“So, what’s wrong with freshmen today?” a faculty member asked in response to hearing about my work. “And are you working on fixing them?” he asked. I initially laughed at the comment, but over time, I began thinking about what it was he was asking me. Isn’t every generation remarkably different than the one before, or is Generation Y (roughly defined as those born between 1982-2004) going places and doing things that no other generation has gone or done before? Regardless of how one looks at it, Generation Y is causing Boomers (1943-1960) and X’ers (1961-1981) to scratch their head in confusion, especially in academic, social and occupational settings.

The Millennial Generation (also called “Millenials” or Generation Y) began college in the year 2000, and faculty and staff have been observing notable differences that set this generation apart from previous generations. “They’re lazy;” “They won’t put down their phone;” “They don’t care about academics;” “They’re always sick;” “They only care about themselves;” “They have no work ethic and want to be given A’s;” “Everything stresses them out,” are just a few of the phrases I’ve heard people use to describe Millennials. I can’t tell you if similar types of sentiments were uttered 20, 30 or 40 years ago when describing college students, as I’m not an expert in generational theory (and it is important to remember that these are generalizations based on generational research -- not all students are alike, nor can we expect a certain set of behaviors for a group of students, based solely on the year they were born. Many additional factors affect the behaviors of individuals). What I can do is provide you with a brief overview of the Millenial Generation and invite you to join a much larger conversation on Generation Y in higher education, coming to the University of North Dakota in this semester.

Recent writings on generational theory have argued that the traits our current generation of traditional students (aged 18-24) share as a group make some pedagogies more conducive than others to their learning. As Stacey Peterson, who coordinates the Success Courses for the Student Success Center argues below, all students have a complex set of traits. But we as teachers and advisors, we often (and understandably) focus on those that are frustrating to us as we seek to promote their learning. As often we fail to acknowledge and build on our students’ constructive qualities, particularly if they differ significantly from our own. We hope you’ll join this conversation, sponsored by the Student Affairs and Academic Affairs, which culminates in an engaging keynote examining the premise that generational traits can be leveraged to enhance student learning and offering strategies for doing so.

Teaching Generation Y

Stacey Borboa Peterson, Student Success Center

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In 2003, the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Offices released an executive summary titled, “Millenials Go To College.” Within that summary, Neil Howe and William Strauss define the Millennial Generation using seven core traits:
ON TEACHING

Continued from page 1

• Special - in that “their problems are the nation’s problems” and “their future is the nation’s future”

• Sheltered - having always been kept safe, “From school uniforms, to identity cards, to V-chips, to fences and metal detectors at school . . .”

• Confident - believing that they will be more successful than their parents; team-oriented, often considered group-oriented

• Conventional - regarding the tight-knit relationships with their parents, resulting in parent/teen sharing of many things (clothes, music, and values)

• Pressured - stemming from their idea that “long term success demands near-term achievement”

• Achieving - because that is what they have been trained to do through extreme involvement in extra-curricular activities and high-stakes testing that occurs throughout their 13 years of education.

Generational theorists have called this “the largest, healthiest, and most cared-for generation in American history” (2006, p. 76). A greater understanding of this statement alone could provide insight into all seven core traits. According to generational research, Millennials have been raised differently from previous generations. In Millennials Rising: The Next Greatest Generation, (2000) Strauss and Howe state:

While having children seemed problematic – or even irresponsible – for many couples in the 1970’s, a surprising cultural change-of-mind occurred thereafter, resulting in a “newfound love of children” (p. 80). This seismic shift was signaled in part by the last-chance efforts of highly-educated Boomer couples to conceive, with birthrates for women over forty skyrocketing between 1981 and 1997 (p. 79).

Wilson and Gerber, writing for the journal Generational Theory, have responded saying, “Quite naturally, after all this work, parents were ready to celebrate their kids and sacrifice heavily for them” (2008, p. 30). As educators, we witness the results of this type of upbringing every day in the work we do. While we focus on the negatives of this generation, we are often overlooking, or are unaware of where their strengths and capabilities lie.

Millennials have been called “The Next Greatest Generation” (NPR, 2013) for a reason, but without understanding who these people are, what drives them, and how to best work with them, we may never see them fulfill this promise. It has been said about Millennials, “While they are willing to put in the work, school for them is not something from which they expect enlightenment or personal transformation” (Wilson & Gerber, 2008, p. 31). What if we were to change that? What if we were to affect transformation?

