

THE GENERATIONAL SURVIVAL GUIDE:

Strengthening Campus Connections
Through Shared Purpose



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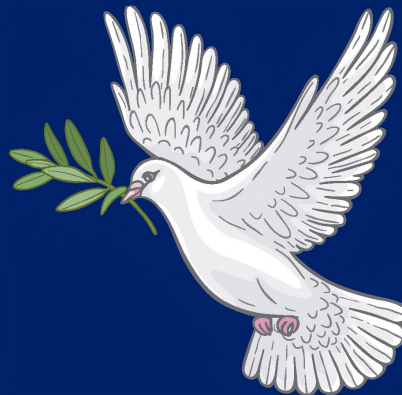
Community Building & Engagement Certificate
Capstone Project
May 2025

Project Purpose

The following Generational Diversity Survival Guide is a proposed resource to help faculty, staff, and teaching assistants better understand and navigate generational differences in the workplace and in the classroom. By recognizing the value of each generation and reinforcing our shared mission to support students, we aim to create a more collaborative, well-informed, and inclusive campus culture.

Why an understanding of Generational Diversity Matters:

Embracing generational diversity strengthens retention, morale, and student support, but even more importantly it supports Duquesne University's Mission of "Serving God by Serving Students"



Community Building & Engagement Certificate
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QUICK
ABOUT

FACTS



TRADITIONALISTS

1922-1945



Key Characteristics



VALUE FRUGALITY AND RESOURCEFULNESS

Embody the “want not, waste not” philosophy
Shaped by Great Depression & wartime scarcity



RESPECT FOR AUTHORITY AND HIERARCHY

Grew up in a time with clearly defined structures
and military influence
Less likely to openly challenge leadership



LOYALTY TO COUNTRY AND EMPLOYERS

Long-term employment was valued
Wealth of institutional knowledge



VALUE “TRADITIONAL” SOCIAL NORMS

For many, “traditional” gender roles were
modeled and normalized

BEST PRACTICES FOR WORKING WITH TRADITIONALISTS

Help Foster an Engaging Environment by embracing the following tactics in your classroom or office space:

- **Prioritize Formal Methods of Communication**
 - While digital communication is essential in today's world, try to adapt to a traditionalists point of view and skill set
 - Utilize office memos, formal in-person meetings, and avoid texting
- **Maintain Clear Chains of Command and Follow Policy**
 - Ensure that you are following established office and course policies for concerns and questions
 - Traditionalists want a well outlined process for reporting
- **Highlight Individual Experience and Work Ethic:**
 - Recognize their dedication to their work and their years of service for employees
 - Staff Awards/Years of Service public recognition are GREAT ways to keep a Traditionalist feeling valued
 - Consider a two-way mentoring program – you will learn as much from them, as they do from you
 - For students, recognize and discuss assignment success and remind them that their life experience brings value to the classroom
- **Provide Easy Access to Technology Training**
 - Do NOT assume that a Traditionalist cannot use technology
 - Instead, offer accessible training and limit your course/office technology to a few cohesive platforms instead of many repetitive ones
- **Ensure that the office/classroom has clear expectations, policies, and guidelines**
 - Ambiguity and a “common sense” mentality can be frustrating for this generation
 - Give them as much clarity on your expectations as possible

QUICK FACTS ABOUT



BABY BOOMERS

1922–1945



Key Characteristics



STRUCTURALLY KNOWLEDGEABLE

Often have valuable insight into the historical knowledge of a company/school



STRONG WORK ETHIC & PROBLEM SOLVING

Value the concept of “being seen” at work
Developed strong analytical skills



DESIRE TO LEAVE A LASTING IMPACT

Continually looking to improve processes
Exhibit company/school loyalty



POTENTIAL FOR KNOWLEDGE SILOS

Previously well-defined roles means potentially less adaptability and collaboration



ADAPTING TO NEW TECHNOLOGIES & STYLES

Continuously challenged with rapid changes in technology and collaboration expectations
– “Work from Home” is odd to them

BEST PRACTICES FOR WORKING WITH BABY BOOMERS

Help Foster an Engaging Environment by embracing the following tactics in your classroom or office space:

- **Leverage Their Experience in New Contexts**
 - Frame opportunities for them to contribute their experience in new, collaborative projects and problem-solving scenarios
 - Help to foster collaborative environments that value all individuals input and historical knowledge of processes
- **Leverage their Deep Domain Expertise and Contextual Understanding**
 - Their experience provides a foundation of knowledge and understanding that can inform decision-making
 - Be sure to publicly recognize the value this members bring to your team or classroom
 - Continually solicit their input and advice on a situation in a collaborative group setting
 - Classroom discussion, discussion boards, team meetings, etc.
- **Capitalize on their Commitment to Quality and Thoroughness**
 - Their highly-detailed approach to work can enhance collaborative efforts and help perfect final-projects and/or reports
- **Facilitate open dialogue and understanding of different work preferences and expectations**
 - Frame collaboration as a way to leverage the strengths of each generation
 - Encourage bi-directional learning between generations
 - Help moderate discussions in which values are shared to ensure that the space promotes trust development, empathy, and kindness
 - This is especially important when differing values are brought up
- **Foster Bidirectional Knowledge Sharing**
 - Recognize that knowledge transfer is not only from senior level to entry level colleagues or classmates. As newer generations have more to learn from previous generations, Baby Boomers also have much to learn from younger generations. Encourage mutual learning and exchange.

