

universally and unilaterally impact everyone born during an exact time period in the same way. We are talking more about a gradual change that is a result of slower societal changes and significant events. The traditional college student in the fall of 2011 fell right in the middle of that generational shift and is likely to be representative of what sociologists are identifying as characteristic of the Millennial generation.

Of course, not all students are traditional college students between the ages of 18 and 22, and the advice contained in this article cannot even be applied equally to all students who do fall in that age range; however, many who face traditional college students have noticed that they have had to adjust coaching techniques and instructional approaches to better facilitate success for these students. As we begin to encounter this new generation of students, several coaches have noted that this generation is fundamentally different than previous students (Hall, 2011; Holm, 2011; Richardson, 2011).

This generation also brings with it helicopter parents, a term used to refer to "an over involvement of parents in their children's lives" (LeMoyné & Buchanan, 2011, p. 399) because they hover around their children. Stories of helicopter parents in forensics are not uncommon. Hall (2011) discusses a parent who intervened in the student's everyday life with demands on everything from when the team traveled to *how* the team traveled, complaining first that trips were too long and coaches drove too fast and then that the coaches were driving on the wrong *kind* of roads. This generation of students "sense that they have the upper hand: that instructors are subject to being disciplined or even fired at administrative will and that institutions want to retain students and keep them happy" (Nilson, 2010, p. 12).

This generation of students not only questions the validity of feedback offered by a coach with years of experience and success at the national level but also whether or not the feedback was given in the right way (sandwiching affirmations and criticisms). Clearly we are looking at a new generation. New does not denote better or worse. New does not mean wrong or right. In this case, new only means different. Coaches, educators and anyone who works with this new generation need to find new ways to better connect with, and help, this new generation. To accomplish that, we need to understand how and why this generation is different, why these differences cause conflict between the generations, and how we can find mutually beneficial ways of resolving these conflicts.

How and Why This Generation is Different

Espinoza, Ukleja, and Rusch (2010) explain, "There are six major value-shaping influences that impact every generation as its members move through their formative years: family, education, morality, peers, spirituality, and culture" (pp. 8-9). We have seen changes in all of these influences. For example, education has changed. Far more

people are going to college, and this generation of students is far more likely to have parents who went to college. Online colleges offer not just undergraduate degrees but Masters and Doctorates. More directly impacting this generation is the self-esteem emphasis in high schools and rampant grade inflation (Glenn, 2000; Weiss, 2005), as well as an emphasis on standardized testing (Goodwin, 2011). Couple those things with the influence of helicopter parents and it is not surprising that Hunt and Gardin (2007) claim "a significant amount of evidence suggests that students take less responsibility for their education" (p. 19).

The ubiquitous nature of the Internet and wireless systems allow this generation to have ready access to more information than any prior generation. These students are living in a different world than most of their coaches experienced in their youth. From time to time, a colleague will forward me a "mindset list" which is produced by faculty at Beloit College in Beloit, Wisconsin. The list reminds us of how the first-year college students today are different than previous generations because of how their world has changed. The incoming class of 2012 has the following notable characteristics: they have always had GPS, taxes could always be filed electronically, and IBM has never made typewriters (The Mindset List, 2012). Previous generations had maps and knew how to read them while driving, they did taxes on paper and mailed them at midnight, and IBM was refusing to make personal computers because they felt there was no market for them.

Impact on Teaching

There are those who seem to take a terribly negative view of the Millennial generation. They describe them as "impatient, demanding, stressed out, sheltered, brand oriented, materialistic, and self-centered" (Nilson, 2010, p. 11). As Sara Konrath noted, "Many people see the current group of college students...as one of the most self-centered, narcissistic, competitive, confident and individualistic in recent history" (cited in "Empathy," 2010). Others have very positive things to say about the Millennials. Tapscott (2009) points out Millennials may be the smartest generation ever (with average IQ points increasing about three points per decade since WWII), and that they actually value intelligence over looks. According to Tapscott, when given the choice between having good looks or intelligence, 7 out of 10 chose intelligence. For educators, they are different and that has impact in the classroom. Kandlbinder (2010) may have summed it up best by pointing out that teaching strategies that "have been effective for years are no longer working with the generation of children born to the baby boomers" (p. 31).

