



technology, children, schools and families

# **The millennial generation: generation y and the opportunities for a globalised, networked educational system**

**Elisabeth Kelan and Michael Lehnert**

**Department of Management, King's College, London**

**February 2009**

## **Abstract**

The paper explores the changing educational needs and expectations of Generation Y, people born roughly between 1977 and 2000. The first part of the paper reviews existing research on Generation Y and examines some of the challenges Generation Y faces in education and the workplace. The second part then takes a look at how educational challenges for Generation Y can be met by exploring good practices. The paper highlights that technical, economic and social changes lead to different demands on the education system which have to be met in order to create a competitive and sustainable educational system for the 21st century.

**Keywords:** work, education, generations, economics, society, technology, social change, personal development

## **Introduction**

This paper explores a range of possible educational needs that Generation Y or Millennials, those born in between the late 1970s and 2000<sup>1</sup>, will require in the context of a rapidly changing economy and society. Generation Y is a prime example of how changes in the economic mode of production are intertwined with changes in technology, society and education, in that Generation Y demand different styles of teaching and learning. The first half of the paper outlines the educational and workplace experiences and expectations of Generation Y. It highlights how the first "global net generation" has experienced education and how it is said to unsettle workplace practices. The second half

---

<sup>1</sup> This paper draws on research on Generation Y, which is sponsored by the London Business School Research Consortium on Generation Y. Its founding sponsor is Accenture and other sponsors are Allen & Overy, Barclaycard, Baxter International, Cargill, IBM, KPMG and Johnson & Johnson. We thank all donors for their generous support of this research study.

of the paper looks at potential future educational needs this generation might have over the lifecourse in a time when workplaces themselves are changing. It also explores the preconditions for developing an appreciation of, and understanding for, life-long learning in the form of education for skills, citizenship and personal development. Good practice is also explored. These examples show how a holistic approach to creating an individual and collective self-understanding from an early age, with the intention of tackling life-long learning as an intrinsic part of leading one's life, can be implemented. Finally, some conclusions are offered.

## **Learning Lessons from Generation Y**

Generation Y has grown up in a world that has been transformed by new technologies that make new ways of communicating, working and exchanging information and creating knowledge possible. The information and knowledge society and its transforming impact on work and life has been highlighted for some time (Beck, 2000; Castells, 1996; Sennett, 1998, 2006). Generation Y has a unique vantage point on these changes because they are coming of age at a time when they still are faced with institutions shaped by the old model but their way of behaving is more in line with new ways of behaving. While institutions change slowly, Generation Y already lives the new lifestyle predicted by theorists of the information and knowledge society.

## **Defining Generation Y**

Looking at what is commonly referred to as Generation Y might therefore be an insightful way to discuss how the recent changes to the economic, social, political and technological context in which individual and society exist. Generation Y is a term used in the popular press, company research and some academic research. Organisations have started to recognise that Generation Y is somehow different and have started to find out how they are different. Although Generation Y is one of the more popular terms for this generation, there are various other terms and names have been applied to it, such as Millennials, Generation Me, Generation WHY, Gaming Generation, Net Generation, Facebook Generation, iGeneration to name but a few. These generations are defined largely on age but age definitions vary widely as Table 1 illustrates.

Born after 1971 (Twenge, 2006)
Under 35 (Mann, 2008)
1977-1994 (Broadbridge <i>et al.</i> , 2007)
1977-1996 (Franz, 2008)
1978-1994 (McLeod, 2008)
1978-1998 (Gribben, 2007)
1980-1994 (McCrinkle and Hooper, 2008)
1980-1999 (Allen, 2004)
Born in or after 1980 (Braid, 2008; Eisner, 2005; Seidl, 2008)
1981-2000 (NextStep, 2008)
Born after 1982 (Howe and Strauss, 2000; Junco <i>et al.</i> , 2007)
20 somethings (Andrus, 2008)
Between 11 and 25 (Asthana, 2008)
Full time undergraduates (Terjesen <i>et al.</i> , 2007)

Table 1

In order to define key characteristics of this particular generation, Broadbridge *et al* (2007) collected key signifiers that are said to set a Generation Y'er apart from previous generations. These collective character traits included being independent, well educated, confident, upbeat, open-minded, sociable, technically-literate, adverse to slowness, highly informed, and 'likely to rock the boat'. On an individual level, people from Generation Y were demonstrated to be entrepreneurial thinkers, self-reliant, ethnically-diverse, polite, curious and energetic, respectful of their parents and grandparents, financially empowered, and conservative investors. Perhaps most notably, however, was that Generation Y was found to have "lived with strong social stressors", which is indicative of the societal changes this generation has lived through.

