



MAGNA ONLINE SEMINARS

Supplemental Materials

Motivate, Engage, and Inspire: Tips for Teaching Modern Learners

Presented by:

Christy Price, EdD

Professor, Psychology, Dalton State College

A professor in both the School of Liberal Arts and the School of Health Professions, and the founding director of the Center for Academic Excellence at Dalton State College, Christy Price has been teaching at the collegiate level for twenty-five years. Her dynamic and interactive style make Price a favorite as a professor and presenter. She regularly presents as a keynote speaker and leads workshops at faculty development seminars and retreats. She is a nationally recognized authority on innovative teaching techniques to engage millennial learners and was chosen by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching as the Outstanding U.S. Professor for 2012 in the Baccalaureate Colleges category.



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Why Don't My Students Think I'm Groovy? The New "R"s for Engaging & Motivating Modern Learners				
	Generational Differences	<u>Boomers</u> 1946-1964 53-71 yrs. Old (1943-1960)	<u>Gen X</u> 1965-1979 38-52 yrs. Old (1961-1981)	<u>Gen Y</u> 1980-2000 17-37 yrs. Old (1982-2002)
1.	Influences	Vietnam Civil Rights The Cold War	Latchkey Kids TV Recession	Helicopter Parents Technology
2.	Values	Hard Work Competition Success Equality Change	Education Development Creativity Information	Teamwork Input Reinforcement Technology Diversity
3.	Traits	Ambitious Workaholic	Flexible Individualist	Entitled Confident
4.	Communication	Letterhead	Email	Text
5.	Timing	Annual	Current	Instant
6.	Technology	Adapting	Adept	Savvy
Twenge, J. (2006). Generation me & Howe, N. & Strauss, W. (2007). Millennials go to college.				
Application and Discussion				
7.	One of the problems with generational cohort research is that we don't want to generalize too much and there are always outliers. Which of the characteristics above seem to be true of you and your students? Which characteristics of your generation seem to <u>not</u> apply to you or your students?			
8.	Which generational differences seem to cause conflict, tension, or other problems in your working with students? What key generational differences are at the root of these problems?			

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Success Enhances Motivation, While Lack of Success is Demotivating		
In order to enhance student success, which of the following do you provide?		
3.1	build student self-efficacy (particularly critical in STEM, writing, communication, technology) help student to overcome anxiety and to believe they can learn content and achieve outcomes	
3.2	organized presentation of material use of organizers or visual diagrams of content organization, lists of steps in assignments	
3.3	clear explanations use of visual aids, kinesthetic activities, examples, tutorials, practice scenarios, scaffolding	
3.4	guided practice – embedded student learning outcomes guide interaction with material mini-lectures, videos, reading assignments preceded by questions to cue memory processing	
3.5	regular verbal cuing & rehearsal opportunities for content knowledge – ex: quia.com “You’ll need to know this for ...,” “This is important because...,” “Previous students have struggled with this specific piece of our course content because...”	
3.6	multidirectional interaction course activities require students to interact with the instructor, the material, and each other	
3.7	repeated & distributed practice built into course structure outcomes are continuously revisited and applied, ideally all assessments are cumulative	
3.8	require students to engage with the content for meaning and deep learning students apply concepts reflect upon content to make their own meaning out of it	
3.9	clear expectations and reward structure of how points will be awarded use of rubrics, low risk or sample ideal assignments, study guides, and peer/self-assessment	
3.10	early and frequent low stakes formative assessment with developmental feedback no mid-term/final only – regular assessment with feedback, student conferences	
3.11	assessment as learning opportunity and a tool for development of competencies reflection on assessment is built into course structure so students learn from assessment	
3.12	students are required to reflect upon and assess their own learning required reflection after each assessment built into rubric or use of exam wrappers	
3.13	students are required to take responsibility for their own learning regularly embedded metacognitive practices develop student learning-to-learn skills	

