

**Being Generationally Savvy:
Supporting Teachers and Administrators of
All Generations**

Agenda

- **Introductions and Grounding Activity**
- **Overview of the Four Generations**
- **Generational Differences at School**
- **Specific Workplace Challenges**
- **Bibliography and Next Steps**

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About the Presenter

Jennifer Abrams is an international educational and communications consultant for public and independent schools, hospitals, universities and non-profits. Jennifer trains and coaches teachers, administrators, nurses, hospital personnel, and others on new employee support, supervision, being generationally savvy, having hard conversations and effective collaboration skills.

In Palo Alto USD (Palo Alto, CA), Jennifer led professional development sessions on topics from equity and elements of effective instruction to teacher leadership and peer coaching and provided new teacher and administrator trainings at both the elementary and secondary level. From 2000-2011, Jennifer was lead coach for the Palo Alto-Mountain View-Los Altos-Saratoga-Los Gatos Consortium's Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment Program.

In her educational consulting work, Jennifer has presented at annual conferences such as Learning Forward, ASCD, NASSP, NAESP, AMLE, ISACS and the New Teacher Center Annual Symposium, as well as at the Teachers' and Principals' Centers for International School Leadership. Jennifer's communications consulting in the health care sector includes training and coaching work at the Community Hospital of the Monterey Peninsula and Stanford Hospital and Clinics.

Jennifer's publications include *Having Hard Conversations*, and the Corwin Press e-courses by the same name, "Planning Productive Talk," her article for ASCD's *Educational Leadership* (October 2011), her chapter, "Habits of Mind for the School Savvy Leader" in Art Costa's and Bena Kallick's book, *Learning and Leading with Habits of Mind: 16 Essential Characteristics for Success*, and her contribution to the book, *Mentors in the Making: Developing New Leaders for New Teachers* published by Teachers College Press. Her latest book, with co-author Valerie Von Frank, *The Multigenerational Workplace: Communicating, Collaborating & Creating Community* was published by Corwin Press in November of 2013 and her upcoming book on developing one's skill set around challenging communications will be published in 2016. Jennifer also writes a monthly newsletter/blog, *Voice Lessons*, available for reading at and subscribing to on her website, www.jenniferabrams.com.

Jennifer has been recognized as one of "18 Women All K-12 Educators Need to Know" by *Education Week's* 'Finding Common Ground' blog. She has been a featured interviewee on the topic of professionalism for ASCD's video series, *Master Class*, hosted by National Public Radio's Claudio Sanchez, and in the lead article, "Finding Your Voice in Facilitating Productive Conversations" for Learning Forward's *The Leading Teacher*, Summer 2013 newsletter; as a generational expert for "Tune in to What the New Generation of Teachers Can Do," published in *Phi Delta Kappan*, (May 2011), and by the Ontario Ministry of Education for their *Leadership Matters: Supporting Open-to-Learning Conversations* video series.

Jennifer considers herself a "voice coach," helping others learn how to best use their voices - be it collaborating on a team, presenting in front of an audience, coaching a colleague, supervising an employee. Jennifer holds a Master's degree in Education from Stanford University and a Bachelor's degree in English from Tufts University. She lives in Palo Alto, California. Jennifer can be reached at jennifer@jenniferabrams.com, www.jenniferabrams.com, and on Twitter @jenniferabrams.

Just One Filter of Perception

- Looking at someone with regard to his/her generational affiliation is but ONE filter of perception with which we look at people.
- A person's identification with a certain race, class, region, and religion, etc. will also influence who they are and how they work.

However, Generational Challenges Can Cause...

- Decreased efficiency/lower productivity
- Lower morale
- A hampered ability to work in teams
- Communication snafus w/staff and parents
- Clashes around issues of fairness
- Increased turnover and hiring challenges

Purpose Of This Session

- The purpose of this session is to assist you in understanding, supporting and working with colleagues, parents and students of all generations.