QUICK FACTS ABOUT



GENERATION X

1965–1980



Key Characteristics



INDEPENDENT & SELF-RELIANT

“Latchkey” kids – limited adult supervision
Self-sufficient with tasks – value independence



ADAPTABILITY & COMFORT WITH CHANGE

Navigated significant technological and
social shifts



VALUE WORK-LIFE BALANCE

Prioritize a life outside of work and may be
less inclined to the “workaholic” tendencies
associated with previous generations



SKEPTICAL OF AUTHORITY

Value sincerity and directness
Willing to respectfully question leadership



ENTREPRENEURIAL SPIRIT

Bring a creative and independent
approach to problem-solving

BEST PRACTICES FOR WORKING WITH GENERATION X

Help Foster an Engaging Environment by embracing the following tactics in your classroom or office space:

- **Recognize Their Role as a Bridge**
 - Leverage their ability to foster collaboration between generations
 - They are highly adaptable, having went through various technological advancements in their lives
- **Offer Flexible Work/Learning Schedules**
 - Their value for work-life balance makes them responsive to flexible arrangements.
 - Considering offering a hybrid-schedule where possible, or hybrid work assignments
 - Focus less on the time in the office and more on the quality of work
- **Provide Opportunities for Growth and Development**
 - While independent, they still seek opportunities to enhance their skills and make a difference
 - Although they may appear as natural-born leaders, they still benefit from collaborative projects as they work towards the common goal
- **Navigating Traditional Hierarchies**
 - Their independent upbringing makes them more likely to question workplace hierarchy – be ready to mediate differences in expectations
- **Addressing Generational Bullying**
 - The forgotten generation – Gen X is more likely to generational bullying
- **Communicate Sincerely and Directly**
 - Their skepticism of authority means they value honesty and straightforward communication
 - Do NOT talk around difficult conversations, address them directly
- **Focus on Results and Productivity**
 - They want to see that their work contributes to tangible outcomes.

QUICK
ABOUT

FACTS

MILLENNIALS



1981–2000



Key Characteristics



COLLABORATIVE & TEAM-ORIENTED

Grew up in a highly connected world
Face-to-face OR virtual connection



ACHIEVEMENT-ORIENTED

Seek instant feedback
High expectations for success



VALUE AUTONOMY

Want to be heard
Dislike rigid hierarchies



TECH SAVVY & CONNECTED

Grew up as “Digital Natives”
Deeply value digital tools



OPEN COMMUNICATION IS KEY

Digital world is always available
Expect open and frequent communication

BEST PRACTICES FOR WORKING WITH MILLENNIALS

Help Foster an Engaging Environment by embracing the following tactics in your classroom or office space:

- **Establish communication expectations early** – how will you notify your employees or students of changes, cancellations, or other important information?
 - Consider Canvas Announcements, Group Texts, Emails, GroupMe
 - Main Point: Establish expectations EARLY and use them frequently
- **Help foster a collaborative environment amongst remote and in-person classes and/or employees**
 - Consider hosting Zoom sessions for remote individuals to connect in a “live” format
 - Consider team-building events in a hybrid environment
 - Ensure all members of the group can participate and give feedback
 - Seek feedback often – if something doesn’t work, change it!
 - If you change it – try to incorporate their ideas
- **Be open to feedback and allow members of the team to share honestly**
 - Millennials value open communication about both the good and bad
 - Don’t beat around the bush with less than ideal news, a millennial appreciates direct communication
 - Consider holding open office hours or supervisor “listening hours” where students or employees can come and speak with you informally about concerns, comments, and acknowledgements
- **Millennials value diversity and social responsibility**
 - Consider their personal interests and assign them to projects that fit their values when possible
 - Explain the potential or ongoing impact of their projects when possible

QUICK
ABOUT

FACTS



GENERATION Z

2001–2020



Key Characteristics



“DIGITAL NATIVES”

Never knew a world without technology
Technology integration is early and often



TEXTING AND INSTANT COMMUNICATION

Texting is the most enjoyable method
Do not heavily engage in voice calls or email



TECHNOLOGICALLY AWARE

Awareness of the negatives of technology
Self-regulate usage of technology



ADAPTABLE STYLES

Willing to adapt to workplace communication
Follow “norms” of workplace professionalism



FLUIDITY IN WORKSPACES

View online interactions as “real”
Productive in-person and online

BEST PRACTICES FOR WORKING WITH GENERATION Z

Help Foster an Engaging Environment by embracing the following tactics in your classroom or office space:

- **Use consistent, clear, digital communication with Generation Z where possible**
 - For quick updates/info use a digital platform if possible
 - For lengthier meetings or explanations, write it out in a professional email
- **Utilize streamlined processes and/or user-friendly technologies**
 - Generation Z wants efficient workplace/classroom tools – try to use an integrative platform and avoid repetitive, separate systems
 - Avoid multiple repetitive systems
 - Generation Z expects digital experiences to be intuitive – they don't want to spend a large amount of time learning a nuanced system, if they think there is a more efficient way to get the job/assignment done
- **Assist Generation Z in developing intrapersonal skills by balancing remote and in-person work where possible**
 - Generation Z spends much time in online spaces, but may have difficulty interacting with individuals in person
 - Plan classroom activities or workplace teambuilding activities around communication and professional development
 - Keep in-person meetings productive and collaborative
- **Generation Z is highly adaptable**
 - These students and employees navigated the COVID-19 Pandemic and came out of it more resourceful. Give them the benefit of the doubt while they adjust to your classroom or workplace norms and expectations.
- **Be mindful of the values Generation Z holds surrounding mental health**
 - Give small breaks in the classroom or workspace and familiarize yourself with the mental load of projects and assignments

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