3.14	professor provides opportunity for students to give feedback prior to mid-term Small Group Instructional Diagnosis or other anonymous informal avenue for student feedback	
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The Modern Learner Checklist – How Groovy Am I?				
How Do My Assessments and Assignments Meet the Following Modern Learner Criteria?		<u>Rarely</u> Got to get Groovin	<u>Somewhat</u> In the Groove	<u>Often</u> Beyond Groovy
Ideal Assessments & Assignments (NT designates this response was true of non-traditional as well)				
4.1	Graded - collected and counted toward course grade			
4.2	Relevant – applied to life or career NT			
4.3	Professor understands students have busy lives NT – flexibility & regular immediate feedback			
4.4	Experiential or Applied NT			
4.5	Varied Assessment Activities - More than just tests NT			
4.6	Frequent Assessments – More than just a midterm and final NT			
4.7	More in-class and group work			
4.8 After responding to the items on the checklist above, describe how your current assessment				

practices align with the criteria above.

4.9 Based on # 4.8 above, which aspects are missing and what changes might you make?

4.10 Describe any implications these criteria might have within your specific discipline?

4.11 Describe any best practices you or your colleagues are engaged in related to these criteria.

Application of Course Content and Contribution to the Learning Environment Rubric

Learning often occurs from listening and interacting with others, not just from listening to lectures.

Therefore, students are expected to be actively involved in the teaching-learning process of the class. Research in educational psychology suggests that more learning takes place when students are actively involved in discussing and processing course content. In addition, verbal communication is one of the top skills employers seek. It is expected that students will come to class prepared to participate effectively in class discussions and in-class exercises during each class meeting. Students will earn points for applying course content through contributions and playing a crucial role in the learning process. Points for contributing to the learning environment can only be earned if you are in attendance. Points will be subtracted when students regularly arrive late, leave early, or detract from the learning environment in any way.

<u>DISTRACTING BEHAVIOR</u>	<u>DISENGAGED BEHAVIOR</u>	<u>VERBAL DOMINATOR</u>	<u>ABSENTEE</u>	<u>OBSERVER</u>	<u>CONTRIBUTOR</u>	<u>SCHOLAR</u>
Engaging in distracting behavior such as impulsive blurting, offensive or disrespectful comments, or engaging in side conversations with other students disrupts the learning environment and interferes with others ability to learn. As does regularly (more than three times) arriving late/leaving early.	Inattentive behavior such as sleeping, reading or working on projects for this or other classes, wearing headphones, utilizing phones (texting under the table), laptops, and other technological devices takes away from the overall learning environment.	Excessive comments (ie: speaking more than 4 times during a class periods and/or sharing unrelated anecdotes or stories) limits the opportunities for others to contribute and should not be considered valuable.	Sometimes it is impossible to come to class (due to illness, etc.), but in order to be fair to students who attend there is no distinction between an excused and an unexcused absence. An absent student is not able to contribute to the learning environment.	A student who is an OBSERVER consistently attends to the instructor and his/her fellow students when they are speaking. An Observer conveys mutual respect by displaying a positive attitude through eye contact and other attentive non-verbals.	A student who is a CONTRIBUTOR has all the attributes of an observer, but they also add insights or examples that support course content. They ask questions to clarify content as well. Their ability to apply content suggests they've come to class prepared. Note that contributions can be made in or outside of class (ie: providing article or media references).	A student who is a SCHOLAR has all the attributes of a contributor, yet they go beyond contributing by asking thoughtful questions. Their comments and questions exhibit critical thinking and application of the content such that it is obvious they've come to class prepared. They make contributions which improve the quality of learning that takes place in the classroom.
-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3

