From We to Me to Gee Whiz!
The Millennial Deaf Student

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Overview

• A composite of several presentations and articles on the Millennials (listed on the Resources page) with the Deaf Perspective factored in.

• What are the Generations and Millennials?

• Who are the Millennials?

• What are the impacts shaping the Millennials?

• What are the implications for educators?
Ready or Not, Here We Come!
A Framework for Understanding Generations

A cohort-group approximating a phase span of life (~20 years)

Phase spans: 0-21, 22-43, 44-65, 66+

Each generation has its own personality and that personality subsequently shapes other generations. -- Strauss and Howe, 1991

Birth Cohorts: **Silents** (1925-1942); WE the **Boomers** (1943-1960); ME the **Generation X** (1961-1981); & GEE WHIZ, the **Millennials** (1982-present)
Which generation is this?

- This group grew up during the post Watergate era and the energy crisis.
- They were in many cases children of divorce and nontraditional family units.
- Many were latchkey kids who were raised on electronic media (television, Atari 2600s).

**Generation X** 1961-1981

Howe N. & Strauss W.
Which generation is this?

- More likely to live in two-income household.
- Have children at home
- Have the basic feeling of security
- More likely than others to focus on education
- Have the higher level of education
- 88.8% of this generation completed high school

Baby Boomers 1943-1960

Howe N. & Strauss W.
Which generation is this?

- This group was born at a time when it was considered natural and appropriate for families to have large numbers of children.
- This generation wed early.
- This generation are about 95% retired at this point.
- This group was during the great depression.

Silent Generation 1925-1942

Howe N. & Strauss W.
Which generation is this?

- Sheltered
- They have experienced a positive economy while moving through their school years
- This generation grew up on kid safety rules, lockdown of public schools, sweeping national youth safety movement
- Technological sophistication
- Used to diversity
- Abrupt loss of innocence

Millennial Generation

1982-present

Howe N.& Strauss W.
Who are the Millennial Students?

- Born in or after 1982
- Presently 80 million (largest generation)
- The oldest entered college Fall of 2000
- Life expectancy of 75 years
- Authority figures (Parents) in their lives tend to be Boomers
- Respectful of social conventions & mores
- Trained to be doers and achievers
- 80% have general purpose credit cards
- 122 Billion dollars spending power as consumers
- 77% have cell phones; 41% access internet this way
- 72% check email daily and use internet for library research
Historical and Social Influences

- 9-11 and Iraq war
- Columbine
- Oklahoma City Bombing
- Princess Di’s death
- Clinton Impeachment Trial
- O.J. Simpson Trial
- Rodney King riots
- Increasing national diversity & immigration
- Girl Power
- www, MP3’s, iPods, Cell Phones
- Spirituality, Political Leanings
Some Historical and Social “Givens” for Deaf Students since 1980’s

- ASL as a language
- Deaf Theatres/ Bragg and NTD; Waterstreet and Deaf West Theatre – Deaf on TV: Linda Bove/Sesame St, Marlee Matlin/Reasonable Doubt, Deanne Bray/FBEye
- Supreme Court Amy Rowley 1981
- Academy Award Winner Marlee Matlin/1986
- IKJordan/Deaf Prez Now 1988
- Miss America Heather Whitestone
- Baseball/Angels’ Curtis Pride
- Deaf School Supts and Administrators
Historical and Social “Givens” for Deaf Students since 1980’s, cont.

- Captioned TV, built in chips
- ADA 1990
- Captioned videos in schools and homes
- Interpreters in schools
- Mainstream, Educ Choices and Chaos
- Communication Tech – pagers and VRS
- Deaf people in different lines of work
- Movie theatres and shows with captions
- Cochlear implants
- Blogs, MySpace, Chat rooms, AIM, Mini Video Players, Vlogs, Virtual multi-screen chat rooms
- Computer games, internet, signing avatars, wifi
Deaf Students Say… + & -

- Role Models
- Diversity & Acceptance
- ASL and Identity
- Job Aspirations
- Assertiveness
- Technology
- Parents
- Attitudes
- Goals
- More empowered and independent
- Engaged in community service
- Future: Scary yet they feel positive and successful
Professionals Say… + & -

• Don’t know what GA SK means
• More rights, entitlements, assertiveness
• Make own decisions re needed services and interpreters
• ASL in schools; More hearing signers = more access
• Cochlear implants and technology
• Need more bells & whistles to keep attention
• Some never saw large crowds of deaf people, isolated in mainstream
• Faster computers, games, etc.
• More adult-like kids, peer pressure
• Thinks $ grows on trees ? ! ?
General Characteristics of Millennial Students

Caveat: Generalizations across generations…!