While there are those who would claim that today's students are no different than previous generations (West, 2011; Brown, 2011), and in some ways they are probably correct, these significant changes to the major influences in their lives make it almost impossible to believe

that they are basically the same as any generation. There has been a slow and steady change in the nature of students and that change probably does not progress at an equal pace across all schools or even all regions of the country, but the change happens. It is, therefore, important for coaches (and all educators) to understand how this new student is different so that we can better help them achieve success—in competition and in life.

Causes of Generational Conflict

To identify ways to more effectively deal with this new generation of students, it is important that we identify the ways in which they are different than previous generations and what that means to us as forensic professionals. By identifying what makes them different from their predecessors, we can develop systems and schemas to engage this generation.

Feedback

The Millennial generation expects immediate feedback (preferably praise). “They expect instant success, partly because the continuous stream of media content never shares with viewers the hard work that success actually requires. And they have been applauded and affirmed for every step they have taken” (Espinoza et al., 2010, p. 96). This is the generation that got trophies for showing up; they became accustomed to grade inflation and online grading and grades. A couple of years ago I decided I would get every grade back to students in the very next class meeting. It involved some very late night grading sessions, but I did it. I still received 4.7 out of 5 on the “Instructor returns assignments in a timely fashion” criterion.

For those who would contend that all generations want immediate feedback, I would agree. But this group is more demanding of it. They expect it and believe it is their right. We have had intercollegiate debate for well over 100 years, but this is the first generation of students to have a “warm-room” (a designated area where students can ask judges if they won the last round and ask them for feedback before their next round). Twenty years ago when a debate round ended, students packed up, left, and waited until breaks were announced to see how they had done—and then waited to see tab sheets in the van to learn their record and look at ballots. Judges did not disclose, they did not give oral critics, and the sanctity of the ballot was protected at all cost. It is clear that we have already begun to adapt to this generation in terms of feedback.

Respect

The new generation sees the world in a new way. While a previous generation may have sported a bumper sticker telling the masses to question authority, this generation takes that further: “It is more than questioning authority—it is about acting as the authority or as an equal” (Espinoza et al., 2010, p. 111). They do not just question a

coach's authority; they question his/her competency. Remember, they did not hire you, the school did. They come from high schools where the competency of their teachers was often called into question by parents and by the media. As this group enters the work force, employers are noting: "They are more than willing to tell you how to fix your team, department, and organization, even before they have completed your orientation program" (Martin 2008, p. 19). This positive "can-do," "I want to help" attitude is often misperceived as a know-it-all attitude born of ignorance.

Hall's (2011) description of a helicopter parent, or perhaps more appropriately, what Vinson (2012) referred to as a Blackhawk or Kamikaze parent, is a prime example of how parents seek to "protect" and "coddle" their children. Children will naturally have a hard time respecting any teacher or coach when the parents are able to dictate everything from classroom assignments to travel policies. These things are all done with the best of intentions and with the good of the student in mind, but ultimately, create tensions down the road.

Personal Accountability

Most students are in class less than 20 hours a week. College students spend an average of less than two hours a day on homework (Hanson, Drumheller, Mallard, McKee, & Schlegel, 2011). Because they were able to be successful in high school with seemingly little work, "they anticipate the same minimal demands in college and are often resentful about the amount of reading, research, problem solving, and writing that we assign them" (Nilson, 2010, p. 12). Black (2010) reports that while the college students of 1969 were academically prepared for college and felt attending college was a privilege, the college students of 2009 were generally lacking basic skills and felt they were entitled to attend college.

Hanson et al. (2001) found, on average, college students spend roughly 12 hours a week on homework, and another 13 hours a week going to class. This means that roughly 25 hours of a week are spent on the business of being a college student. (This generation also spends an average of 13.27 hours a week working at a job). Since the week has 168 hours in it and 25 are spent on being a college student and we will say that a college student sleeps eight hours a day (which to hear them tell stories, this never happens), that still leaves them with 87 hours of free time.