NAME of PEER EVALUATOR				
<p align="center">Team-Based Learning Peer Evaluation Rubric</p> <p>According to research conducted by the National Association of Colleges & Employers, the ability to work productively as part of a team is one of the top skills employers seek. In order to build your skills, we will use a learning-centered team-based approach involving peer evaluation.</p>				
Productive Learner Behaviors in a Learning-Centered Task Oriented Team				
1.	Leading	Initiates & facilitates productive discussion, keeps team on task		
2.	Supporting	Invites, encourages, and openly accepts contributions of ALL team members		
3.	Mediating	Helps team members constructively analyze differing opinions and come to consensus		
4.	Positivity	Displays and/or promotes a positive attitude toward the learning tasks		
Learner Behaviors that are Non-Productive to Group Process & Task Orientation within a Team				
1.	Withdrawn	Not participating		
2.	Dominating	Interrupts or participates so much it limits the participation of other team members		
3.	Attacking	Is hostile or negative toward other team members and/or their contributions		
4.	Distracting	Displays verbal or nonverbal behaviors that distract the group from the learning tasks		
5.	Negativity	Displays and /or promotes a negative attitude toward the learning tasks		
Evaluation Descriptors for Learner Contribution to Team-Based Learning Activities				
<p><u>DISRUPTIVE</u> Regularly exhibits nonproductive behaviors disrupting group process such as distracting, attacking, and consistent negativity.</p> <p align="center">0-2 pts</p>		<p><u>MINIMAL</u> Excessive absences missing 5 or more classes or withdrawn with no productive contributions. Or slight exhibition of distracting, dominating, or negativity.</p> <p align="center">3-4 pts</p>		<p><u>OBSERVER / LIMITED</u> Observes without contributing much or absent three to five times limiting opportunity to contribution.</p> <p align="center">5-6 pts</p>
		<p><u>VALUED</u> Fair attendance with no more than two to three absences and/or regular display of productive group behaviors. Never exhibits non-productive behaviors.</p> <p align="center">7-8 pts</p>		<p><u>EXCELLENT</u> Consistently attends with no more than one or possibly two absences. Always displays positivity, leads, supports, & mediates. Never exhibits non-productive behaviors.</p> <p align="center">9-10 pts</p>
LIST TEAM MEMBERS BELOW		List # of Absences	Choose the best descriptor for each team member from the 5 listed above	Point Total from 0 – 10 for Each Team Member
1.				
2.				
3.				

Professional Behavior Rubric – School of Education			
Prof. Behavior / Disposition	Does Not Meet Expectations (1)	Meets Expectations (3)	Exceeds Expectation (5)
1. Exhibits sound judgment and moral reasoning, especially in relating to and safe-guarding students	Uses objectionable language; relates to P-12 students as peers; leaves the classroom without a qualified person in charge	Does not use objectionable language; relates to p-12 students in an adult and professional manner; never leaves the classroom without a qualified adult in charge	Uses exemplary language and deals individually with P-12 students who exhibit inappropriate behavior; maintains a warm but professional attitude with students; maintains control and assumes responsibility for classroom at all times
2. Interacts appropriately and positively with others	Interactions with students, colleagues, or authority figures are negative, demeaning, sarcastic, combative, or inappropriate	Interactions with students, peers, colleagues, or authority figures are appropriate and positive	Interactions with students, peers, colleagues, or authority figures are appropriate, positive, and respectful of differing opinions
3. Treats others with courtesy, respect, empathy, and open-mindedness	At times treats others rudely and with disrespect. Words or actions are insulting or show contempt for others	Treats others with courtesy and respect. Words and actions are polite and professional	Treats others with courtesy, respect and open-mindedness. Listens to and shows interest in the ideas and opinions of others
4. Displays the ability to work with diverse individuals	Communicates an inability or unwillingness to work with some students, other candidates, or teachers	Works harmoniously and effectively with diverse individuals	Displays the ability to work with diverse individuals and seeks opportunities to include or show appreciation for those excluded
5. Displays maturity and independence by following appropriate protocol when seeking solutions to problems	Fails to identify the appropriate personnel with whom to address the problem; focuses on blaming others rather than seeking solutions	Enlists the help of faculty or staff in identifying the appropriate person to assist; focuses on seeking solutions rather than assigning blame	Seeks solutions independently and/or identifies the faculty or staff member who can assist; follows through with recommendations
6. Accepts and uses constructive criticism (feedback)	Is not receptive to constructive comments and shows no sign of implementing change	Is receptive to constructive comments and implements changes	Is receptive to constructive comments, implements changes, and seeks feedback from others
7. Demonstrates Enthusiasm and initiative	Lacks enthusiasm and confidence in teaching and does not take initiative	Exhibits enthusiasm in teaching	Is enthusiastic, confident, and takes initiative in teaching
8. Demonstrates self-monitoring and control of emotions and behavior	At times visibly demonstrates a lack of emotional control; may become upset, use put-downs or display anger	Models appropriate emotional and behavioral responses	Models appropriate emotional and behavioral responses in difficult situations
9. professional appearance uses appropriate hygiene	Appearance, attire or hygiene are often inappropriate		Is a role model of professionalism in appearance, attire, and hygiene
10. Prepares thoroughly and consistently	Seldom displays a thorough preparations for students and is frequently late with assessments	Prepares for all learners and consistently abides by deadlines	Prepares thoroughly for all learners and always abides by deadlines
11. Exhibits a strict code of honesty related to assessments	Has knowingly allowed students to plagiarize, cheat on tests, or copy another's work	Consistently demonstrates behaviors that exemplify honesty and integrity.	Always demonstrates behaviors that exemplify honesty and integrity
12. Demonstrates punctuality and good attendance	Is frequently tardy or has unexcused absences	Is always punctual with only excused absences	Always arrives early and has no absences
13. Expresses self orally to communicate effectively	Inconsistently uses standard English in the school setting	Consistently uses standard English in the school setting	Consistently uses standard English in the school setting and is able to move with ease between audiences/registers
14. Expresses self in written format communicates well with diverse audiences	Inconsistently uses standard English in written format in the school setting	Consistently uses standard English in written format in the school setting	Consistently uses standard English in written format in the school setting and is able to move with ease between audiences/registers