CHAPTER 1 SUMMARY

	Traditionalists (1922–1943) 52–62 million	Boomers (1944–1964) 80 million	Gen Xers (1965–1981) 50 million	Millennials (1982–2000) 70 million
Other definitions	1922–1945 1930–1945 1900–1945	1946–1964 1943–1960	1961–1980 1965–1976 1965–1977 1965–1980	1977–1990 1977–2000 1980–2000 1981–1999 1981–2000
Other names	Veterans Radio Babies Silent Generation Matures Traditionalists The Greatest Generation	Baby Boomers The “ME” Generation	Baby Busters Latchkey Kids	Baby Busters Echo Boomers Generation Y Generation Why Generation Next Nexters Internet Generation iGeneration Mosaics
Characteristics	Patriotic, loyal, respectful of authority, formal, hierarchical, dedicated, risk-averse, detail-oriented, hard working, financially and socially conservative	Optimistic, idealistic, educated, competitive, diplomatic, loyal, high expectations, opinionated	Skeptical, resourceful, independent, entrepreneurial, pragmatic, straightforward	Technologically savvy, empowered, pragmatic, confident, collaborative, neotraditionalist, community-centered, versatile, very busy
Need	Respect, commitment, consistency, privacy	Privacy, validation	Flexibility, work-life balance	Fast rewards, instant feedback, sense of safety
General description	Their name says it all. They didn’t redefine the nation’s values—they just did their job of winning World War II. They are patriotic, civic-minded, frugal, and private. They	Growing up in a time of economic prosperity, they could afford to focus on their own goals and achievement. They are willing to sacrifice for success and	Less optimistic than Boomers, they were highly criticized as slackers. Their cynicism is born of witnessing corruption revealed and changing values.	This is a generation of multitaskers who value flexibility and freedom. They are socially conscious, highly educated, and tolerant of authority, having been

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	may struggle with diversity, having grown up in mostly homogenous groups. Life often revolved around family, school, and church.	are often viewed as workaholics.	They are highly independent and less committed to any organization than to gaining job skills that will take them to their next job. They are unimpressed by titles and authority. They want a life/work balance and are willing to sacrifice to attain it.	coddled and scheduled by parents. They are more inclusive and accepting than prior generations as their world has been increasingly diverse. They are overwhelmingly confident, public in sharing information, and optimistic. They are adaptable, having grown up with constant change.
Defining events	Great Depression Pearl Harbor and World War II GI Bill Korean War	Cold War Civil Rights Act Rock and roll Assassinations of J.F.K., M.L.K. Woodstock Vietnam War Chappaquiddick Watergate Energy crisis	Computers <i>Challenger</i> space shuttle Fall of the Berlin Wall AIDS Oklahoma City O.J. Simpson Chernobyl International Space Station	Internet Diversity Columbine 9/11 Darfur
Technology	Automobiles more common Radio Magazines and newspapers Party telephone lines Handwritten letters	Color TV Car-sized computers in institutions Typewriters Landline telephones	Cable TV Video games MTV	1,000 TV channels Internet Cell phones Instant networking with peers Digital information at their fingertips

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Job prospects	Options often were limited by race, gender, and family background. Women's career options were severely limited, and few pursued higher education. Strong unions supported skilled trades and provided good livings for the working class. Work often resulted in tangible goods, rather than services.	Many individuals were expected to follow their parents' career paths. Good jobs could be had with a high school diploma and on-the-job training. Company loyalty could lead to lifetime employment. Midcareer, they found that retraining became necessary and layoffs were possible—and traumatic.	Factory and labor jobs began to disappear, and this generation became more technologically savvy. Telecommunications became a field, and technology gave rise to new industries.	Knowledge is power, and this generation knows it will need to develop its own expertise to compete economically. Work is less about producing goods than working with information.
Family life	More families had both father and stay-at-home mother. Mixed race families were rare. Divorce was difficult and uncommon.	More women joined the workforce rather than staying home to raise families.	Increase in divorce led to more single-parent families.	Typical families may be single parents, never-married biological parents, blended families, multiracial, multigenerational, or same-sex partner parents.
Organizational structures	A civic-minded generation that fought in World War II. The government has focused on them throughout their lives, from the GI bill through Social Security and Medicare, and they have a better attitude toward government as a result. They are hierarchical, with slower communications through bureaucratic processes.	Structures still surround the workplace, and technology begins to exert an influence. Machines begin to change the nature of work.	Globalization and free trade start to force organizations to restructure. A flatter system often results, and formal hierarchies are loosened. Many jobs, especially middle management, are outsourced overseas or eliminated.	Instant communication allows for much different work relationships, with rapidly changing norms and more unpredictability.
Heroes	Superman Joe DiMaggio Walter Cronkite John Wayne Franklin Delano Roosevelt	John Glenn Martin Luther King Jr.	Someone they seek out.	Danica Patrick Jennifer Hudson Josh Groban

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Pop icons	Wheaties Mickey Mouse The Lone Ranger	Slinkies TV dinners The peace sign Mood rings Bell bottoms Brooks Brothers	Brady Bunch E.T. Cabbage Patch Kids	Barney Oprah X Games
Literature	Daily newspaper The Bible Gone With the Wind	Catcher in the Rye Atlas Shrugged Lord of the Rings MAD magazine	The Stand Angels and Demons Wired magazine	Harry Potter Video games
TV shows	The Lone Ranger, The Cisco Kid, The George Burns and Gracie Allen Show, The Abbott and Costello Show, The Roy Rogers Show, The Jack Benny Program	Laugh-In, What's My Line?, I Love Lucy, Bonanza, American Bandstand, The Twilight Zone, Looney Tunes, Tom and Jerry, Maverick, Doctor Who, Star Trek	Little House on the Prairie, Dallas, Saturday Night Live, M*A*S*H, The Muppet Show, The Waltons, The Six Million Dollar Man	The Simpsons, Saved By the Bell, Full House, Star Trek: The Next Generation, The Cosby Show, Seinfeld

