

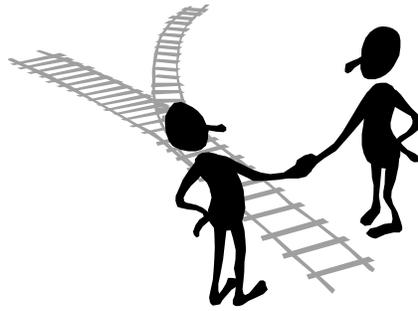
Communicating Across Generations



UC Santa Cruz

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Training & Development*

Communicating Across Generations



Purpose: To equip you with the knowledge, tools and techniques to work successfully with people of all generations

Objectives: Participation in this session will enable you to:

- Increase your awareness of the four generations currently in the workforce
- Understand the similarities and differences in the generations
- Learn strategies for communicating effectively with employees of all generations
- Identify potential sources of intergenerational conflict and techniques for managing them
- Recognize how age diversity benefits an organization

Benefits: What's in it for me?

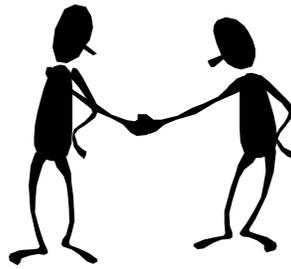
- Improved communication and respect
- More inclusive work groups
- Better business results

Agenda



- Welcome and introductory remarks
- Overview: Four Generations in the Workplace (Traditionalists, Baby Boomers, Generation X, Millennials)
- Generational Issues at UCSC
- Benefits & Challenges of Four Generations
- Skills for Improving Intergenerational Communication
- Case Studies
- Workplace Application
- Wrap-up

Four Generations in the Workplace



As you view the four slides, you will notice that each is a snapshot of several images representative of a certain time. Think of yourself as you were growing into adulthood and the events occurring around you.

1. Which single slide most closely captures this time for you? Circle one below:

#1

#2

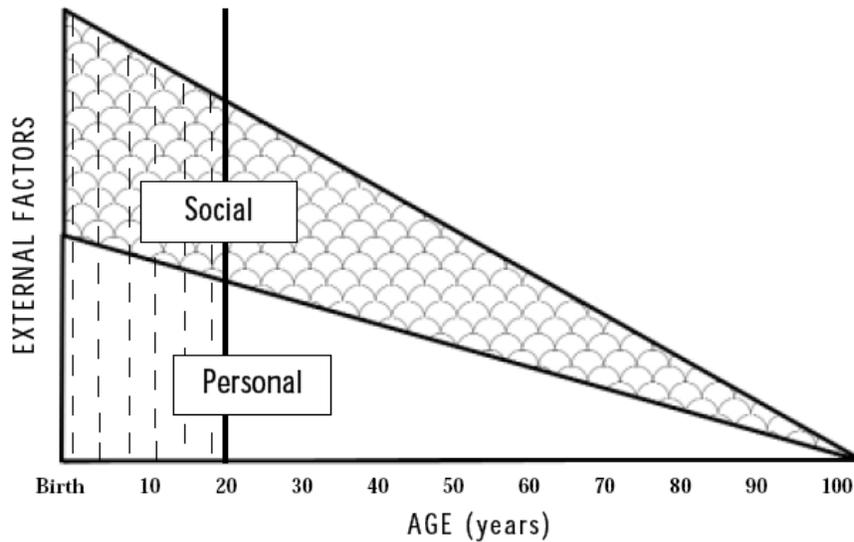
#3

#4

2. Which single image from the slide you selected had the greatest and most long-lasting effect on your life? Why?

3. Be prepared to discuss your responses.

FORMATION OF WORLD VIEW



Each of us has a perspective – a set of filters – through which we see the world. It shapes the way we think things should and shouldn't be. This perspective is largely formed during our first 10-15 years of life.

The chart above represents how we form our own world view or personal perspective. The horizontal line represents a person's lifetime. The space between 0 and 20 (with the vertical dash-lines) represents the years when we're most likely to form our world view -- when we're most impressionable and most open to influence.

