

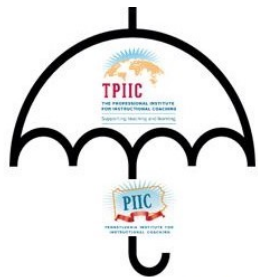
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February 2019
Volume 1, Issue 2

Hints and Tips for Decoding Gen Zs

By Silvia Breiburd, Teacher Trainer, Generational Researcher and Consultant, Argentina



PIIC is managed by
TPIIC, The Professional Institute
for Instructional Coaching

For anyone who started teaching 20 years ago, evidence could not be more revealing: students have changed significantly in needs, interests and beliefs. The complex panorama is compounded by the shift in the educational paradigm and the newly valued role of technological tools in learning. Given this new reality, teachers are in urgent need of successful strategies that may provide them with a better understanding of their Gen Z students' *sui generis* identity. Yet, every problem is an opportunity in itself. Collective students' trends also set promising new ground in unprecedented ways for teacher collaboration and academic improvement through educator-centered instructional coaching.

Look who is learning!

According to generational theorists, Generation Z, the first truly global cohort (McCrindle, 2009) is on the way to graduation. Its members make up a unique group mostly born between 1995 and 2012 (McQueen, 2014; Stillman & Stillman, 2017; Elmore, 2017), and at present populate elementary schools to colleges and universities. They also constitute the youngest graduates from teacher training colleges.

These generation Z students, also called Centennials, Screenagers, Igens or Gen Zers for short, have been raised in times of economic crisis, climate change and the threat of terrorism (Elmore, 2017; Twenge, 2017). Other key factors such as social and ideological pluralism and the expansion of social media, -in particular Twitter, Facebook and YouTube-, together with the influence of their Gen X parents, have contributed to mold their collective mindset and distinctive personality.

It's all in their 'generational genes'

Characterized as visual, global and digital and with technology seamlessly incorporated into their lives through the early use of three to five screens since birth, these students boast a new 'learning DNA'. They use their mobiles for socializing, distraction and gratification on equal terms so gamification, blended learning and flipped classrooms make generationally-friendly, student-proven tools.

For increasing motivation and reducing the newly-detected 'fear-of-missing-out' syndrome (FOMO), it is recommendable to integrate mobiles into the classes rather than banning them. After all, real life is mobile-inclusive and these on-demand students can better connect to knowledge when their devices become instrumental to learning objectives and allow them to conduct the process at their own pace.

Other typical generational characteristics are impatience and fear of messing up or risk aversion. Classroom environments where mistakes are allowed and seen as opportunities to learn provide a most favorable Z-friendly atmosphere. For better scaffolding and enhanced results for these micro-learners, try multiple gradually-spiraled, smaller-in-size but more meaningful tasks. It works!

Instructional coaching: friend or foe?

Centennials display a clear need for immediate feedback and show a marked preference for horizontal, one-on-one bonds where they are given a say. Profiled as prosumers (producers and consumers of data on equal terms) and with a liking for collaborative-learning styles, - Zers tend to participate with ease in classes where instructional coaching interactions are taking place and generally welcome the new way of 'working together' with everyone 'on board' and heading for the same direction. Coaches are positioned to work with teachers to enable this collaborative environment.

No doubt, unique conditions are given to favor educator-centered coaching practices that provide opportunity for collaboration and learning together. Understanding the whys behind Gen Z students' collective behavior may provide instructional coaches and coachees with new insights to profit from the triple transformation of paradigm, tools and learners in search of better student outcomes.

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"...Zers tend to participate with ease in classes where instructional coaching interactions are taking place..."

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PIIC'S MISSION: To support instructional coaching which helps teachers strengthen instructional practice, increase student engagement, and improve student learning

Letter from TPIIC's Executive Director

Back in May 2017, Beth Holland wrote an EdWeek blog titled, "Teaching 21st Century Skills Requires More Than Just Technology." This article struck a chord for me because I have so often heard that 21st century skills = technology and without the technology, the skills are not being addressed in classrooms. On the contrary... 21st century skills involve much more than just knowing how to use technology. And, in fact, instructional coaches are the conduit for ensuring that those skills are front and center in all classrooms. Coaches are the voices reminding teachers that the learning process is deliberate, relevant, multi-dimensional, and involves collective problem-solving as well as critical thinking. These are skills, not tools.

In the blog, Ms. Holland states that education has reached a tipping point for improving 21st century skills by focusing on the 4C's: creativity, critical thinking, communication, and collaboration (*Partnership for 21st Century Skills*). But she also issues a warning... she mentions that technology often gives the impression that collaboration and communication take place but without the verbal commitment, idea sharing, and open dialogue, does that collaboration really occur the way we think it does?