The most widely cited reference on literature relating to Generation Y is from Howe and Strauss (2000) entitled *Millennials Rising: The Next Great Generation*. They note that there are seven unique characteristics of Generation Y: special; sheltered; confident; conventional; team-oriented; achieving and pressured. They are special because they are the children of Baby Boomers, and thus they have "internalised a sense of specialness in part from their experience of dominating the national dialogue" (Howe and Strauss, 2000, p9). They are sheltered, as parents and authority figures have sheltered this generation from harm (eg 'Baby on Board' signs). Perhaps related to being special and sheltered, they are confident: they exude optimism. They are conventional: while the Boomer parents of the Net Generation rebelled against the conventional attitudes of their own parents, members of the Net Generation have a stronger connection to their parents and have returned to more conventional values. They are team-oriented, as they

are more connected to each other than any previous generation. They are the highest-achieving generation in history. Finally, they are pressured to perform, in part due to their focus on achievement.

It can be expected that this generation of people expects very different things from work. An academic research study on what Generation Y wants from work (Terjesen et al, 2007) found that they seek employers that invest heavily in training and development of employees, care about their employees as individuals, present clear opportunities for long-term progression, offer a variety of daily work and have a dynamic and a forward-looking approach to their business. The research also found that women of Generation Y were interested in a variety of elements to their jobs, whereas men were mainly interested in salaries.

Generation Y seems to value the quality of working life: they work to live and not live to work (Asthana, 2008; McCrindle and Hooper, 2008; Reynolds, 2008). They are 'constantly on' through their use of technologies and mobile devices, which seamlessly integrate previously separate realms of 'paid work' during the day and 'private life' in their free time. In fact, spending moments at work telecommunicating via information communication technologies during their leisure time is something readily done by Generation Y. However, at the same time, they seem unwilling to sacrifice free time if no meaningful reason can be provided by the employer.

When asked what Generation Y wants from work, the usual feedback is mainly self-development (Eisner, 2005; Orrell, 2007). Generation Y regards itself as high achieving and is willing to accept certain pressures to perform. However, immediate feedback on performance, not for reason of self-indulgence but as a helper for constant self-improvement, is often requested from superior managers (Eisner, 2005; McLeod, 2008). Aware of demands of a globalising workforce that is very mobile, developments of transferable skills are key for life-long learning and training seminars as well as lateral effects of the daily job. Ultimately, the goal is to do something they enjoy and that is meaningful for a wider set of society.

Generation Y clearly values respect and merit: respect for their ideas regardless of age, as sensitivities towards seniority (length of service) and corporate hierarchies exist outspokenly (Braid, 2008; Reynolds, 2005). For Generation Y, respect comes solely from competence and integrity. They prefer collaborative and inclusive management styles rather than command and control careers, and show commitment for such jobs. However, they do not think that their jobs or even their career patterns are for life. According to Howe and Strauss (2000), members of Generation Y do not expect to stay in the same job forever but expect to change careers. They are multi-taskers and easily get bored if they have to do the same thing. They have high expectations of both themselves and their employers (Armour, 2005). As a consequence, Generation Y has a very low loyalty to its companies, but a much higher loyalty to their work and their immediate colleagues. In many problematic workplace situations, they are more inclined to leave than to stay. These situations include deferred promotions, which can easily lead to a Generation Y'er leaving the company – even into the unknown – in order to leave for new challenges.

However in the current economic climate, such stark ideals and principles might get tested to breaking point, and indeed a recent article in the Economist (2009) reviews Gen Y (or Net Geners) at work, both before the economic downturn and now as the recession begins to bite. The article claims that the global downturn has been a brutal awakening for the youngest members of the workforce and states that attitudes are changing. Employer testimonials offered in the article show that the tone applicants are using has changed from "What can you do for me?" to "Here's what I can do for you". Although job hopping has become less prevalent as the recession creates lower turnover,

their dissatisfaction is growing as crisis-hit firms adopt more of a command and control approach to management. What is more important however – which levels the bargaining powers between the two parties somewhat – is that Generation Y'ers may be just the kind of employees that companies need to help them deal with the recession's hazards. The article cites their facility at juggling many tasks at once, and the fact that they are often eager to move to new roles or countries at the drop of a hat, in contrast to older workers with more settled family lives. Moreover, their knowledge of internet technology and online tools can help companies save money and work more efficiently. Generation Y is also more likely to use online job and social networking sites in order to find new employment via informal means and personal recommendation rather than through conventional means of job advertisements and application forms. Generation Y can create virtual networks easily for social and professional purposes.