Creating Value or Relevance		
	In order to enhance the value or relevance of course content and assessment activities I:	Describe or provide an example of how you create or how you might like to create value or relevance in this way
8.1	Connect course content and assessments to student interest	
8.2	Utilize real world authentic application	
8.3	Utilize personal application activities and assignments	
8.4	Link course content and assignments to students' academic lives	
8.5	Link course content and assignments to students' future professional lives	
<i>Ambrose, et al. (2010) How Learning Works: 7 Research-Based Principles for Smart Teaching</i>		
Make Content & Assessments Relevant by Linking them to Competencies Employers Seek		
	In order to enhance relevance I create assessments that develop the following competencies:	Describe or provide an example of how you create, or how you might like to create, relevance such that it develops each skill
8.7	Communication Skills (verbal & written)	
8.8	Strong Work Ethic	
8.9	Teamwork Skills	
8.10	Initiative / Motivation	
8.11	Interpersonal Skills	
8.12	Problem solving Skills	
8.13	Analytical Ability	
8.14	Flexibility / Adaptability	
8.15	Computer / Technical Skills	
8.16	Organizational Skills	
<i>U.S. National Association of Career Educators Annual Outlook</i>		

The Modern Learner Checklist – How Groovy Am I?					
How Often do You Exhibit the Following Behaviors ?			<u>Rarely</u> Got to get Groovin	<u>Somewhat</u> In the Groove	<u>Often</u> Beyond Groovy
The Ideal Educator or Instructor (NT designates this response was true of non-traditional as well)					
9.1	Approachable and easy to talk to	NT			
9.2	Nice, caring, friendly, helpful	NT			
9.3	Alert as to whether students understand NT – noted knowledgeable				
9.4	Open-minded and flexible – not rigid	NT			
9.5	Energetic, enthusiastic, positive attitude, upbeat	NT			
9.6	Displays a sense of humor, fun, and engaging	NT			
9.7 Which of the qualities of the Millennial Students' Ideal Professor do you exhibit?					
9.8 Which qualities do you wish to develop or improve upon?					
9.9 Describe any implications these criteria might have within your specific discipline?					
9.10 Describe any best practices you or your colleagues are engaged in related to these criteria.					

RAPPORT BUILDING CHECKLIST – DO STUDENTS PERCEIVE OF US AS ON THEIR SIDE?