The vertical line represents the external factors that influence our world view and can be broken into two major categories: personal and social. The *personal* section represents all the things that happen to us individually – e.g., the family who raised us, the teachers we had, our unique experiences.

The *social* section is the one we'll address in this session. It represents the things occurring around us sociologically – e.g., the economy, the political climate, the fads, the language, the music and news events.

Because generations share a place in history and therefore, the same sociological influences, each generation develops its own unique personality.

Personal influences make a big difference in our world view. When an individual is quite different than others of the same generation, it is those personal influences that make the difference. But, even when individuals differ, it's worthwhile to consider their generation.

Source: Claire Raines in "The X Factor: Managing & Motivating Generation X." 1998, corVISION Media, Inc.

What Is a Generation?



A generation is:

- A group of people who witness the same historical events and had similar sociological influences
- A group of people who are living at the same time and who are within a certain age range
- Sometimes referred to as a “cohort”

Note: People born in other countries and children of immigrants don't track to American generational characteristics in the same way other Americans do.

For the first time in recent history, there are four generations of employees represented in the U.S. workforce.

	<u>Ages Calculated effective 2012</u>
Traditionalists	– Born 1925-1942 (Ages 70 – 87)
Baby Boomers	– Born 1943-1960 (Ages 52 – 69)
Generation X	– Born 1961-1981 (Ages 31 – 51)
Millennials	– Born 1982-2002 (Ages 10 – 30)
Cuspers	– People born at the end of one generation or at the beginning of the next; may have characteristics of both generations

Generations-at-a-Glance

Generation	Born Between:	Characteristics:	Sometime Stereotyped As:
Traditionalists	1925–1942 <i>Now 70- 87</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hardworking & dedicated • Respectful of rules & authority • Conservative & traditional • Sacrifice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Old-fashioned; behind the times • Rigid/autocratic • Change/risk averse
Baby Boomers	1943–1960 <i>Now 52 - 69</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youthful self-identity • Optimistic • Team player • Competitive • Hard-Working 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-centered • Unrealistic • Political • Power-driven; workaholic
Generation X	1961–1981 <i>Now 31 - 51</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Balanced (work/life quality) • Self-reliant • Pragmatic • Skeptical • Eliminate the task • Challenge others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slackers • Selfish; impatient • Cynical
Millennials	1982–2002 <i>Now <30</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fast paced/Multitasking • Extreme Fun • Technology savvy • Social Responsibility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short attention span • Spoiled & disrespectful • Technology dependent
Cuspers	Born in the 3-5 years that overlap two generations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May demonstrate characteristics of both generations they overlap 	N/A

More about the Generations

Traditionalists: 1925 – 1942



Born prior to the end of World War II (1925-1942), this group also is referred to as *Veterans*, *Builders* or *The Silent Generation*. Although many in this group are now at or past the age of retirement, they are staying in the workforce longer, reflecting both the need for their skills and the impact of such laws as the *Age Discrimination in Employment Act*. Research and scientific organizations in particular have growing numbers of employees in their 70s who have no immediate plans to retire. For this generation, longevity with one employer is seen as a positive measure of success. Restaurants and retail organizations are aggressively seeking workers from this group, viewed as stable, reliable and drug-free.

- Respect for rules, hierarchy and authority
- Dedication; hard work
- Loyalty
- Sacrifice
- Duty before fun
- Value tradition

Working with Traditionalists

Motto: Pay your dues

History: Grew up during a time of economic and political uncertainty – influenced by clearly defined sex roles and military model.

Characteristics: Generally seen as dedicated, loyal, long-term employees.