When bad grades come at the end of the term and the student has to explain why, they do not cite the 14+ hours they spent texting each week or over six hours a week they spent talking on the phone (Hanson et al., 2011) or time spent on video games, on intramural sports, or partying. They will say it is because they had to file (electronically) 200 files for extemp, or that they had been practicing too much. It is not forensics that keeps them from being successful academically. A good deal of research points to the exact opposite being true: Forensics makes them more academically successful (Allen,

Berkowitz, Hunt, & Louden, 1999; Benton, 2002; Holm & Carmack, in press; Hughes, 1994; Hunt, 1994; Millsap, 1998; Rogers, 2002, 2005; Whalen, 1991; Yaremchuk, Brownlee, Beasley, & Woodard, 2002). Forensics can become a scapegoat for poor time management. Some parents might attack coaches for *forcing* their children to file hundreds of files and compete in four events when even the most committed high school competitors did only half of that. From this perspective, coaches, not students, are responsible for bad grades because we expect way too much and we need to change the way we run our program to accommodate their children. This is a role very familiar to some parents; they did this when their child was in high school and now they are doing it again.

Learning to Work with the Next Generation

"The changing nature of college students and their needs...are the primary impetuses for educational change, because the success of higher education will depend upon its ability to respond successfully to such change" (Black, 2010, p. 100). Each new generation of students brings changes to the university and to instruction and coaching. Many of us work on a campus where at least some of the dormitories were built in the 1940s-1950s. The rooms were plain, almost spartan, but each person in the room got his or her own two-plug outlet (one for a clock and one for a light or radio). When students started bringing televisions, stereos, refrigerators, computers, gaming systems and a whole host of personal electronics, the universities upgraded the electrical infrastructure of the dorms. When this generation became dependent on computers and the Internet, universities invested in developing online systems to accommodate students. Now nearly everyone has online class registration and an online "space" for each class, and most schools offer online courses that adapt to any schedule. Instructors and students are given email accounts, and it has made things better. On-line courses, podcasts of lectures, on-line notes, on-line tests and quizzes, model assignments, and virtual office hours are all the result of institutions adapting to this new wave of students, and new technologies have improved our educational environment. We have reason to believe that if/when the forensic community adapts to the wants, needs, and expectations of the Millennial generation, it will also make things better.

Recruiting the Millennial Generation

There was a time students wanted to join forensic teams because they wanted to learn to debate and express themselves clearly. It was what our society valued. Then baby-boomers came along and they wanted to know how being on a forensic team was going to get them a job because that was what society valued, so we showed them how this would get them a job. We showed them what employers wanted, we conducted studies and collected anecdotal evidence, and we proved forensics was going to help them get a job, keep a job, and excel in that job. Debate was critical thinking at its peak, public speak-

ing was the essence of communication skills, and oral interpretation was the ultimate liberal arts experience challenging both hemispheres of the brain and tasking students to touch the hearts and minds of their audience. Now we have another generation and they, too, are looking for something different in forensics.

Forensics Must be Cool

"No matter how cool your company may appear to Millennial job candidates, once you have them on board, it's imperative that you also provide a cool work environment" (Sujansky & Ferri-Reed, 2009, p. 81). The Millennial generation wants their jobs (and we can cross apply this reasoning to forensics) to be the coolest things ever. We need to think of our recruiting the way modern business is viewing advertising and recruiting. We want to target specific groups of individuals. In the past, we have often cast a wide net and hoped that we would find the poet, the philosopher, the genius, and the leader every team needs, and that along the way, we would also attract some hard workers, some creative thinkers, some funny people, and some driven people. Today, students are experts at ignoring messages they do not feel apply specifically to them. Social media websites bombard them with advertisements filtered by their personal profiles and web browsing history. If it is not a dead-on match, they are not interested.

We need to adjust our recruiting/marketing accordingly. Sure, you are still likely to find a few interested students at the fall activity fair and get a few more from table tents in the dining halls, but if you are looking for the academically gifted, target the honors program. If you are looking for philosophers, make connections in the philosophy department and get the word out to their majors. The poets hang out in the creative writing program, and you can spot leaders during new student orientation sessions. To use an analogy, we need to stop fishing with nets and start fishing with spears. That means we need to go to the best fishing holes for the kind of fish we want; for example, we can consider recruiting at high school tournaments and holding summer institutes where they can get to know us in a way that benefits them and allows us to get the best fish.

Keep in mind that forensics is "cool" (providing you can embrace your "inner-nerd"). If forensics were not "cool," we probably would not do it. Forensic coaches find themselves working with the very best students. We develop friendships that last a lifetime. Sometimes we get to be the ones who first show young students the ocean, or introduce them to a new kind of food, or take them on their first airplane ride. We show them they can do and be more than they realized. We watch them overcome adversity and revel in success. If that is not "cool," I do not know what is.

