beyond a basic definition of generation:

exploring the dimensions of generational differences

FACET Retreat
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MTCoP: Multicultural Teaching Community of Practice

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key questions to be considered

- what generational differences do you observe in your classrooms?
- besides age, what additional factors contribute to our understanding of generational differences?
- how can a multicultural teaching perspective impact learning across generations?
defining generations
“generation neXt” ?
“the wired generation”?
“non-traditional student”?
basic definitions

- “Veterans”
  - 1930-1945
  - a.k.a. “silents”; “traditionalists”

- Baby Boomers
  - 1946-1963

- Generation Xers
  - 1964-1979

- Millennials
  - 1980-present
  - a.k.a. “Gen-neXt;” “Gen Y;” “echo-boomers”

Source: http://www.careerfirm.com/generations.htm
overlapping generations in our classrooms

- Baby Boomers: 44-61
- Millennials: 27 & under
- Gen-Xers: 28-43
- Veterans: 62-77
overlapping generations: IUPUI students (2004)

Source: http://www.imir.iupui.edu/infore/mi/five10.htm
generational rifts in our classrooms

- baby boomers
  - rebel against conformity
  - perfectionist lifestyle based on personal values & spiritual growth
  - teamwork

- gen-Xers
  - skeptical toward authority
  - cautious in commitments
  - embrace free agency
  - ambitious & independent

- millennials
  - optimism
  - tenacity
  - heroic spirit
  - tech. savvy
  - positive, can-do attitude

- veterans
  - commitment
  - responsibility
  - conformity
  - authoritarian

Source: http://www.careerfirm.com/generations.htm
a multicultural perspective for a multi-generational classroom

- challenges…
  - skill level; knowledge base
  - getting to know students
  - relevancy
  - set up time

- benefits…
  - all students benefit from diverse learning environments
  - acknowledges diverse life experiences
  - creates a sense of community
  - promotes democratic ideals
  - prepares students to live and interact in a global workplace

“culturally responsive pedagogy”
(Wlodkowski & Ginsberg 1995: xii)

- respects diversity
- engages the motivation of all learners
- creates a safe, inclusive, and respectful learning environment
- derives teaching practices from principles that cross disciplines and cultures
- promotes justice and equity in society
a look at the new generational learner

a demonstration of an online course on cross-cultural competency
the “digital divide”

Despite rapid growth in ICTs...

Penetration rates, worldwide

- Mobile subscribers
- Fixed-lines
- Internet users
- PC

Source: World Telecommunication Indicators Database
## MDG trends 1990-2005

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Telephone lines and cellular subscribers per 100 population</th>
<th>Personal computers in use per 100 population</th>
<th>Internet users per 100 population</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>World</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developed regions</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Developing regions</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>38</td>
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</table>

Source: World Telecommunication Indicators Database

### Millennium Development Goals: 2006 Progress Report - Goal 8, Target 18, indicator 48

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Africa</th>
<th>Asia</th>
<th>Oceania</th>
<th>Latin America &amp; Caribbean</th>
<th>Commonwealth of Independent States</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Northern</td>
<td>Sub-Saharan</td>
<td>Eastern</td>
<td>South-Eastern</td>
<td>Southern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet users</td>
<td>moderate availability</td>
<td>low availability</td>
<td>moderate availability</td>
<td>moderate availability</td>
<td>low availability</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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United States Internet Access*

*Digital Divisions, Suzanne Fox, PEW Internet and American Life Project, October 2005

![Graph showing Internet Access, 2000-2005](chart.png)
millennials...

- up to 25-27 years of age
- higher income levels
- technologically savvy
- team oriented
- value active learning
- diverse talents and ways of knowing
- most diverse generation of college students
- broader understanding of race than white-black
- more global perspective
- more egalitarian view of male/female roles
digital immigrants

- conventional speed
- step-by-step
- linear processing
- text first
- work-oriented
- stand-alone

digital natives

- twitch speed
- random access
- parallel processing
- graphics first
- play-oriented
- connected
generational differences related to culture and gender
teaching “Women and Law”

- life experience and context different
- different experience of gender roles and gender relations
- knowledge of history different
- learning styles and preferences different
## Generational Life Experiences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Generation</th>
<th>Life Experiences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Baby Boomers</strong></td>
<td>- Pill approved in 1960 by FDA, Kennedy Assassination, Civil Rights Movement, Man on the Moon, Women’s Movement, Vietnam War, Roe v. Wade, Title IX, Watergate, VCR’s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gen X</strong></td>
<td>- Reaganomics, Iran Contra, Challenger Accident, AIDS, Cable television, MTV, Personal computers, World Wide Web, Fall of USSR, Gulf War</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Millennials</strong></td>
<td>- Clinton, Cell phones, Digital technology, September 11th, War on Terrorism, “GW”, Reality TV, Global warming, Enron, Iraq War, American Idol, Human Genome, Mars Rover</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Generational Rights of Adult Woman (age 18)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contraception</td>
<td>1965</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abortion</td>
<td>1973</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal Pay</td>
<td>1963</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal Opportunity</td>
<td>1964</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal Education</td>
<td>1972</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual Harassment</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>1986</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FMLA</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>1993</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military</td>
<td>1978</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
the new digital divide is generational: what can we do?

How do we empower and protect our students in an environment that increasingly excludes us? (McLester 2007)
the new digital divide is generational: what can we do?

**Challenges…**
- technology learning curve
- adjusting our teaching
- dealing with generational behaviors, values and practices
- dealing with a lack of or disregard of historical knowledge
- making the shift to “user-generated” paradigm (e.g., student input)
- accepting change (brought on by technology, globalization & demographic shifts)

**Strategies…**
- using/learning new technologies (e.g., games); experiential learning
- understanding how our generational experiences may impact (or clash with) our students’ generation
- meeting folks where they are; finding common ground
- setting expectations
- effective communication
- integrating technology literacy with cultural competency
techniques (mix it up!)

- **baby boomers**: share experience and lived history in class, reflection in writing
- **gen-Xers**: grade rubrics, well-defined schedule and reward system, visuals
- **millennials**: co-create curriculum, choices, group work, presentations
thank you!