What is striking with research on Generation Y is the number of stereotypes that are mobilised. There is very little differentiation between people who fall within the generation even though it matters enormously from which background people are, which interests they have and where they are educated and work. However, these nuances and differences are regularly glossed over in the literature, creating a myriad of assumptions which if at all might only be true for a specific group of Generation Y'ers. According to a recent study by the Chartered Management Institute (McLeod, 2008), Generation Y is often stereotyped within the literature as disloyal, impatient, self-absorbed, cosseted and all the same. However, according to CMI's study of Generation Y managers (which defines Generation Y as people born between 1978 and 1994), while commonalities across Generation Y exist, these negative stereotypes are myths. Rather than being selfish, disloyal, and unwilling to work hard, Generation Y managers are driven by a sense of purpose and ethics, have a good record of company loyalty, and are committed to long term career planning. The report cites the following common features of Generation Y: the boundaryless office; new technology and the internet; the importance of job attractions such as career development, flexibility and change; commitment to career development and transferable skills; and self-directed learning styles. Indeed, while nuances are generally missing in the literature, it also has to be stated that generations do share characteristics, attitudes and behaviours and in this generation they are most likely to be related to the emergence and re-development of technologies. Those technologies, with their immediacy, shape expectations and patterns of behaviour that are most likely to be shared by a large number of people born in this age bracket.

### **Generation Y's Experiences of Education**

Prior to entering the workplace, Generation Y has specific experiences of education. Many people from Generation Y have already finished their formal education, while many others from Generation Y continue their education. This generation will have experienced great changes in education and in society. Their private life will have been influenced to a great degree by new technologies, yet many educational institutions appear to be ill-equipped to keep up with the pace of change.

For Suárez-Orozco and Sattin (2007), education, broadly conceived as formally structured, socially organised directed teaching and learning, has always been connected to, yet purposefully set apart from other institutions of society. Furthermore, research literature has clearly and consistently established over decades the multiple discontinuities between teaching and learning within versus out of schools (Benedict, 1938; Ogbu, 1982). Teaching and learning are highly formalised and routine-based, usually around strict time, subject, and level or grade demarcation systems. Meanwhile, learning outside these formal education centres takes often the shape of constructivist patterns, being more fluid and informal, and often anything but less efficient (Suárez-Orozco and Sattin, 2007). Scholarly learning emphasises non-contextual learning, whereas learning outside of scholarly systems is mostly context-dependent and "hands-on". While the former is devised to achieve increasing levels of abstraction, the latter is

more applied in nature and designed to solve concrete problems. Suárez-Oroco and Sattin conclude that the focus in schools is predominantly on “teaching”, while the focus outside of school (as in the currently existing institution) is on “learning”. They acknowledge, however, that these dichotomies are not mutually exclusive binaries, but that in reality, a degree of fluidity exists in all human learning.

School systems are, to many degrees, deeply interconnected with the economies and societies that encompass them. They shape but are also reshaped by the cultural and socioeconomic realities in which and of which they form an essential part (Noguera, 2003). Supranational exercises such as the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA), conducted by the OECD, have showcased an increasing divergence between educational systems and needs. The legacy-oriented formal education systems in many nation-states fail to meet people’s need to be provided with the knowledge and skills necessary for them to adapt to a rapidly evolving globalised world, such as skills in technology and communication. Above all, however, higher-order cognitive skills for critical thinking, and meta-cognitive abilities for reflecting about one’s own learning so as to become a life-long learner by nature, are generally left aside in formalised education, leaving out rather obvious key attributes when more and more societies and state systems exist and interact (whether by choice or not) in complexity and diversity on this planet – the latter two being described by Giddens (2002) as the twin corollaries of an ever more globally interconnected world.

There are new technological developments which allow individuals to instantly connect themselves with other human beings across vast distances like never before and to communicate with, exchange with and learn from other human beings that may even remain impersonal to them (eg via means of immediate internet communication or global media reporting). These new technological developments lead to what could be called a “para-scholarly” means of learning: individuals are taking their education informally into their own hands (or even being unaware of their learning processes) while using 21st century technological means to research and learn about anything they choose to investigate, either willingly or incidentally.