BEHAVIOR		BEHAVIOR EXAMPLES	TOMATOES HAVE BEEN THROWN ON THIS ITEM	STUDENTS HAVEN'T THROWN TOMATOES YET, BUT..	I WIN THE GOLD MEDAL ON THIS ITEM
1	Exhibits Enthusiasm Dynamic and enthusiastic	Acts physically animated while talking with students, varies intonation and other vocal characteristics, is outgoing / extroverted with students			
2	Exhibits Altruism Tries to be of help	Does things ranging from holding the door for the student, to assisting him/her with studies, assignments, & other school related tasks			
3	Exhibits Optimism Perceived as pleasant	Acts in a professional manner, is cheerful, and positive. Avoids complaining about things, and being critical of self and others			
4	Exhibits Sensitivity Shows warmth	Communicates concern, is sympathetic & empathetic to students' problems/anxieties, and believes what students say			
5	Supportive	Encouraging - avoids being too harsh or excessively criticizing students			
6	Trustworthy Consistent and reliable	Emphasizes her/his responsibility, reliability, fairness, dedication, honesty, and sincerity. Fulfills any commitments made to students			
7	Exhibits Openness Shares information	Discloses personal information about her/his background, interests, views, insecurities, weaknesses, and fears, but not too much information			
8	Exhibits Respect	Avoids appearing superior, arrogant, or condescending toward students			
9	Promotes Similarity Makes the student feel they are similar	Expresses views that are similar to the views of students, agrees with some things students say, and points out the areas that students & teacher have in common (attitudes, values, interests)			
10	Exhibits Comfort	Is relaxed, at ease, casual, and tries to have a good time with students			
11	Interesting Self Interesting to know	Highlights past accomplishments and positive qualities, emphasizes things that make her/him interesting & expresses unique ideas			
12	Confirms Self-Concept Helps students feel good about themselves	Treats students like important people, compliments students, says only positive things about students, and treats things students say as being important information			
13	Elicits Disclosure Asks questions	Inquires about students' interests, feelings, opinions, views, and so on - responds as if these are important and interesting			
14	Keeps Social Rules Cooperative, friendly, and polite	Answers questions, acts interested, and adapts messages to the particular student - avoids changing the topic too soon, interrupting the student, dominating discussions, and excessive self-references			

RAPPORT BUILDING CHECKLIST – DO STUDENTS PERCEIVE OF US AS ON THEIR SIDE?

BEHAVIOR	BEHAVIOR EXAMPLES	TOMATOES HAVE BEEN THROWN ON THIS ITEM	STUDENTS HAVEN'T THROWN TOMATOES YET, BUT..	I WIN THE GOLD MEDAL ON THIS ITEM
Adapted from: <i>Richmond, V.P. & McCroskey, J.C. (1992). Power in the Classroom: Communication, Control, Concern. Hillsdale, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum</i>				

Applying the Research on Promoting Student Behaviors Conducive to Learning				
	I:	Solid	OK	Need Work
1	build positive rapport with students and “assume goodwill”			
2	allow for student input on course policies and consequences			
3	clearly state / communicate course policies			
4	clearly state a rationale for each course policy			
5	Clearly communicate consequences for non-adherence to policies			
6	have students sign off on a code of conduct / course policies			
7	immediately and consistently enforce course policies			
8	have course structured so classroom behaviors impact student grades			
9	focus on student learning & factual behaviors, not character or emotion			
10	do not take student behaviors personally			
11	do not react defensively			
12	project a relaxed non-authoritarian manner			
13	avoid public confrontations			
14	avoid sarcasm and belittling			
15	project concerned indifference - “I’m really sorry, wish I could help but..”			
16	practice “verbal judo” – in order to de-escalate confrontational students			
17	utilize evidence-based active engaging teaching methods			
18	strategically embed/require meta-cognitive processing and test-wrappers			
19	employ pedagogies of engagement so that students can’t just get notes			
20	make in-class activities crucial to success, particularly at beginning /end			
21	promote student responsibility for learning with self-assessments			
22	allow students to hold one another accountable with peer assessment			
23	let students be responsible for information they miss			
24	regularly require evidence of preparedness			
25	embed regular formative (providing feedback) low-stakes assessment			
26	conduct midterm evaluations getting student input on the course			
27	am working toward establishing departmental / campus guidelines for a consistent approach			
28	interact by consistently turning toward, as opposed to away or against			

