

Teaching Generation Z Students in the Technology-Driven World

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Today, higher education is experiencing significant changes in its recruitment, retention, graduation, and accreditation. Faculty professional development is considered a key for the success of Generation Z students. As a result, faculty are interested to modify their teaching environment. More and more faculty are flipping their traditional courses and offering either hybrid or online courses. Blended learning means that students receive instruction in both face-to-face and online environments. Embedded within the concept is an assumption that blended teaching environments also give students some control over the pace, flow, or focus of their learning activities. Also, blended learning prepares students for full online courses. Research indicates that empowering students to have organization in their education leads to many positive outcomes, including that students do better in inequality of access situations, are able to personalize their learning and achieve regardless of ability, and build dispositional skills, such as executive functioning, perseverance, self-awareness, and tolerance for uncertainty, that many believe are necessary to thrive in current and future societies. This chapter explains current practices and the potential of digital learning initiatives to teach Generation Z in the technology-driven world.

INTRODUCTION

Unlike the other generations who have gone before them – Millennials (Generation Y), Gen X and Baby Boomers, the Generation Z (Gen Zers) were born after 1995 into a world where the internet, social media and mobile technology always existed and excited them (Swanzen, 2018; Ascione, 2019). Indeed, generation Z has officially entered colleges and is disrupting the way learning happens in higher education. Gen Z-ers tend to embrace social learning environments, where they can be hands-on and directly involved in the learning process. These students expect on-demand services that are available around the clock with an open access. Indeed, these students are more career-focused earlier in their college careers. Generation Z expects digital learning tools such as these to be deeply integrated into their education. In fact, technology has always been a fully integrated experience into all facets of their lives. Consequently, these students do not think education should be any different. For these students, learning is not limited to just face-to-face in the classroom. This is something that can take place at anytime, anywhere. They believe they should be able to seamlessly connect academic experiences to the technology driven world. Traditional and new faculty who teach the digital learners are moving with the flow to empower new generation students and engaging them with digital feedback, flexibility, frequent rewards, short meeting break-ups and modifying their courses digitally.

In recent years, empowering students to take ownership of their learning emerged as a major goal for higher education institutions. Research indicates that empowering students to have organization in their education that leads to many positive outcomes, including that students do better in inequality of access situations, are able to personalize their learning and achieve regardless of ability and build dispositional skills, such as executive functioning, perseverance, self-awareness and tolerance for uncertainty, that many believe are necessary to thrive in current and future societies (ISTE, 2016). Today, higher education is experiencing significant changes in this changing world towards their recruitment, retention, graduation, and accreditation. Faculty professional development is considered a vital key for the success of Generation-Z students. As a result, faculty are interested to modify their teaching environment. More and more faculty are flipping their traditional

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