In the early stages of understanding instructional coaching, tech coaches often found themselves in the position of "help desk" gurus, being summoned to help teachers troubleshoot computer issues. Making the transition and fostering the

communication and collaborative learning process took some time before the staff understood the role of the instructional coach and how tech coaches were, in fact, instructional coaches with a targeted focus of integrating the discussion of technology into the conversation. The tech coaches had to help build awareness that the coaching interactions were driven by conversations about goal setting and intended outcomes, not the tools. These were conversations that fostered collaboration and were designed to move practice forward. In fact, "...the use of the tools themselves should not be viewed as synonymous with the skills that they intend to foster" (EdWeek, May 2017). So, two people editing the same document from different locations are not collaborating; they are cooperating with each other and are reviewing rather than sharing their thoughts. Sharing thoughts and ideas, going back and forth with peers is a revision process that enhances communications skills. Asking questions and digging deeper into the conversation gets to the root of change. Remember the adage, *two heads are better than one!*

In spite of this, or maybe because of this, teachers do have a responsibility for preparing students for the 21st century and helping them understand the plethora of issues, e.g., societal, economic, environmental, etc., that impacts their daily lives. Our students need the skills to work together and collectively problem solve to address these challenges they face. They need to do this by communicating and

interacting with each other and recognizing the value of each other's strengths, contributions, intuitions, perceptions, and philosophies that may be different from their own. They need to respect one another and listen to each other. "Might doesn't make right"; transparent communication and the understanding that every voice counts makes the difference between growth and apathy.

Instructional coaching is a "way of life." It's a job-embedded teacher professional learning model that helps teachers become architects of their own learning. Coaches help teachers think critically, collectively problem-solve, advocate for collaborative learning teams, make data-driven decisions, and help teachers choose appropriate resources (digital and paper) that integrates these 21st century skills across all grades and content areas. Yes, using the tools is critical in preparing students for our global society. But, having the skills to communicate learning to all through authentic and effective collaboration means that gathering the collective wisdom of a group and learning from each other is much more productive than relying on only one individual's contribution even if s/he used technology in the process.

Sincerely,



Look for Instructional Coaching in Action: An Integrated Approach That Transforms Thinking, Practice, and Schools. Available on ASCD.org and Amazon.com!

Evocative Coaching: Transforming Schools One Conversation at a Time

Book Review by Bernadette Barrone, Bristol Township SD Instructional Coach

This book lays the ground-work for collaborative, creative and compassionate coaching relationships, "one conversation at a time." The authors, Bob and Megan Tschannen-Moran, provide a framework that portrays the coaching conversation as a "dynamic dance" that helps coaches create trusting relationships and maintain a continuous cycle of transformation for teachers. The four dance steps are: *Story, Empathy, Inquiry, and Design*.

"When teachers feel accepted and understood, they trust and are ready for the next steps of the dance."

Step One-Step Two: Story-Empathy. This aspect provides opportunity for teachers to share their story. As I read this book, I learned to listen to a teacher's experience as a narrative. I hear the plot, the themes, the character interactions and conflicts. As I help teachers tap into their feelings about their story and I respond with authentic reflections, we—as partners—notice the story underneath the story. This book provides guidance about how to listen quietly, reflectively, mindfully and imaginatively; and how to bring compassion and curiosity to questioning. When teachers feel accepted and understood, they

Continued on p. 3, Evocative Coaching

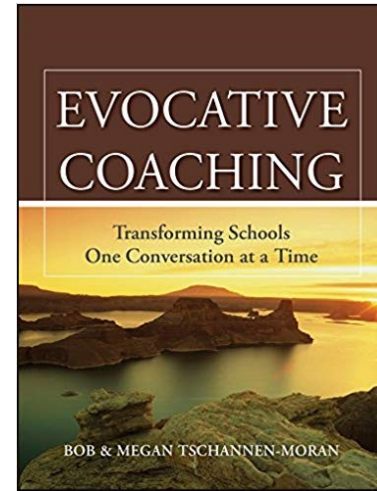
trust and are ready for the next steps of the dance.

Step Three-Step Four: Inquiry and Design. The authors provide appreciative questions that help teachers remember their strengths and vitalities; frame their aspirations and consider new possibilities in the classroom. The key--inspire teachers to develop intrinsic motivation to improve. When the teacher and I hit that pivot point, we *design*: brainstorm, plan for implementation and determine tools to track student growth. Samples and guidelines provided. By viewing our design as an experiment, the teacher and I can both be more playful and open to what is happening.

This book, which provides practical advice and easy-to-use techniques for a truly collaborative process, is in alignment with PIIC's Before-During-After (BDA) cycle of coaching. Reading and re-reading this book refreshes my ability to listen mindfully and ask appreciative, strength-based questions that inspire transformation in the classroom.

For more information, please contact:

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"Teachers are capable adults who, with the right mix of understanding and engagement, are well equipped to improve the quality and outcomes of their instruction."

Evocative Coaching: Transforming Schools One Conversation at a Time

Double the Support for Coaching

By IU 3 Mentors, Heather Moschetta and Kevin Conner

In Allegheny IU3, we are fortunate that we have two mentors to support our network of nearly 70 instructional coaches. While the funding streams are different, the IU leaders understand the value of mentor support for coaches and have kept a mentor in place to support instructional technology coaching in the decade since the Classrooms for the Future (CFF) grant.