During March the divisions of Academic Affairs and Student Affairs are collaborating to begin conversations about Generation Y in higher education, which will lead up to a keynote address delivered by Curt Steinhorst from the Center for Generational Kinetics. His presentation, “Crossing the Generational Divide in Education: Unlocking the Power of Generations to Strengthen Education” will focus on Millennials in higher education and how their “generational differences can become a strength in education” and how we can “transform generational disconnects into breakthrough opportunities.” Participants will leave with strategies specifically designed for education environments, whether you are teaching, advising, or providing support and services to Millennials.

Steinhorst’s presentation will take place from 2:00-3:30pm on Wednesday, March 26 in Education 7. Please plan to join us for what is sure to be an informative, thought-provoking and pragmatic conversation.

References


TEACHING WITH WRITING WORKSHOP

How would you like to have that new prep for fall 2014 completely planned out before the end of May? If you are planning to use writing in a new course or a revision of a course, apply to participate in this year’s Teaching with Writing Course Development Workshop. The workshop provides an opportunity to work on course development with the input of colleagues from across campus. Along the way you’ll learn about best practices for teaching with writing, including ways to use writing to promote learning and ways to teach students the writing conventions of their disciplines. Your workshop facilitators will be Kathleen Vacek, University Writing Program, and Dr. Audrey Johnson, English.

Teaching with Writing is a five-day workshop. Each day, the group meets in the morning for four hours of collaborative activities and discussion. In the afternoon, participants work on their own, reading assigned texts and drafting course materials.

At the end of the workshop, participants will have a final version of the syllabus and assignment handouts for one course. They will also have a plan for coaching and evaluating the assignments.

The workshop is open to all UND faculty planning to incorporate writing in a new course or a revision of an existing course. Writing can be used in the course in a variety of ways—from quick, in-class journal entries to dissertation proposals and everything in between. Any course can qualify if the instructor plans to use writing as a learning tool, a learning outcome, or an assessment tool.

The workshop will take place May 19-23 from 8:30 am to 12:30 pm on campus. Participants receive a $500 stipend (subject to standard deductions) and workshop materials.

The workshop is limited to 15 participants. Applications are reviewed as they are received, so it is advantageous to apply early. The application deadline is April 1.

The Teaching with Technology Workshops are designed for faculty interested in using technology to enhance traditional classroom and online teaching. CILT is offering two sessions this summer:

- May TwT: May 19-22 and May 27-30, 2014, afternoon sessions from 12:30-4 pm
- June TwT: June 9-12 and 16-19, 2013, morning sessions from 8:30 am – Noon

During the eight day seminar, participants will: articulate the student learning outcomes for their course; explore technologies and pedagogies most suited to accomplishing those learning goals; share ideas with colleagues about how to use instructional technologies purposefully and effectively; plan and design a course “technology component”; engage in hands-on experiences using the technologies appropriate to their projects; and schedule one-on-one sessions with CILT Instructional Designers.

The group will meet in seminar format and will use the CILT workshop lab and multimedia studio for hands-on learning and practice. Please apply by filling out the online form at http://und.edu/academics/cilt/workshops/twt.cfm. Registration is limited to 12 faculty per seminar, and a $500 stipend is offered.

Deadline for application is April 11, 2014.
Outstanding Faculty Award Winners

The Outstanding Faculty Awards Committee selected the following individuals and departments to receive teaching, faculty development and service, and faculty scholar awards at Founder’s Day. The outstanding Advising Awardee is selected by the Student Success Center. Please congratulate your colleagues!

- UND Foundation / BC Gamble Faculty Award for Excellence in Teaching, Research or Creative Activity and Service
  - Paul Sum (Political Science and Public Administration)

- UND Foundation / McDermott Faculty Enhancement for Individual Excellence in Teaching
  - Chris Felege (Biology)

- UND Foundation / Lydia & Arthur Saiki Faculty Award for Individual Excellence in Teaching
  - Wesley Lawrence (Music)

- UND Foundation / Thomas J. Clifford Faculty Award for Graduate or Professional Teaching Excellence
  - Anne Haskins (Occupational Therapy)

- UND Foundation / Thomas J. Clifford Faculty Achievement Award for Outstanding Faculty Development and Service
  - Thomasine Heitkamp (Social Work)

- UND Foundation / Karleen Home Rosaaen Award for Excellence in Academic Advising
  - Rebecca Simmons (Biology)

- The UND Award for Departmental Excellence in Teaching
  - Department of Space Studies

- The UND Award for Departmental Excellence in Service
  - Department of English

EVENT

Are UND Students Academically Engaged? Results from Recent Study

Monday, March 31
9:00 AM - 10:30am

River Valley Room, Memorial Union

Offered by the Office of Institutional Research

What do we know about the student learning experience at UND? Learn about how UND students engage with our campus, faculty and their education by attending this overview of the results from the 2013 National Survey on Student Engagement (NSSE). Leave with a fresh perspective of what the data is telling us about student experiences at UND.

