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# Understanding and Motivating Generation Z Students

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# Understanding and Motivating Generation Z Students



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# Session Goals



- Assess characteristics associated with Generation Z
- Connect concepts from Cognitive theory to characteristics associated with Generation Z
- (Re-)Design and share a course activity, project, assignment, or assessment based on the above activities

# Who Are Gen. Z?: Think-Pair-Share



- Generally defined as starting with birth years in the late 1990s
- What have you heard/experienced?
- What challenges/opportunities have you found?
- Do they seem different than previous generations?

# Think-Pair-Share: Experience Responses



- Technologically savvy
- Google (heavily) – doesn't know a world where Google didn't exist
- Like to hold physical books for reading
- No child left behind – passed on
- Don't know how to study – haven't struggled
- More activist-oriented and socially engaged
- They feel the world is very unstable
- Think they are good multi-taskers
- Lack resilience
- Helicopter parents

# Think-Pair-Share: Experience Responses cont.



- More resilient than the ones [generation/millennials] before them
- Entrepreneurs

# One Dean's Take



“We are highly interested in bringing in a speaker for a shorter workshop/series on the topic of Generation Z and the issues that come with this generation. We are seeing an increase in the sense of entitlement and a lack of adult maturity with respect to handling criticism and feedback (often handled highly defensibly)” – Dean at a large public research university

# Generation Z Descriptors



## How they describe themselves

- Loyal
- Compassionate
- Thoughtful
- Responsible
- Determined
- Open-minded

## How they describe peers

- Competitive
- Spontaneous
- Adventurousome
- Curious



# Northeastern Survey



- Really interested in entrepreneurship
  - 63% say it is important to learn in college
  - 72% want to be allowed to design a major
  - 42% expect to work for themselves
- Lot of economic anxiety
- Value interpersonal interaction
  - 15% Prefer interacting via social media rather than in person

# Understanding Motivation through Self-Determination Theory



## Types of motivation

- Amotivation
- Extrinsic motivation
  - Externally regulated
  - Introjection
  - Identification
  - Integration
- Intrinsic motivation

## Three Basic Psychological Needs

- Competence
- Autonomy
- Relatedness

# Autonomy supportive vs. Controlling environment



## Autonomy Supportive

- **Feedback**
  - The comparison in your paper was really interesting
- **Choice**
  - Choose groups and roles
- **Time management**
  - Students have an hour to complete 4 components of a lab
- **Symbols**
  - Corrections on a page in green

## Controlling

- **Feedback**
  - Your paper is precisely what I wanted
- **Choice**
  - Assigned groups and roles
- **Time management**
  - Students have 15 minutes on each of 4 components
- **Symbols**
  - Marking corrections with a red pen

# (Re-)Designing



- Think about some element of your teaching that you think would benefit from more highly motivated students/employees/collaborators
- How might you rethink this to make it more autonomy-supportive?
- Share with your group to further develop your ideas

# Contact Information



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