995 and 2012, and have developed their own behavior and personality. Molded by endless wars and Recessions, they are exhibiting more pragmatism and conservative tendencies. Shunning the exhibitionism and voyeurism of Facebook, they are more private and protective of their personal brand than Millennials (Williams, 2015). They are always on Social Media and consume massive amounts of content (Hulyk 2015). Private, cautious and in control are driving concepts of their behavior (Williams 2015). Unlike Millennials who had helicopter parents that played the role of *lifesaver* throughout their lives, GEN Z parents have produced a more sober, realistic traditionalist.

Gen Z watch more than two hours of YouTube and spend at least 3 hours on their computers each day (Hulyk, 2015). They are regularly consuming so much information that the National Center for Biotechnology and the U.S. National Library of Medicine have reported changes in their brains to process data faster (Sparks & Honey, 2014).

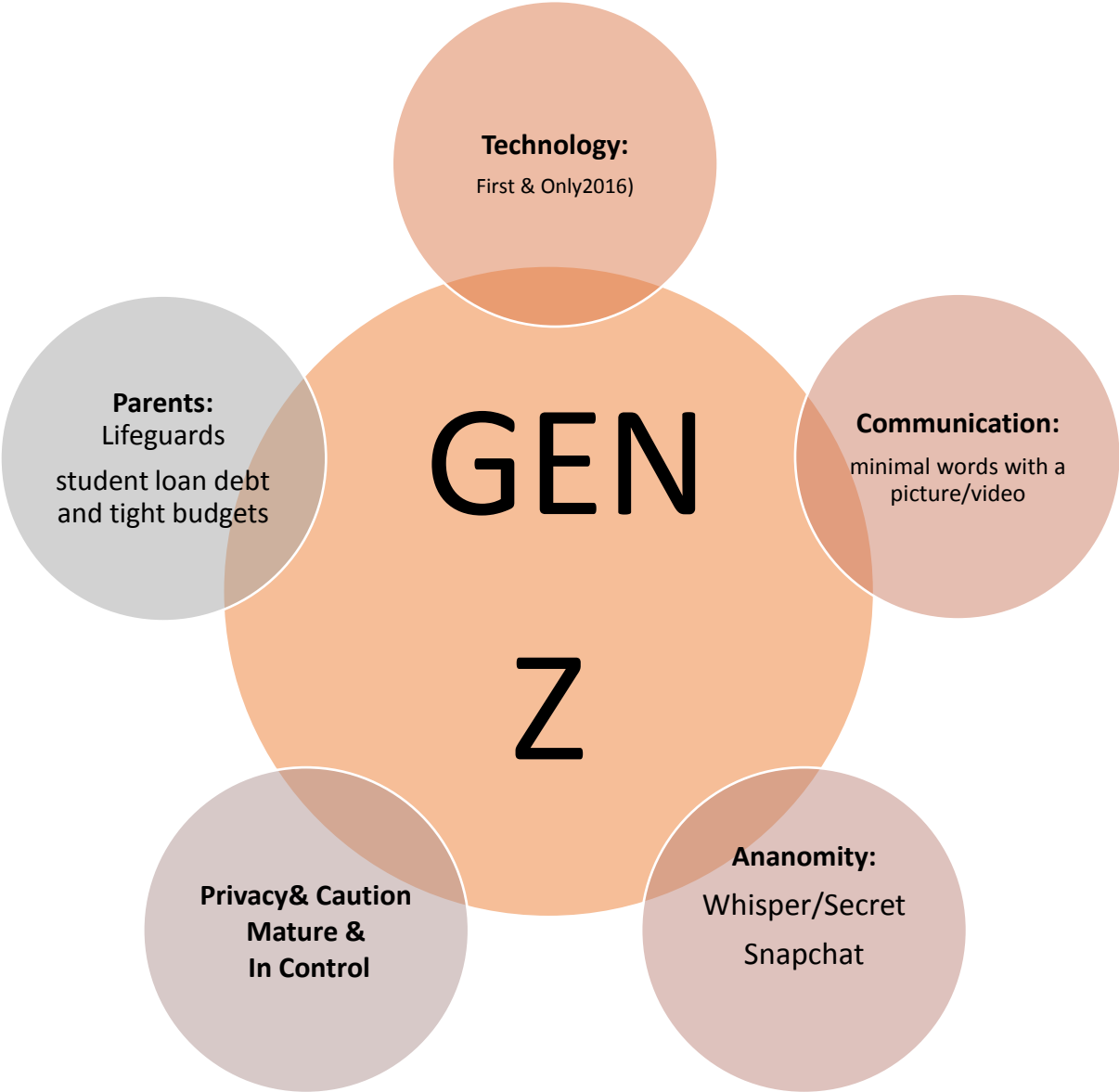
Trained by an educational system that emphasized mainstreaming, diversity and differentiated instruction, they consider everyone equal. This equality is reflected in winning or losing and has created a generation of collaborative team players. Gen Z is a multiracial, gender blurred cohort that tends to be high achievers who easily adapt and possess a strong sense of self.

FIGURE 1



(Coates 2007; Howe and Strauss 2007; Williams, Beard and Tanner 2011)

FIGURE 2



(Kingston, 2014; Hulyk, 2015; Rigik, 2015; Williams, 2015; Crappell, 2016)

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## Relevance to Marketing Educators, Researchers and Practitioners:

Marketing Professors diligently struggle to educate the Millennial Generation and most of the time it is challenging and rewarding. Now on their heels come an entirely new group of cohorts, Generation Z. Individuals who have never known life without access to the Internet or connections through their smartphones. We have progressed from Digital Natives to Mobile Natives. This Special Session will explore the challenges and techniques of meeting the unique demands and needs of Generation Y and the aspects that can be tweaked and adapted to accommodate Generation Z.

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**TRACK: Special Sessions**