Identifying People's Generational Profiles

Think about each generation's "take" on the following concepts:

The Delineators	Boomers	Xers	Millennials
Perspective on work	Career	Job	There will be many careers
Communication style	Diplomatic	Blunt	Easy and open Don't hurt me
View of authority	Impressed	Unfazed	Wants it
Need for approval	Seek validation	Indifferent	Needs it a lot
Perspective on resources	Abundant	Scarce	No worries or lots of worries
Response to policies and procedures	Protective	Mistrustful	Need help with protocols
Relationship to team	Team-oriented	Self-reliant	Been on 'em Can do them
Work ethic	Driven	Balanced	Multi-Task
Focus on work projects	Relationships and results	Tasks and results	Lots of fun and lots of results
Relationship to technology	Acquired	Assimilated	In the DNA
Entitlement	Experience	Merit	Assumed

Adapted from [The Xers & The Boomers](#)

Processing Prompt

Think about how all the generations of colleagues you work with would relate to these ideas. What are some of the implications of this thinking for you in your role?

Specific Generational Challenges at School

- **Recruitment and Retainment**
- **Supervision and Feedback**
- **Daily Communication and Etiquette (Being School Savvy)**
- **Training and Professional Development**
- **Succession Planning and Mentoring**

Language and Communication

Traditionalists	
Persuasive Language	Turnoffs
Authority	Profanity
Discipline	Slang
Dependable	Emotional language
Great	Disorganization
Respect	Lack of respect for tradition
Sacrifice	Poor grammar
Consistent	Disrespect for experience
Baby Boomers	
Persuasive Language	Turnoffs
Consensus	Brusqueness
Human Rights	Unfriendliness
Involvement	Not showing interest in the person
Relationship/Trust	Shows of power and one-upmanship
Team	Political incorrectness
Tolerance	Sports and war metaphors
Equal/Fair	
Gen Xers	
Persuasive Language	Turnoffs
Alternative	Schmoozing
Independent	Inefficient use of time
Efficient	Flashiness
Pragmatic	Hyperbole
Results	Incompetence
System	Bureaucracy
Competent	Complex Policies
Millennials	
Persuasive Language	Turnoffs
Achievement	Cynicism
Challenge	Sarcasm
Collaborate	Unfairness
Community	Condescension
Discovery	
Future	<i>(Adapted from <u>Connecting Generations</u>-Claire Raines</i>
Positive/Fun	

Collaboration and the Generations

What might a Boomer want in a colleague?

- A colleague who has high expectations for you and for them – for ‘us’
- A colleague who connects with the deep values around education
- A colleague who acknowledges prior experience and values it
- A colleague who understands personal connection matters
- A colleague who thinks in ‘affiliation’ to a greater goal – thinking ‘we’
- A colleague who is mindful of language and respect given through language
- A colleague who gives of him or herself – willing to do something additional
- A colleague who understands it is jolting to be on the bottom of the pecking order again and the difficulty of being a “rookie” or paying one’s dues and proving one’s self all over again
- A colleague who can acknowledge the challenges of a 2nd career person seeing this system as strange because it is experienced based vs. performance based
- A colleague who is very clear and understanding of the need for clarity of protocols AND knows that the colleague can also ‘read between the lines’

What might an Xer want in a colleague?

- A colleague for whom constant face-to-face interaction isn’t needed
- A colleague who understands and believes in the life-work balance
- A colleague who gets the need to affiliate, but not totally commit to work
- A colleague who isn’t afraid to answer the question “Why?”
- A colleague who doesn’t take it personally when someone is blunt
- A colleague who can be clear and discuss consequences honestly
- A colleague who is comfortable with transparency
- A colleague who is ok with not a lot of schmoozing and getting to business
- A colleague who understands and doesn’t judge when someone just ‘does the work’ to ‘get it done’ and that there are other priorities

What might a Millennial want in a colleague?

- A colleague who is easy with email communication
- A colleague who is open to just in time, relevant support and access to materials when needed
- A colleague who acknowledges smarts in 20 somethings and doesn’t patronize
- A colleague who praises the present and sees a speedy path for the colleague’s growth
- A colleague who is willing to take as much feedback as is giving feedback
- A colleague who is willing to collaborate and change (think co-creation)
- A colleague who acknowledges the whole life of the colleague and isn’t bitter when the colleague has a life and will be moving on