The Millennial Learner: Challenges and Opportunities

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Desired outcomes
• You will have a better understanding of today’s undergraduate students
• You will have strategies to make their college experience more productive
• You will see positive changes in your students’ learning and behavior
• You will experience an increase in your job satisfaction

The Millennial Learner 2001!
• Undergraduate Student
• Traditional College Age (17 – 24)
• Attending College in 2001 or beyond

1970’s Learners vs. Millennial Learners
• Producer mentality vs. Consumer Mentality
• Very limited Computer Access vs. Ubiquitous Computer Access
• Tolerant of Non-engaging Pedagogical Techniques vs. Impatient with Non-Engaging Pedagogical Techniques

1970’s Faculty vs. Millennial Faculty
• 25 years older than the students
• Used primarily lecture format
• Knew little about learning mechanisms and strategies
• 25 years older than the students
• Use primarily lecture format
• Know little about learning mechanisms and strategies
Communication Gap
Middle Aged Faculty vs Millennial Student
47 years old vs 21.6 years old

Counting Vowels in 30 seconds
How accurate are you?

1970’s College vs Millennial College
Teacher Centered Institution vs Learner Centered Institution

Consumer Mentality

BOTTOM-LINE LEARNERS
Learning not for sake of learning and thrill of knowledge
Studying to pass the test, pass the course, and get the degree

FISHING RODS VS. SEAFOOD DINNERS
Faculty Must Make the Case For Learning
Active, engaged learning is key
Why the Millennial Learner Needs Engagement

- Increasing number of students diagnosed with ADD/ADHD
- Increasing alcohol consumption among college students
- Lack of basic study skills

Increasing Numbers of ADD/ADHD Diagnoses

In 1998: 3.69% of entering freshmen were diagnosed with learning disorders, including ADD/ADHD

Increase in Binge Drinking

In 1999, 2 of 5 students (44%) were binge drinkers.
1999 Harvard School of Public Health College Alcohol Study

Resulting Alcohol Related Problems
Missed Class (62.5%)
Falling behind (46.3%)

Lack of Basic Study Skills

Fall 1998 entering freshmen had averaged one hour a day of studying in their senior year of high school.

Students with a GPA of 3.7 or higher...

- STUDIED OVER 30 HRS. PER WEEK OUT OF CLASS
- REVIEWED MATERIAL PRIOR TO CLASS
- STAYED 1-2 CHAPTERS AHEAD IN TEXT
- REVIEWED NOTES AFTER CLASS
- VISITED PROFESSOR/INSTRUCTOR/TUTOR
- STUDIED IN SMALL GROUPS (3-5) SEVERAL TIMES PER WEEK
- ASKED QUESTIONS, ASKED QUESTIONS, ASKED QUESTIONS!!!
Students with a GPA of 2.0 or less...

- Studied 8-12 hrs. per week out of class
- Did not reviewed material prior to class
- Stayed 1-2 chapters behind in text
- Did not reviewed notes after class
- Rarely discussed classwork with others
- Rarely asked questions
- In effect, they were still in high school

Four year study, R. B. Landis, California State University, 1993

Stages of Learning

- Acquisition (understanding the information)
- Fluency (being able to discuss it in your own words)
- Application
- Generalization

Pedagogical Strategies that Engage the Learner

- Collaborative Learning, Peer-Led Learning, Supplemental Instruction
- Problem Based Learning, Case Based Learning
- Service-Learning
- Learning Communities, Residential Colleges

Programs and Strategies that work at LSU

- Supplemental Instruction
- The Absent Professor program
- Continuous process of learning
- Intense study strategies
- www.cas.lsu.edu

Faculty and Staff Must Help Students Learn How to Learn
Continuous Process of Learning

Phase One: Read or preview chapter(s) to be covered in class... before class. (Create chapter maps)
Phase Two: Go to class! Listen actively, take notes, participate.
Phase Three: Review and process class notes as soon after class as possible.
Phase Four: Incorporate intense study sessions.
Repeat

www.cas.lsu.edu

Intense Study Sessions

- **5 minutes**: Set goals for next 40 min.
- **40 minutes**: Read text more selectively/highlight
  - Make doodles/notes in margins
  - Create mnemonics
  - Create maps
- **5 minutes**: Review what you have just studied
- **10 minutes**: Take a break
- Repeat

Keys to Studying Smarter

- There is a hierarchy of learning levels.
- It takes time to climb the ladder of understanding.
- Knowing your learning style increases learning.

Learning Styles

- **Visual**
  - concept maps
  - charts, diagrams
- **Auditory**
  - lectures, debates, discussions
- **Kinesthetic**
  - simulations, field trips, research projects

Helping Students Modify Inappropriate Behavior

- Specify appropriate behavior early and often
- Reward appropriate behavior
- Impose consequences for inappropriate behavior

The Role of Academic Support Centers in Facilitating Learning

Provide faculty and TA’s with information on characteristics of their students and on learning strategies they can teach students

Assist faculty in advising students about effective study skills (Absent Professor Program)

Help students identify the problem with their performance (e.g. vowel counting vs. word usage)
In conclusion

Millennial learners CAN change their attitudes and behaviors about learning. BUT, faculty and staff must help them do this.

Final Note

Please visit our website at www.cas.lsu.edu.
We have on-line workshops and information that introduce you and your students to effective study strategies. Please feel free to contact me at smcgui1@lsu.edu, or call me at 225.578.6749. I wish you great success this year.

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