

Gen Z Teachers

Dreams and Challenges



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Gen Z Teachers: *Dreams and Challenges*

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Introduction

Gen Z have their own way of thinking about things. They are reared in the age of instant gratification through on-demand videos, apps, and many struggle with focus and persistence when things get tough. They are accustomed to personalized content and have a feeling that nothing is out of their reach; it's all possible. They are more socially active online than in real life. For Gen Z, the problem happens online. Problems with social media can impact their personal feelings and hence have a higher tendency to feeling depressed and anxious.

General Characteristics of Gen Z

The characteristics of Gen Z serve as a tool for the purpose of understanding and identifying the Gen Z in classrooms.

Digital Natives: Gen Z is the first generation to grow up with internet access, playing on computers and tapping on smart phones and some members can't remember a life without it.

For them, there is little or no separation between in-person and online experiences.

Socialize Online: They rely on social media to connect, watch, listen, read, play and share. The most popular platforms change and shift over time, but right now one can expect students in this generation to spend roughly time on Snapchat, TikTok, Instagram and YouTube.

In-person Interaction: Members of this generation also value face-to-face interaction and collaboration that extend into the classroom, and it is identified that 57% of Gen Z prefer in-person learning activities with classmates.

On-demand Experiences: When they want to watch a movie, there's Netflix. When they want to buy something, there's Amazon. Much of Gen Z's life is lived on demand, influenced by algorithms that populate their news feeds, suggest content and recommend products.

Shorter Attention Spans: The research found out the average Gen Z attention span as just eight seconds, compare that to Millennials, who clock in at 12 seconds on average. Possible explanations for the drop include the pervasiveness of on demand services and smartphones.

Gen Z are Practical: They value self-reliance and independence, particularly when it comes to self-directed learning. They're likely to search a video on YouTube to learn a new skill or explain a new concept. Their pragmatic attitude extends to matters of money and social issues as well.

Preparation of Teachers for Gen Z Classrooms

Provide Assignments in Multiple Formats: Providing assignments in multiple formats, will accommodate Gen Z, who prefer digital format as well as those who work best with traditional paper and pen. Also consider implementing video into assignments when it seems appropriate. To take this even further, consider creating assignments where the students themselves have choices to submit in various formats. For example, an assignment where the student must demonstrate hospitality when a guest is being challenging. Rather than have students submit written answers, the teachers could allow them to pair up and videotape some role playing and have them submit that.

Usage of Personal Devices: Remember the days when teachers had students drop their cell phones in a basket at the classroom door. But for young adult Gen Z, using personal devices in the classroom is a way of giving them their safety. Cell phones can

be used constructively to record lectures, take photos of the white board or otherwise use cell phones productivity apps to learn better. Visual imagery in the form of video is their preferred method of receiving information. YouTube is a favourite learning resource for everything

Personalize the Instruction: Gen Z expect personalized content. Emails can be sent to individual students, if possible, every day. Tailored lessons can be offered for individual students. Once having created these lessons students can be easily tweaked in the following semesters/years. Besides, the payoff will be huge, when students respond to the personal treatment they receive in the classroom.

Offer Online Communication: Some students need extra help outside the classroom. Chat or Skype help can be offered instead of traditional class hours. Gen Z love being able to quickly reach out from their home via online chat or a video chat app. One can still set boundaries with off-hours limits, but the availability in a format they love will really resonate with the way Gen Z interacts with the world. These ideas are different than what one may be used to as a teacher. But giving Gen Z the support and foundation, they crave to be a success in the world will be very satisfying.

Methodologies for Gen Z Teachers

The following methodologies can be adopted in curriculum mapping and lesson planning processes:

Cross-Disciplinary Assignment: Connect and promote learning across several subjects, from STEM to arts and language. Not only does this serve to keep Gen Z students engaged, but it also provides opportunities for them to learn in the ways that suit their individual needs best.

Student Informed Learning: Students should be given opportunities to get involved in their own development. More choice in how they want to consume classroom materials, complete assignments, receive assessment and access resources can be offered.

Experiential Learning: Build in opportunities for community-centred learning that involves hands-on solutions to real-world problems. Authentic learning activities, for example, engage students with meaningful work that has a useful outcome for a genuine audience.

Integrated Technology: Smartphones should not be left in front of the classroom, but find ways to include them in the lessons. Tech can be used when it comes to engaging a generation of tech-savvy students with shorter attention spans.

Visual Aids: Videos can be integrated and kept in short format in particular, with a curated set of videos from YouTube, own contents can be created for the classroom, or students are asked to co-create their Additional resources in reaching Gen Z students.

Tips for Enhancing Gen Z Teachers

Harness the Power of Music: Starting class by playing a song (or even a music video) from a particular country or region can be a great way to expand students' cultural horizons while engaging their attention through multimedia. For instance, a French teacher could consider beginning every class with a song from a prominent French artist. For language learners, this has the added benefit of helping with oral comprehension and pronunciation.

Try Digital Exchange: Exchange programmes can be hugely enriching for young learners but it's not always feasible to take class on an international trip. However, students can still experience the cultural enrichment and international relationship building of a physical exchange through digital technology. Take it to the next level by having them join the class virtually over video messaging.