Tips:

- Acknowledge their experience, expertise and dedication
- Pay attention to the chain of command and its importance in getting things done in certain areas of your organization
- Speak positively of your organization's history and legacy
- Express interest in the work (e.g. projects, processes, products and bottom-line results)
- Seek the insights they've gained from years of experience
- Use them as a resource when you have questions or problems
- Acknowledge their respect for rules and hierarchy
- Avoid age-related name calling or offensive comments, such as *When are you going to retire? Senior moments; Are you still here?*

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More about the Generations

Baby Boomers: 1943 – 1960



Born between 1943 and 1960, this generation has shaped American society since its inception. Baby Boomers experienced the societal “firsts” of desegregation and integration, as well as other significant political and cultural changes. Now in their 50s and 60s, Boomers are characterized by optimism and a reluctance to grow old. They currently dominate the ranks of senior management in organizations and positions of power in established political institutions. The first wave of retiring Boomers is redefining the meaning of *old* and the concept of retirement in our society.

- Work is a priority
- Optimistic
- Personal fulfillment
- Competitive
- Strong professional networks
- Value meaning

Working with Baby Boomers

Motto: Anything is possible

History: Grew up during a time of economic prosperity and positive change that was viewed as “progress;” that included progressive views on child rearing (Dr. Spock).

Characteristics: Generally seen as optimistic and competitive, willing to work hard to ensure their (organizational) success.

Tips:

- Acknowledge their experience, expertise and hard work
- Find a communications balance between email (can be seen as too impersonal), voicemail and face-to-face conversations and meetings
- Seek their help with workplace politics. Use them to navigate politically charged environments
- Use them as a sounding board to test ideas before plunging in; ask a lot of questions about what has worked or not worked in the past
- Avoid age-related name calling or offensive comments, such as *They will do anything to get ahead; workaholic*

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More about the Generations

Generation X: 1961 – 1981



Born between 1961 and 1981, Gen Xers also have been called Baby Busters and the 13th Generation. Now in their early 30s to 50s, they grew up in the culture created by the Baby Boomers – self-indulgent, mobile and materialistic. They are **knowledge workers* who have been influenced by technology, as well as by shifts in family and societal trends including divorce, two-income households and gender, racial and ethnic diversity. Given this world view, their values tend toward individualism and self-reliance.

*One who works primarily with information or one who develops and uses knowledge in the workplace.

- Self-reliance
- Desire flexibility
- Skepticism
- Technology
- Informal
- Value balance (work/life)

Working with Generation X

Motto: Work-Life Balance

History: Grew up in the shadow of the Baby Boomers during a time of change that negatively impacted family (divorce/latch-key kids); jobs (massive layoffs); economy (double-digit inflation; public trust (Watergate); and the environment (oil spills/endangered species).

Characteristics: Generally seen as skeptical with loyalty and work ethic defined more individually, based on personal needs rather than organizational needs.

Tips:

- Acknowledge their experience and expertise and that you can learn from them
- Be clear and direct in your language – avoid corporate jargon, buzzwords and clichés
- Find a communications balance – save meetings for issues that really require face-to-face communication
- Allow flexibility and autonomy in work style and processes
- Honor the need for work-life balance
- Encourage a friendly, open and informal work environment
- Avoid age-related name calling or offensive comments, such as *slacker*, *lazy*; *no loyalty*; *poor work ethic*.

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More about the Generations

Millennials: 1982 – 2002



Those born between 1982 and 2002 have received multiple labels, among them *Gen-Next*, *Nexters*, *Generation Y*, the *Digital* or *Net Generation* and the *Mosaic Generation*. Currently in their late 20s and younger, Millennials are entering the workforce in significant numbers. As a group, they are more diverse, globally-oriented and more knowledgeable of computers and technology than any preceding generation. This is also reflected in the ways in which they learn and work (e.g., multitasking, use of multimedia). Compared to other generations, the parents of Millennials are very involved in the lives of their offspring (often into adulthood) and are sometimes referred to as “helicopter parents” for their tendency to hover.

The Millennial group is actually a larger demographic than the Baby Boomers and is predicted to have an equally distinct impact on society and the workplace.

- Fast paced (multi-tasking/multimedia)
- Tenacity/Directness
- Entrepreneurial
- Group-oriented
- Global diversity (people/perspectives/access)
- Technology savvy
- Value fun

Working with Millennials

Motto: Technology Rules!

