Gen Z communication: a cheat sheet for teachers

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Introduction

Gen Z students aren't like previous generations. They're not even completely like Millennials (although there are some striking similarities). What do instructors need to know when teaching them?

This cheat sheet explains what instructors need to know about Gen Z students for a successful learning experience.

What defines Gen Z?

Researchers generally agree Gen Zers were born between 1996 and 2007. This is the first generation to grow up in a world where the internet existed; they've never lived without it.

As a result, many Gen Z students have grown up with mobile devices. However, that doesn't mean that they're security-savvy or that they know how to find reliable information online.

In addition, Gen Zers have been impacted by the global health crisis. They had been set to inherit a strong economy and low unemployment. Lockdowns and health restrictions led to layoffs and pay cuts. A March 2020 survey from the Pew Center revealed half of 18-23 year-olds had either lost their jobs or lived in a household in which someone had lost a job or taken a pay cut.

Understanding Gen Z students also involves recognizing what they value. Gen Z students tend to care deeply about equality and equitable outcomes; researchers say Gen Zers see themselves as loyal, thoughtful, compassionate, open-minded, and responsible (these same researchers note that in reality, Gen Z students like to work alone and sometimes lack creativity).

How can educators communicate with Gen Z students?

With all that in mind, here's what educators must keep in mind about communicating with Gen Z students:

- The right communications platform streamlines communications and improves the learning experience

- Make communication transparent

- Make learning meaningful

- Ensure hybrid and in-person learning are engaging

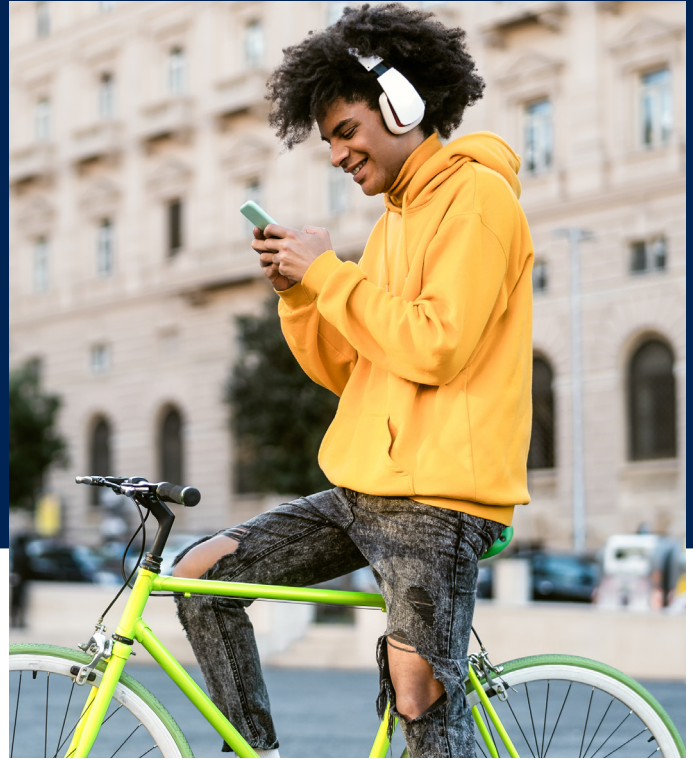- Prioritize reliability and security

Choose the right communications platform

[A unified communications platform](#) provides a set of communication and collaboration tools in a single platform. They include:

- Telephony

- Video conference

- Text

- Screen sharing

- File sharing

Unified communications platforms can also have contact center functionality, so interactions can be routed to a dedicated representative.

Make communication transparent

[Gen Zers value transparent communications](#). They're used to multiple communication channels being available to them all the time, and they're accustomed to their peers sharing personal information with them freely.

A unified communications platform enables transparent communications. They offer a number of communication channels, so students can easily share information with one another and their instructors.

Make learning meaningful

Another thing that Gen Z students want out of their learning experience is for it to be [meaningful](#). They want to learn things that will matter to them, not just because it's required of them.

A unified communications platform can aid the goal of making learning more meaningful for Gen Z students. Market-leading education communication tools integrate with [learning management platforms](#) so instructors can post videos, articles, podcasts, and other scintillating educational materials to enhance the learning experience.

Ensure hybrid and in-person learning are engaging

In the spring of 2020, the learning experience changed drastically for students in higher education.

Suddenly, their schools were shut down. Those who were living on campus had to leave their dorms, and in-person classes became virtual.

The fall of 2020 was also not like the start of previous school years. Students had the option of attending hybrid classes. For those who were concerned about their health, or for students who were unable to travel to their universities for in-person classes, hybrid classes represented an excellent option.

For hybrid classes to offer an excellent learning experience, instructors must invest time and effort. Again, the right school communication tools play a prominent role; they enable asynchronous and synchronous learning, so students who can't learn in person can access lessons afterward. Students learning synchronously but virtually can participate through chat and video conference.

Prioritize reliability and security

Gen Z students aren't always as security-savvy as they should be.

However, they don't want to be victims of data breaches or hacks. Also, they want reliability; Gen Zers don't want to worry that their texts won't go through or their video conferences will drop.

Best-of-breed education communications tools are secure and reliable. They incorporate multiple layers of built-in security, including end-to-end encryption. 24/7 platform monitoring ensures users that unauthorized individuals can't access the solution, while a 99.999 percent uptime agreement means that users can trust the unified communications platform won't disappoint them at a critical time.

About RingCentral

Improve the learning experience for students with RingCentral's unified communications platform

RingCentral's unified communications platform offers a high-quality, meaningful educational experience for students in higher education. With flexible communication options, integration with LMS, and hybrid instruction capabilities, students can connect to their instructors and peers.

To learn more, get a demo.

With RingCentral, learning is always in session.

Learn more about RingCentral for Education at ringcentral.com/education.

For more information, please contact a sales representative.
Visit us at
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