Students Must Feel Special

This generation also needs to know they are special. This generation wants things to be different, unique, and special (Lippmann,

Bulanda, & Wagenaar, 2009). Dorsey (2009) talks about how Cold Stone Creamery has been attracting quality applicants through a unique job application process: "They repositioned their initial job interview as an audition. That's right, an audition for a job" (p. 55). They bring in up to 20 people and ask each one to give their best three seconds of any talent or trick they can do. People did things ranging from telling a joke, to playing air guitar, and even dance moves. They had people lined up out the door to audition.

This generation of students not only wants to know that they are wanted on the team but that they were chosen over others. Medical schools have gone to "speed dating" type interviews with candidates. "It is called the multiple mini interview, or M.M.I., and its use is spreading. At least eight medical schools in the United States—including those at Stanford, the University of California, Los Angeles, and the University of Cincinnati—and 13 in Canada are using it" (Harris, 2011, p. A1). Last year our program tried MMIs, and it was well received by new and old members alike. Some went through the interviews in one area while others played an improvisational game in another room. When the interviews were done, the groups switched and those who had been interviewing now played the game. Both activities were part of the interview and both gave insight and elicited a number of comments about it being the most fun they had ever had at an interview.

Retaining the Millennial Generation

Sujansky and Ferri-Reed (2009) explain, "The first step is to make sure you let them know that you consider them to be keepers" (p. 82). Remind them that when they accept a place on the team, they are taking one of a limited number of spots available (to some extent that will always be true) and that you are placing your trust in them to fulfill the duties of being a team member. Remember: they are special, you are smart enough to recognize that, and they are critical to the team's success. All of that is true and if saying that is what it takes to keep the best and the brightest, then say it. Sujansky and Ferri-Reed (2009) go on to explain: "Millennials, like other generations, don't want to pull someone else's weight—especially a low performer" (p. 85). Team members become sullen and resentful that poor performance is being tolerated. The kind of environment that would allow people to be mediocre is unappealing to high achievers. While none of them want to be the person who is cut, they seem more than willing to identify those who should be cut.

While some have labeled this generation lazy, because they are more prone to quit jobs and move back in with their parents, it may be an inaccurate label. They may want a challenge—they may want a really big challenge—but they want a specific kind of challenge. If a job does not excite them and reward them, they will quit rather than find themselves stuck in dead-end jobs they hate. They refuse to do all the work and let the team share all the credit. If they are quitting,

there is a reason. If they are getting good coaching and making progress and receiving reinforcement and feeling important, they will not quit. Remember, this is the generation that grew up playing in soccer tournaments where everyone got a trophy and some did not even keep score. Previous generations might look at these practices and scoff saying "it's not really winning if all you did was show up." Such practices, however, may have spawned an unrealized outcome: self-reflective appraisal.

If a diving coach told a student he/she needed to dive an hour a day every day on his/her own and three hours a week with a coach and do three hours of additional strength training and the student did not show up for those sessions, that student would be cut. No one would question why, no one would say it was unfair. If athletes failed to get faster, score more points, or increase their abilities in some measurable way, they would not likely be invited back the next year. Forensic coaches are less likely to do that; however, this generation might not be opposed to that type of coaching environment.

This new generation is not completely dissimilar from previous generations. "You need to make expectations clear to all employees and coach them individually toward higher levels of performance and growth. And also encourage team members to coach others" (Sujansky & Ferri-Reed, 2009, p. 90). That advice has held true for generations, but that advice assumes these students will listen to you and respect what you say. That is an assumption we can no longer make. To a greater or lesser extent many of us have run into this with juniors or seniors on our teams who have decided that they know as much as we do (and really more), and that they are going to do their events the way they want to do them and the coaches are just holding them back because they have been out of competition for too long. Sometimes they have success, sometimes the success is hit or miss, and sometimes they come crawling back to coaching somewhat apologetic for their hubris. "The lesson is that those who lead Millennial employees need to establish respect through what they do, because it won't come due to their titles" (Sujansky & Ferri-Reed, 2009, p. 94). Showing a history of success is good, but making sure each coaching session is worth coming to is even better.