How Well Are We Meeting the Needs of the Millennial? The Institutional Groovyness Index				
	Our Institution:	Groovyless	Need to Get Our Groove On	Groovylicious
1	views parents as partners			
2	provides avenues for parental input & support (parent association / board)			
3	communicates expectations of the role parents & students should play			
4	allows for parent contact through multiple modes of communication (email, interactive web Q&A, phone, live contact, etc.)			
5	is legally savvy and prepared for parents who threaten legal action			
6	utilizes interactive online forms with little use of paper			
7	requires little to no need for students to physically walk from office to office			
8	has a near immediate response to most student issues and processes			
9	provides ample courses in extension campus, hybrid, & online formats			
10	offers the latest technology to students, faculty, and staff			
11	offers a well trained techno-savvy faculty /staff			
12	values, supports, and rewards cutting edge technology use among faculty			
13	values, supports, and rewards faculty / staff development activities			
14	intentionally hires and trains faculty/staff to meet the needs of the millennial			
15	has a faculty that utilizes a variety of methods (not lecture only)			
16	offers a safe environment with high quality health & counseling services			
17	makes students feel “special” and as though they belong			
18	respects student ideas & invites student input in institutional governance			
19	offers faculty/staff/administrators that have positive connections w/ students			
20	values, displays, and rewards service excellence			

Ten Tips to Engage and Motivate Today's Students

In order to enhance student engagement and motivation I:

- | | | |
|-----|---|--|
| 10. | Structure courses holding students accountable with consistent consequences such that they take RESPONSIBILITY for their learning
regular quizzes / assessments, rubrics for contribution & application | |
| 9. | strategically design courses to create significant learning experiences
utilize integrated backward design linking outcomes to instructional methods and assessments | |
| 8. | promote student success – see checklist on page 2 of this handout
success motivates, while lack of success demotivates | |
| 7. | engage Students with VARIETY of Methods
embed discussion, application activities, group work, multimedia, case studies, role play, etc. | |
| 6. | use active RESEARCH-based pedagogies of engagement
problem-based and team-based learning, undergraduate research, community engagement | |
| 5. | embrace a learning-centered approach & become more facilitator less disseminator
less instructor dissemination time and more student application time | |
| 4. | create a RELAXED non-authoritarian learning environment
more caring and less rigid control oriented class with built in flexibility in course structure | |
| 3. | make outcomes and assessments RELEVANT & provide RATIONALES for policies
utilize personal & authentic application , connect content to student interests and their futures | |
| 2. | build positive RAPPORT with students – rapport is highly correlated with student motivation
support students and interact to produce closeness as opposed to creating distance | |
| 1. | Create a positive emotional experience for students in your courses
class activities should be engaging and of such importance and interest that students don't want to miss them | |

Summary of Dr. Price's Research on Student Motivation

Top 5 Factors that Motivate Student Attendance

Instructor:

- | | | |
|----|--|--|
| 5. | is enthusiastic or motivated | |
| 4. | Explains well – clear & not too fast | |
| 3. | makes class enjoyable or fun | |
| 2. | has an attendance policy, grade is impacted – points earned or lost | |
| 1. | Involves students: Invites questions, uses discussion, group work, hands-on activities, cases, etc | |

Top 5 Factors that Heighten Student Interest and Attention During Class

Instructor:

- | | | |
|----|---|--|
| 5. | embeds humor | |
| 4. | is NOT monotone | |
| 3. | explains well – clear & NOT TOO FAST | |
| 2. | utilizes multimedia | |
| 1. | involves students: invites questions, uses discussion, group work, hands-on activities, cases | |

Top 5 Factors that Motivate Students to do Work Outside of Class

- | | | |
|----|--|--|
| 5. | assigned work allows students to share their point of view | |
| 4. | assigned work applies to students' lives | |
| 3. | professor cares, encourages, or offers help | |
| 2. | students earn extra credit or bonus points | |
| 1. | work is required or collected for a grade | |

Newsletter Article

Tips for Teaching Modern Learners
Christy Price, Dalton State College

Ask colleagues who have taught undergraduates for a decade or more if students have changed, and they will typically respond with a resounding, “YES!” My interest in this new breed of students was piqued when I began to notice unrealistically high expectations of success among my students combined with an astonishingly low level of effort on their part. After having read Angelo and Cross’s *Classroom Assessment*, I began to embed formative assessments in the courses I taught. One of these assessments turned out to be particularly valuable. After the first major assessment or exam, I asked students to anonymously respond to the following four questions:

1. What did you do to prepare for the exam?
2. Considering what you did to prepare for the exam, what grade did you expect to earn?
3. What will you do differently in preparing for the next exam?
4. Is there anything I can do to assist you in preparing for the next exam?