History: Soon to be the largest group in the workforce, their history is still forming. They have grown up with multitasking, multimedia, and an unprecedented exposure to diversity, technology, violence and sexual themes.

Characteristics: Generally seen as self-assured with a global view; they respond positively to opportunities involving technology.

Tips:

- Acknowledge their expertise, perspective and that you can learn from them
- Be open to new and different ways of working
- Encourage and embrace technology
- Create opportunities to involve them in projects of significance
- Show respect by asking their opinion or asking for help
- Offer to be (or to find) a mentor
- Find a communications balance – speak directly and quickly, avoid long-winded explanations and match words with actions
- Foster a fun and fast-paced work environment; find ways to incorporate work and play
- Give frequent and timely feedback
- Avoid age-related name calling or offensive comments, such as *the baby*; *new kid*; *wet behind the ears*; *they need instant gratification*; *We don't do it that way here*

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UC Santa Cruz Staff Workforce % Composition



Traditionalists	2% of career workforce -- Age 66+
Baby Boomers	49% of career workforce
Generation X	44% of career workforce
Millennials	5% of career workforce

*As of December 2008

Supervisory Issues Related to Age at UCSC

- Recreational computer use during work hours (such as texting, handheld devices, social networking, computer games)
- Euphemisms of a discriminatory nature, such as; "you kids," "old timer," "slackers," "short-timer"
- Work/Life balance needs (aging parents, children, family)
- Work expectations (ethics, assignments, work hours, telecommuting, workload, overtime)
- Retention issues (how long to be in a position OR move up fast vs. pay your dues)

Where the Differences Tend to Occur



- Feedback, Communication Styles & Language
- Work Motivation & Rewards (Work/Life Balance)
- Work Processes & Technology Focus
- Business Etiquette
- Dress & Grooming
- Authority, Leadership and Hierarchy
- Behaviors in the Workplace (Respect)
- Dismissive of the Abilities of Different Generations
- Work Hours

Skills for Improving Intergenerational Communication

Underlying Principles:

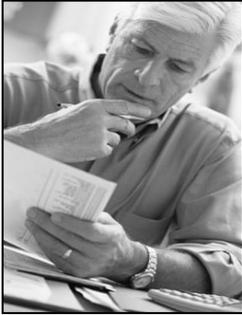
- Don't make assumptions
- Adjust your approach to their style
- Consider the appropriate time and place for addressing the issue

Skills for Improving Intergenerational Communication:

1. Describe the issue and its effect on you
2. Ask questions
3. Listen without judging
4. Appreciate the other's perspective
5. Clarify the real issues
6. Plan next steps, if appropriate
7. Act on the plan

Meet the Generations

Traditionalist: Thomas



Meet Thomas. Thomas has been working in construction management for the past 35 years. He has worked his way up, which he is proud to talk about with everyone. He's a highly dedicated worker who is committed to getting the project done on time and on budget.

Thomas loves photography and bridges. He reads voraciously about both – he can tell you about cantilever bridges, suspension bridges and arch bridges – he has his own photographs of them on his office walls. He spends his vacation time traveling, often bringing back photos and stories of the bridges he's seen.

Thomas has a home computer and can email you pictures of bridges if you show interest, but often has trouble opening or sending email attachments at work.

Thomas and his wife are active members of the community. They spend their weekends at community events and visiting their children and granddaughter.

Baby Boomer: Carol



Meet Carol. Carol is hard working, conscientious and completely dedicated to her UCSC career, her family and her many personal causes. She fondly recalls being arrested in college for participating in a sit-in in the Chancellor's Office. She insists on feeding her family organic foods and is a zealous recycler. Carol came of age when the protest music of Bob Dylan and Joan Baez was popular.

She attends all of her son's soccer games on weekends – usually with her laptop in tow so that she can generate budget reports or strategic goal updates. Carol's hard work pays off with excellent results for the organization.

Carol earned her master's degree while working and raising her family, using UCSC's reduced fee program.

She's a self-made woman in every way and is concerned that the younger generations will never experience the satisfaction and confidence to make it on their own.