Introductory Video: If a picture is worth a thousand words, then a video must be worth well, a lot. In any case, when the teacher can't be there in person, a video is the next best thing. Make a video to introduce the name and other details to the exchange partners.

Teacher Swap: Trade teachers for a day or a period. The colleague abroad prepares a lesson plan for the class and vice versa and teach it as though for their regular class. Take it to the next level by having them join the class virtually over video messaging.

Digital Pen Pals: Pair the students with a digital pen pal in the other class and encourage them to start messaging through their school email account.

Get Social: Social media has become a major driving force of political and social movements. Used properly, it can enable students to observe landmark political decisions and protests as they happen in real-time. If an international event related to a particular subject has been dominating newspaper headlines, the students can be allowed to take social media as digital anthropologists to investigate first hand. If students aren't provided with their own device through the school, make sure to borrow enough for the class.

Create Objectives: To avoid the pitfalls of social media distraction, set a clear objective or question for students to investigate and a time limit to complete it in. Allow time for review and discussion at the end so that students can share their findings.

Motivational Factors for Teachers

Five factors that contribute to teachers' motivation to integrate tech include:

- i. Long-term continuous development of teachers
- ii. Tech specialist teachers to help students learn computer skills
- iii. Partnerships and cooperation among teachers
- iv. Support from leaders and administrators and
- v. Adequate equipment to support the tech in the classroom

Issues on New Technology

Unfamiliarity is a major barrier for adoption of new tech but is rarely a case of simple technophobia. Properly integrating new technology that is meant to redefine practices, can be difficult for many reasons.

Communication is Key: How teachers perceive a new technology and its purpose has a big impact on how well the tool will be utilized.

Organizational Change: It's disorienting when long used systems of 'staying on top of things' change.

Time Management: Integrating technology may be seen as yet another thing to do in the classroom where time is at a premium.

Lack of Sandbox Time: While training did occur, there was insufficient time to explore and make meaningful connections for how this technology will work in 'my class'.

Embarrassment: Teachers are asked to teach and motivate kids in using the new technology often before they themselves become familiar with the system(s).

Benefits of Tech Tools

The right technology combined with executive integration can have tremendous benefits for both students and teachers. Executive implementation of communication technologies promotes a facilitative role for teachers, while students become active participants who take responsibility for their learning. The teacher's role continues to be important in this space, as

students (often thought of as 'digital natives'), must learn how to use these tools for 21st Century learning.

For Students

- i. Students are able to learn at their own pace, reviewing material as needed
- ii. Improves collaboration, problem solving, and communication
- iii. Access to up-to-date, primary source material and
- iv. Opportunities for expressing understanding via multimedia.

For Teachers

- i. Fewer classroom management issues because students are engaged
- ii. Methods of collecting/recording data
- iii. Ways to collaborate with students, teachers, and experts around the world
- iv. Provides opportunities to differentiate instruction
- v. Giving them more power in the school and
- vi. Making their administration more efficient.

Conclusion

Gen Z are generally more concerned about the environment creating a sustainable future and addressing inequalities and

injustices around the world. Much of this care and concern is cultivated in the classrooms. Teachers should encourage this behaviour by indulging in socially and environmentally conscious events at classrooms. Techniques like easing teachers' financial burdens, leveraging teachers favoured social media connections and appeal to their social consciousness are valuable for learning, which will enhance educator intermediaries. Not only that, but memorable national celebration days develop an association with teachers, parents and students alike.

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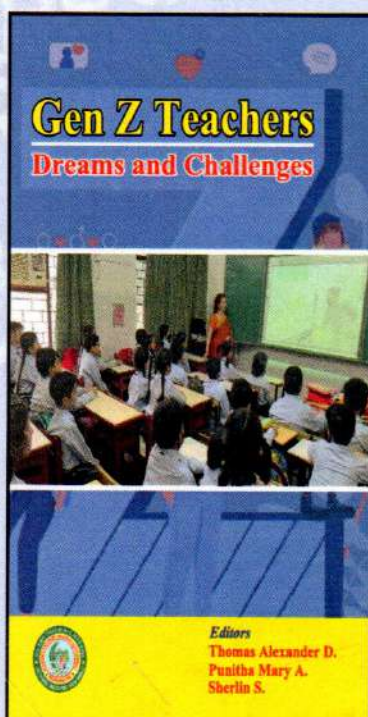
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Technology can't replace teachers ... but teachers who use technology will probably replace teachers who do not. Since, we are in the era of technological explosion, technology influences the field of education too. In the present context of teaching-learning process, all the learners belong to Gen Z category who are digital natives and the most of the teachers are digital immigrants; this technological gap remains as the greatest challenge for the 21st century teachers.

Gen Z have been exposed to the internet and various social networks, producing a hyper cognitive generation, very comfortable with collecting and cross-referencing many sources of information and with integrating virtual and offline experiences. They constantly evaluate unprecedented amounts of information and influences. They are more interested in establishing their identities than the previous generations who have been in the struggles of human life. Thus, the expectations, demands and needs of the learners are changing and accordingly the teachers have to update themselves. The teachers with technology, understand the ideology of Gen Z, can be efficient teachers; otherwise, they will be completely ignored by the Gen Z learners.

"Technology will never replace great Teachers,
but in the hands of great teachers, it's transformational"

- George Couros.