In response to the first question, students offered up surprisingly candid responses. For example, they replied, “I read **parts** of the chapter” and “I looked over my notes **the night before** and reviewed **during my class that meets right before.**” There was the classic commuter student response: “I looked over my notes **in the car** before coming to class,” and my personal favorite “I’m going to do much better next time, **now that I bought the book.**” This student sat through three weeks of class and took the first exam without purchasing the required text! The most astonishing part of all of this was when these students were asked what grade they expected to earn, they confidently listed an A or a B.

Although there is an abundance of information focused on the traits of modern learners (millennials as well as nontraditional students 25 and over), very little has been published regarding how these characteristics impact the teaching and learning process. One exception is Ellen Pastorino’s 2006 essay “When Generations Collide in the Classroom” which makes a case for understanding generational differences and their potential impact on our teaching. In keeping with Pastorino’s assertion, I conducted a qualitative analysis of narratives provided by more than a hundred modern learners. What I uncovered was truly enlightening, and it transformed my teaching.

Modern learners’ ideal professor

Most astonishing of all the findings of my study on modern learners were their perceptions regarding the ideal professor. The list below summarizes respondents’ views. Modern learners feel that the ideal professor should be:

5. “Energetic,” “enthusiastic,” and “upbeat” with a “positive attitude.”

4. "Open-minded" and "flexible."
3. Alert as to whether students understand them.
2. "Nice," "friendly," "caring," and "helpful."
1. "Approachable" and "easy to talk to."

The modern learners' ideal learning environment

The list below summarizes modern learners' perceptions regarding their ideal learning environment. Millennials felt the ideal learning environment was one in which the following elements were present.

5. "Students know one another" and "work together in groups."
4. Learning is "relaxed," "enjoyable," and that awful "F" word we dread hearing... "fun."
3. A "multimedia" format is utilized, including podcasts, online activities, video, PowerPoint, etc.
2. "Real examples" that are "relevant" to their culture are used.
1. "interactive" and "participatory."

Interestingly, the most consistent theme present in the analysis of the modern learner responses was they preferred a variety of teaching methods, as opposed to a "lecture only" format. It is important to note that these students did not attack the lecture method altogether, but they had strongly negative perceptions of learning environments in which lecture was the only method used. According to one respondent, "If you lecture all throughout the time then we get bored. If you are constantly changing from lecture, to discussion, to group work, that helps a lot. It helps keep us awake and we learn more. Stuff gets into our head better."

In presenting on this topic, I often summarize the main themes of this research with the following five "R" s for engaging the modern learner:

1. **Relevance:** Modern learners do not typically value information for information's sake.
2. **Rationale:** Unlike Boomers who were raised in a more authoritarian manner, more readily accepting of the chain of command, modern learners were raised in a non-authoritarian manner and are more likely to conform, comply, and adhere to course policies when they are provided with a rationale.
3. **Relaxed:** Modern learners thrive in a less formal, more comfortable learning environment in which they can informally interact with the professor and one another.

4. **Rapport:** Modern learners are extremely relational. They are more central to their parents' lives than previous generations and are used to having the adults in their lives show great interest in them. They appreciate it when professors show that same interest, and they seem to be more willing to pursue learning outcomes when we connect with them on a personal level.
5. **Research-Based Methods:** Modern learners have grown up in an era in which they were constantly engaged. When they are not interested, their attention quickly shifts elsewhere.

Clearly, meeting the needs of modern learners is a topic still under study, yet I highly encourage you to apply these initial findings to your practice in the classroom. I regularly receive enthusiastic emails from professors who have participated in my workshops and subsequently altered their methods. It is my hope that this article will inspire you to do the same.

References

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Christy Price, EdD is a professor of psychology at Dalton State College. She will explore modern learners and the psychology behind teaching them in *Motive, Engage, Inspire: Tips for Teaching Modern Learners*, a Magna Online Seminar, on August 31. Go to <https://www.magnapubs.com/online-seminars/motivate-engage-and-inspire-tips-for-teaching-modern-learners-14537-1.html> for more information or to register for this interactive webinar.