Gen X: Michael



Meet Michael. Michael is a man of many interests and talents. His cubicle features pictures of him enjoying various extreme sports – mountain climbing, surfing and bungee jumping.

He loves challenges of all kinds and prides himself on his creativity – “thinking outside the box.” He’s easily bored with routines and endless meetings, where little seems to get resolved. He challenges the status quo and isn’t afraid to speak his mind to anyone who will listen, including management.

Michael likes to work with ideas and big concepts. He prefers that his work make a difference. He telecommutes one day a week and feels that he could do his entire job from home.

During his lunchtime, Michael regularly checks CraigsList to explore other jobs. He’s open to changing jobs if more interesting work, opportunity and pay come along.

Millennial: Ashleigh



Meet Ashleigh. She is a young, hip new assistant architect. She is ready to launch her UCSC career...as soon as this song is over. It’s her favorite Black Eyed Peas tune that she has just downloaded to her iPhone on UCSC time.

Ashleigh is a masterful multi-tasker, she checks her FaceBook and tweets while effectively managing small projects. She can out type most people in the office – since she started typing on a keyboard at five. She’s a master at designing and maintaining databases.

A high performer, Ashleigh is always enthusiastic and brings new ideas to her job. She loves technology and is always asking her supervisor to approve the latest project management software and PDAs. Her supervisor believes it will be costly and complicate matters, while Ashleigh is convinced it will simplify her life.

Ashleigh doesn’t understand why some others value “paying your dues”. She’s from a generation that’s not used to losing since “everyone is a winner.” Ashleigh is already actively seeking her next job and hopes to make a change soon to a position with a more flexible schedule and more vacation time.

Case Studies

Individually, read the case study assigned to your group. With your team, review the situation and develop a strategy to address it according to the conversational prompt(s) provided. Incorporate the skills introduced earlier into your strategy, as appropriate. You may also want to refer to the tips for working with each generation on pages 8, 10, 12 and 14.

1. *Describe the issue and its effect on you*
2. *Ask questions*
3. *Listen without judging*
4. *Appreciate the other's perspective*
5. *Clarify the real issues*
6. *Plan next steps, if appropriate*
7. *Act on the plan*

#1 – Traditionalist: Thomas

Your department is switching email programs from Eudora to Thunderbird. Ashleigh wonders if she'll be able to get her Facebook notifications without a problem. Michael uses Thunderbird at home, so he's not concerned. Carol was on the selection committee for the program and has already created a cost-benefit analysis. You are the supervisor of this team. Thomas approaches you to ask you why the switch was made, because Eudora works just fine for him. He also requests a user's manual for Thunderbird and there isn't one. He seems worried.

Prompt: You say ...

#2 – Baby Boomer: Carol

Carol is working on a big project for UCOP and has enlisted her co-workers to participate in several meetings. Carol has scheduled a meeting for tomorrow morning at 8:00 am.

Tomorrow is Michael's regular telecommute day and he has asked if Carol can arrange a conference call instead or just fill him in later. Ashleigh says this interferes with her regular yoga class and she wasn't planning to be at work until 9:00 am. Thomas says he'll be there at 8:00 am sharp.

Carol is very disappointed. She feels that people aren't committed to her project even though she's told them how important it is to her.

Prompt: What should Carol say or do to gain the team's support?

#3 – Generation X: Michael

Michael has had a big breakthrough developing new streamlined, paperless submittal process that will make managing construction documents easier. He's worked on it all night and is very enthusiastic about his accomplishments. He's called a special meeting with the team to brief them on his project. The team is very complimentary. Carol asks Michael if the documentation and implementation plan will be ready for tomorrow's senior management review. Michael can't understand why he should interrupt his development momentum to write a long, tedious report.

Prompt: How can the team resolve this issue and defuse Michael's frustrations?

#4 – Millennial: Ashleigh

Ashleigh is the lead on a complex, highly visible web-based LEED documentation project, and is partnering with Thomas and Carol to present an update to the department's senior management team. She's invested a lot of time and energy into creating a dynamic PowerPoint presentation and feels very proud of it. During the presentation, which Ashleigh kicks off, the attendees direct their questions to Carol. Ashleigh feels that she's not being taken seriously because of her age.