Creating a Millennial-Friendly Team Environment

Sujansky and Ferri-Reed (2009) talk about how having a zany and fun workplace environment is very important to this generation. They talk about companies who give out silly awards and ring bells and a variety of other behaviors that would have been seen as disruptive by previous generations. Napoleon reportedly said if he had enough ribbon he could rule the world. Many chain restaurants must feel the same way about pins and buttons. The fact is we all want, and even crave, recognition. Getting a trophy at a tournament rewards a great final performance and that is important to our programs. The process of developing that performance, however, is equally impor-

tant in promoting successful team norms. Determine what you would like to see students doing as part of the process, then chart and reward their success and the team's success. If it is displayed on the wall it becomes a daily affirmation, a model for others, and a clear motivator. In that regard, they are just like every previous generation.

Leadership for the Millennial generation is different. They expect the "rise to leadership to come faster, while boomers believe one should 'pay one's dues'" (Barnes, 2009, p. 60). After a very short period of time, this generation will start telling you how to run the program better. "One thing that will ring true to you if you have ever managed Millennials is they will exhaust themselves looking for an easier way to do something" (Espinoza et al., 2010, p. 121). Perhaps that is why Martin (2008) suggests taking advice from them like they were your colleagues: "They want to feel like a colleague or an associate, not a subordinate" (p. 20). Listening to ideas and making modifications to the way things are done gives them the perception of having a controlling/leadership role in the organization. This gives members a vested interest in the team because they feel they are helping to create the team. More importantly, they may find better ways to run the program.

Just because something has not worked in the past does not mean it will not work with this generation of students. They will be quick to point out that things are different. Argumentum ad antiquitatem, or the fallacy of tradition, is something of which we must be aware. "We have always used paper files for extemp," "we have never done well at tournament X," or "the last time we did that everyone quit in December" are not good reasons to this generation.

Coaching the new generation is a new learned skill. In many ways they are just like all the generations who preceded them, but in some ways they are unique. "They take micro-managing behavior personally because it connotes a lack of trust or confidence in them. A common refrain heard from Millennials in our study...was, 'Show us what you expect us to do, and then get out of our way'" (Espinoza et al., 2010, p. 51). When they say, "show us," they mean it literally. These are students who grew up with model assignments and exemplars of task components every step of the way. Showing them what a good introduction looks and sounds like is very helpful to them. Deconstructing that model once they have seen it may be more helpful than explaining how it is constructed. They are not afraid to get things wrong because they know they will have a chance to do it over again. Use that characteristic to your advantage as a coach and stress the importance of rewriting scripts and re-cutting or reorganizing literature until it is perfect. Also, stress the importance of knowing when to dump a topic, piece, or event if it is not working. I play the popular smartphone application "Words with Friends," and one Millennial I play with routinely resigns from matches whenever he gets too far behind. When I chastised him about this, he simply responded, "I'm not gonna waste my time on a game I can't win." These words offer

great insight to coaches.

The win or quit attitude can be an advantage or a detriment, depending on how coaches channel that attitude. "They expect instant success, partly because the continuous stream of media content never shares with viewers the hard work that success actually requires. And they have been applauded and affirmed for every step they have taken" (Espinoza et al., 2010, p. 96). This is important to remember. Unless new members see varsity members working, coaching, writing, researching, rewriting, reading literature, cutting, practicing, and doing it all over again, they will see the final product, and it will appear to them like magic. While they have had lots of final products to serve as models, it is equally important for a team to have process models. At the beginning of the year, as new students try to put together events, if all they see from varsity members is final products, they are likely to see a game they can't win.

Conclusion

The Millennial generation is different than all of the previous generations in many important ways. The older we are, the more different they seem. Lamenting the loss of a strong work ethic, dedication, and the respect that we have been accustomed to is not going to make us better coaches, nor will it make them better competitors. We must adapt to *them*. Adapting does not mean we have to lower our standards. Some researchers contend that this generation, more than any before them, want to be held to higher standards.

Coaches and directors get frustrated when Millennials want to do forensics as long as it does not prevent them from doing *everything* else they want to do when they want to do it. We reel when a third or fourth year member (one we have invested so much in) decides to study abroad in the spring and miss nationals, or worse yet, just quit so they can play intramural lacrosse. We are aghast when we get calls from parents about kids on the team working too hard or needing special treatment. We must adapt to this new generation of student because their world has always adapted to them; they have not adapted to it. "Quit focusing on what [Millennials are] not and start thinking about how to create the right atmosphere; one that capitalizes on their team building, trusting, tech-savvy nature" (Gavatorta, 2012, p. 62).

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