- They feel Special
- Sheltered
- Confident
- Conventional
- Team-oriented
- Achieving
- Self-Assured
- Stressed

- Multi-taskers
- Racially diverse
- Extremely close with parents
- Savvy with technology; “net” generation
- Less interested in humanities
- Global connections
Parent Baby Boomers
The “Helicopter” Parents
- 50’s & 60’s education
  - Democratic and unmet social needs
- Boomers liked school
- Right brain dominant
  - Creativity was enforced
- Independent study
- Concentration on middle of bell curve

The Millennials
- 90’s education
  - Back to basics
  - Values
  - Standards
  - School/teacher accountability
- Dislike school, but see value
- Left brain dominant
  - Science & Math emphasis
- Collaborative learning
- Flattening bell curve
  - Mainstreaming gifted and disabled

Luckey, R; Jenkins, M.; Cogar, T.
Parent Baby Boomers

- Thinks outside the box
- Inner driven
- Ideal cultivating
- Enjoyed defying authority
- Less structured
- Individualist
- Drug culture

  - Sense of entitlement
    “my child, my money”
  - Expect to be involved from admission to graduation

The Millennials

- Behaviors inside the box
  - Colors inside the lines
- Outer driven
- Dualism reinforced
- Seldom questions authority
- More structured
- Team oriented
- Tends to suppress impulses

Luckey, R; Jenkins, M.; Cogar, T.
Parental Influence on Millennials

- Reflect parent values
- Trust their parents
- Programmed; scheduled to the max
- Decisions are made for them
- Aim to please authority figures
- Stay connected to family

Affects on Deaf Students:

- overprotective, involved parents
- parents as interpreters
- parents choose college and jobs and check on their child frequently
Orientation to Learning

- Multi-taskers like to blur work and fun.
- Process information in narrative form. Not rote memory.
- Respond to experiential learning and want to be allowed to come up with their own solution.
- Expect frequent and instantaneous feedback.
- Want to use technology – the newer the better.
- Expect that their teachers will know more than they do.
- Are active and interactive; let them move.
- Want skills and information that will help make their lives less stressful and increase their marketability.
- Want job security.
Contradictions

• Expect high grades but do minimal work
• Want aspiring careers but work in unrelated jobs
• Service compliance rather than service commitment
• Respect authority but will try to circumvent or challenge authority
• People vis a vis Technology (eg, in group but cocooned, focused on pagers)
Educational Issues to Address

- Diversity of needs, experiences and backgrounds; educational musical chairs
- Early identification = Cochlear Implants and American Sign Language?
- Multiple-literacies and cultures
- Drop-out and failure rates
- Increase class participation
- Typically under-prepared, need instructions
- Critical thinking skills to form own opinions and responsibilities
- Technology and group processes, direct communications, lifelong learning
Challenges for Educators: Success for Millennial Students

• Provide student-centered and deaf-friendly learning programs and environments
• Stimulate responsibility for own intellectual, affective, individual & community growth
• Empower choices for own support services
• Enhance pedagogy with tech options and relevant www linkages
• Be a guide on side, not sage on stage
• Challenge with various points of view
• Foster choices and consequences
• Show linkages among equality, empowerment, education and employment
• Advocate for systematic changes for quality education for all
References and Resources


Coomes & DeBard (Eds.). Serving the Millennial Generation. New Directions for Student Services. 2004

Damast, Allison. Invasion of the helicopter parents. Business Week Online, April 19, 2007


Piper, Terry. Meet the Millennials. A CSUN presentation & handout, November 2006

High School Students want parents to be more involved in college planning. Student Poll, Vol. 6, #1 2007 www.collegeboard.com

The Millennials: Their Future is in Your Hands. Good Luck and Thank You.