Prompt: Thomas notices Ashleigh's discomfort in the meeting and says to the group ...

Prompt: In a private meeting later, Carol and Thomas discuss the situation with Ashleigh. Here are some points they can make in that discussion:

Workplace Application

Individually:

1. Identify one generational issue that is having some negative effects in your workplace.
2. Without identifying anyone by name, describe what's happening and explain how it's affecting you and/or others.
3. What efforts have been made to address the situation? What results have you seen?
4. Be prepared to share this situation in your table groups.

Appendix

Tips for Working with Every Generation

DO

- Recognize that generational differences influence our ideas, expectations, values and behaviors at work
- Acknowledge that everyone wants to be treated with respect and recognize that respect might look and feel different, based on differing experiences and perspectives
- Know that you have different life experiences and can learn from others' experiences and perspectives
- Find ways to create shared values and common ground
- Be willing to flex your natural style and preferences in order to work effectively with all your colleagues
- Be open and honest about your "hot buttons" (i.e., recurring sources of tension or conflict)
- Give your colleagues specific suggestions on what they can do to help you perform your best
- Focus on what really matters – productivity, teamwork and customer relationships
- Challenge assumptions and raise awareness regarding the multigenerational workplace
- Bring team member's diverse perspective and abilities out into the open

DON'T

- Form quick negative conclusions based on generational differences
- Stereotype (e.g., judging your colleagues' capabilities by what they wear and what their work hours seem to be)
- Ridicule or make derogatory remarks like "dinosaur," "bureaucrat," "slacker," or "kid"
- Miss opportunities to improve communications and strengthen relationships
- Assume every member of any given generation thinks or behaves exactly alike

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Generational Personal & Lifestyle Characteristics

	Traditionalists	Baby Boomers	Generation X	Millenials
Core Values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect authority • Conformers • Discipline 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Optimism • Involvement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skepticism • Fun • Informality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Realism • Confidence • Extreme fun • Social
Family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traditional Nuclear 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disintegrating 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Latch-key kids 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Merged families
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Dream 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Birthright 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Way to get there 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Great expense
Communication / Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rotary phones • One-on-one • Write a memo 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Touch-tone Phones • Call me anytime 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cell phones • Call me only at work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internet • Picture phones • Email
Budget / Money	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Put it away • Pay cash 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buy now, pay later 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cautious Conservative 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Earn to spend