Technology coach mentor Kevin Conner and PIIC mentor Heather Moschetta have partnered to provide professional learning and mentoring for all "kinds" of coaches: tech, content-specific, and general instructional coaches. Through our partnership, we are able to offer opportunities for coaches to integrate concepts such as project-based learning, STEM and STEAM, human-centered design, and 21st century skills into their work with teachers. Those are just a few of the topics for our monthly coach network workshops for the 2018-19 school year. We provide ongoing multiple

opportunities for teachers to collaborate regularly as they work together to impact student learning.

In our monthly workshops, we capitalize on our collective mentor experience to broaden the coaches' *coaching toolkit*. As an example, our January 2019 workshop focused on 21st century skills. We set up

"Ultimately, the goal of coaching is to build teacher capacity, and influence teaching and learning across the curriculum, all with support from the mentors."

three site visits with different organizations in Pittsburgh for coaches to learn about workplace readiness, labor market demands, and essential 21st century skills. The intent was for coaches to gain knowledge from firsthand sources and bring it back to their schools. Who better to support a teacher with building the four C's into classroom routines than a coach?

At the root of the coach role is support for teaching and learning, regardless of whether the vehicle to strengthen practice is technology integration, instructional techniques, literacy practices, or integrated STEM. Therefore, our monthly coaching topics always center on effective coaching practices such as the BDA cycle, use of data, and effective teaching and learning as the anchors for working with their colleagues. Engaging in ongoing conversations with the mentors about setting goals, visiting classrooms to support the learning, and debriefing after the visits is a three-pronged approach that is content neutral. Ultimately, the goal of coaching is to build teacher capacity, and influence teaching and learning across the curriculum, all with support from the mentors.

For more information, please contact: Heather Moschetta, heather.moschetta@aiu3.net

Teacher Efficacy and the Role of the Instructional Coach

By Karen DeNunzio, Exeter SD Instructional Coach

Teacher efficacy is defined as, “the extent to which the teacher believes he or she has the capacity to affect student performance” (Tschannen & Hoy, 1998). Collective Teacher Efficacy refers to a teaching staff’s shared belief that they can change student outcomes through their actions and beliefs. Hattie’s 2016, Visible Learning Research Report ranks Collective Teacher Efficacy (CTE) as #1 on the list, with a 1.57 effect size, in the influence of student achievement! How is authentic collective teacher efficacy achieved? Instructional coaches can provide teachers with the cognitive bridge as they travel from teachership to teacher efficacy. Instructional coaches are the resource to model and support collective teacher efficacy (CTE) with grade levels, content, and team building.

In our data driven society, which supports decisions in all aspects of education, teacher efficacy must be viewed through a granular lens to quantify the levels of student growth. Developing students’ critical thinking skills and mastery of complex content are the learning intentions of students and the responsibilities of educators. How can teachers independently meet these high levels of expectations for all students? There needs to be a plan of focused, structured support for authentic success. Instructional coaches are the resources to bridge these needs and create an opportunity for teachers to experience efficacy on their journey to a culture of Collective Teacher Efficacy.

In the *before* session, an instructional coach co-plans with teachers, decide what data to collect, and how to use it to create a research-based focus which launches a teacher’s ability to organize and execute an effective plan of instruction. The term “effective” means that student performance improves when appropriate instructional strategies are used. *During* the class visit, an instructional coach gathers agreed upon student data, academic and behavioral, to support a post lesson analysis of learning intentions and student outcomes with the teacher. Effective teachers make conclusions and future instructional plans based on student data. *After* the visit, the teacher and instructional coach collaborate and engage in reflective questioning and problem solving based upon the collected data and the alignment with the lesson’s learning intentions and curricular goals.

“Reflective thinking leads educators to act deliberately and intentionally rather than randomly and reactively” (Shandomo, 2010). Through this complex process, instructional coaches create the opportunity for co-construction with intentional, research-based goal setting through the analysis of student data.

Teacher efficacy directly aligns to a teacher’s ability to affect student performance; an instructional coach’s role is to support this sophisticated process and create opportunities to build teacher capacity with a reflective mind set. The impact of the collaboration between teacher and instructional coach could change a district’s culture and become the greatest model of support to our unified goal in education – student efficacy.

“There needs to be a plan of focused, structured support for authentic success. Instructional coaches are the resource to bridge these needs...”

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The PIIC 4-Quadrant Framework

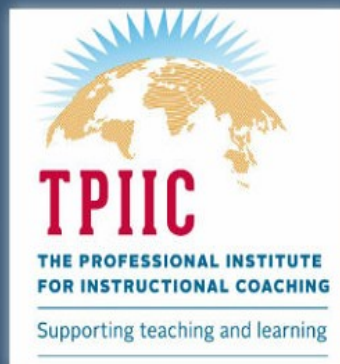
PIIC advocates **one-on-one and small group support** for teachers, coaches, and school leaders using the **BDA cycle of consultation**

PIIC focuses on **collecting, analyzing, and using data** to identify student needs, assess changes in classroom instructional practice and measure student progress.

PIIC emphasizes the use of **evidence-based literacy practices**.

PIIC supports **reflective and non-evaluative** practices.

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