Register online through the University Within a University (U2) program at http://u2.und.edu/sessions/
UND and STIRS

The American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) recently selected two UND faculty, Dr. Tami Carmichael (Humanities and Integrated Studies) and Dr. Ryan Zerr (Mathematics), to be STIRS Scholars. The STIRS — which stands for Scientific Thinking and Integrative Reasoning Skills — project is designed to encourage faculty “to imagine scientific thinking as a means through which to intentionally integrate knowledge, skills, and action across the undergraduate experience and through the widest array of disciplines.” This two-year endeavor brings 13 scholars chosen from across the US together and develops their work to inform the national conversation on best practices in integrative curriculum design and assessment. The case studies developed by the STIRS Scholars will be peer reviewed, piloted at variously sized institutions, and shared nationally at AAC&U meetings and in their publications. Below you will find brief synopses of the case studies our scholars submitted. UND has the distinction of being the only institution from which the AAC&U selected two scholars. As Carmichael and Zerr develop their work over the following year, we’ll bring you more information about the larger project.

The Impact of Tar Sands Pipelines on People, Communities, and Environments (T. Carmichael)

During the first week of October 2013, a group of Anishinaabe tribal members rode on horseback across 230 miles of the proposed Enbridge Alberta Clipper Pipeline to protest the proposed construction of a tar sands pipeline designed to carry crude oil from Alberta, Calif. to Superior, Wis. The erection of tar sands pipelines in the U.S. and Canada creates debate around issues of environmental impact, safety, health, land management, regulation of commerce, international relations and, often, tribal sovereignty. The increasing drive in the U.S. to extract natural resources in order to decrease fuel-dependency on the Middle East brings about a variety of opportunities and challenges that local, state and federal governments must consider. In this case study, students will consider information and arguments for all sides of the issue and learn how to analyze and evaluate this information to better understand a topic of national and global importance.

Congressional Apportionment: Constitutional Questions, Data, and the First Presidential Veto (R. Zerr)

This case study will focus on the question of how to most equitably apportion the members of the U.S. House of Representatives among the several states. The question seems a simple one at first, but even basic examples quickly illustrate that in only the rarest of cases will a perfectly equitable solution be possible. In most realistic situations, which includes every instance encountered thus far throughout U.S. history, every possible choice of apportionment method will result in an imperfect solution. A perfect solution in the spirit of “one person, one vote,” is almost always impossible. The difficulties inherent in finding the best choice from among the imperfect solutions was confronted not long after the first U.S. census in 1790. Different approaches emerged. The one originally adopted by Congress failed to meet President Washington’s expectations for constitutionality, resulting in the first-ever use of a presidential veto. In this way the case study will ask students to consider matters of fairness. Can fairness be quantified? How do different apportionment methods compare in terms of fairness? Are there any systematic biases in these methods?

For more information on the project, a quick search for STIRS and AAC&U will bring you directly to the project overview page.
February FIDC Awards

The Faculty Instructional Development Committee (FIDC), elected by the University Senate, provides support for course and curriculum development, which goes beyond the means of the individual faculty and academic units. FIDC grants may be used to purchase instructional materials, travel for pedagogical development, travel to make a Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) presentation or other projects relating to teaching. To submit a proposal, you will find the necessary information on the OID website. The next deadline is April 1 at noon.

In February, the FIDC awarded travel grants to the following faculty members:

- **Suzanne Gonzales-Smith** (Art & Design), $1,000.00 to attend the 51st National Society for Photographic Educators Conference: Collaborative Exchanges: Photography in Dialogue.
- **Surojit Gupta** (Mechanical Engineering), $1,000.00 to attend the Materials Education Symposium.
- **Deb Hanson** (Occupational Therapy), $1,000.00 to attend the American Occupational Therapy 2014 Conference and Expo.