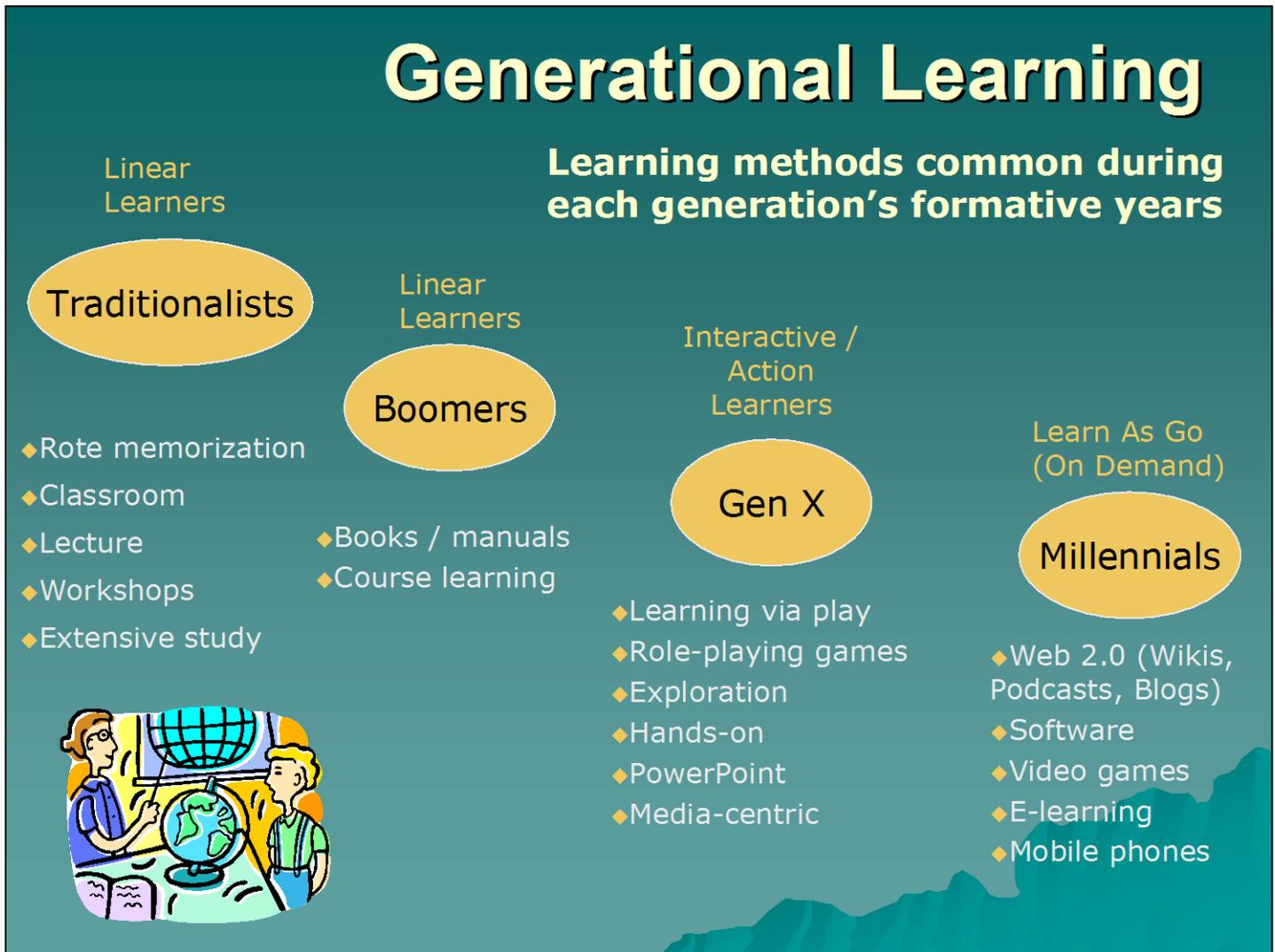
Generational Workplace Characteristics

Work Ethics / Values / Preferences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hard work • Sacrifice • Duty before fun • Respect authority • Adhere to rules 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workaholics • Work efficiently • Crusading causes • Personal fulfillment • Desire quality • Question authority 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eliminate the task • Self-reliance • Wants structure & direction • Skeptical • Casual, friendly work environment • Values flexibility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What's next • Multi-tasking • Tenacity • Entrepreneurial • Tolerant • Goal oriented • Social responsibility
Work is...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An obligation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An exciting Adventure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Difficult challenge • A Contract 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A means to an end • Fulfillment (no obligation to stay)
Leadership Style	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Directive • Command & control 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consensual • Collegial 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Everyone is the same • Challenge others • Ask why 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teamwork • Technology • Work/life balance
Interaction Style	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team player • Appreciates meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entrepreneur 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participative
Communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal • Memo 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Person 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct • Immediate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Email • Voicemail
Feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No news is good news 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't appreciate it 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How am I doing? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immediate & constant
Rewards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Satisfaction in job well done 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Money • Title recognition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Freedom is best reward 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meaningful work • Immediate & often
Messages The Motivate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your experience is respected 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You are valued & needed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do it your way • Forget the rules 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with bright, creative people
Work / Life Balance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Separate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No balance • Work to live 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Balance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Balance

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Generational Learning Styles



Source: Laderas, N. (2008). *Who is the Net Generation? How do they learn?* Retrieved August 9, 2009 from <http://plsonline.wordpress.com/2008/01/04/who-is-the-net-generation-how-do-they-learn/>

Suggested Readings

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