While some might argue that people spending their time surfing the internet is detrimental to a successful learning curve, particularly for children, PISA’s ‘Complete-the-Sentence’ test using the sentence “School is \_\_\_\_\_” seems to indicate another potential perspective. The PISA test is given to pupils who are between the ages of 15 and 16 and in 2000 43 countries were tested and typically 4,500 to 10,000 pupils per country are included (PISA, 2008). As the common response to this test question was the word “boring” (Suárez-Oroco and Sattin, 2007), it seems that for many children – in light of their non-scholarly learning activities – educational institutions seem to have made their taught subjects bored and emotionally disengaged from the learning activities they offer.

Given this disenchantment with education, it is not surprising that Twenge (2006) refers to an increase in cheating behaviour in high schools in the US among this generation, which she calls Generation Me (born after 1971). She also talks about a grade inflation in the US. More students are awarded top grades and the number of students who fail courses decreases. This is attributed to the fact that education is now seen as building self-esteem rather than shattering it through failing students. The number of tests students have to undergo is increasing and it has been claimed that a characteristic of the following generation, Generation Z (in this definition born after 2002), is that they are being constantly tested (Matthews, 2008). Generation Z will not only have more certificates and diplomas but an even bigger need for constant feedback than Generation Y (Matthews, 2008). Matthews (2008) also assumes that for Generation Z more schools will be sponsored by companies who want to secure the talent of future generations.

New technologies shape how students want to be educated. A survey of college students in the US showed that 97% owned a computer, 94% a mobile (cell) phone and 75% had a Facebook account (Junco et al, 2007). Manuel (2002) has analyzed Generation Y, here defined as those aged between 17-19, to explore which methods of learning are suitable to teach this generation in university. She found that Generation Y prefers visual and kinesthetic learning styles and teaching styles which link with their worldviews. Manuel also found that this generation saw many potentialities in technologies and were generally proud of their own technological skills. It could be assumed that the preference for visual and kinesthetic learning styles is linked to the visual impetus provided by the internet and video games which is combined with at least some reaction on part of the person interacting with this technology.

It has also been argued that the diversity, which Generation Y is said to bring to tertiary education, will create a wider range of ideas and will improve the learning environment and might as well lead to a more egalitarian society (Carnevale and Fry, 2000). Strauss and Howe (2007) stress the ethnical diversity of this generation. Strauss and Howe (2007) point out that colleges and universities are changing in light of the arrival of millennials and their 'helicopter parents'. These 'helicopter parents' constantly hover over their children and try to convince teachers that their child really deserves a better grade. Strauss and Howe (2007) point out that in the US millennials are attracted by well-respected universities and are brand conscious when it comes to selecting the right university. In this light, admission to colleges in the US is said to have become more and more competitive (Twenge, 2006).

While competition for places is increasing, Generation Y is said to favour collaborative work styles in educational institutions (Strauss and Howe, 2007). This means that new approaches to learning which stress cooperation, working in teams and being responsible for own learning outcomes, are taking centre stage (Tapscott, 1999). The teacher or instructor is then no longer defined as an all-knowing authority figure but fulfils much more a role of a moderator who helps students to acquire new knowledge. This would mean that students are taught to a lesser degree in the traditional lecture format, but are given time to work collaboratively in teams or in groups.

Generation Y reflects the dramatic changes and tensions in economy and society through attitudes and expectations of education and work. This generation was assessed as "bored by school" in the first PISA study but is also faced with more competition from peers in educational and work settings. Learning is said to be more collaborative, multicultural, visual and kinaesthetic for Generation Y.

## **Generation Y's Future Educational Needs and Good Practice**

What can be taken from the research on Generation Y is the fact that Generation Y is said to be significantly different to previous generations, particularly in their understanding that jobs are not for life. Life-long learning is therefore not only a necessity but due to the integration of work and life an enjoyable, challenging and achievement-oriented aspect of everyday life. In the work context, flexibility is regarded as a key skill, and the transferability of skills is seen as a central personal asset (Sennett, 1998). As Generation Y's life paths are increasingly spent in a global networked economy, their capital is now accumulated through applying knowledge on information (Castells, 1996). Information gathering is facilitated by new means of technology. Bureaucratic organisations are replaced by network organisations, which require flexible and individualised labour. Castells terms this 'self-programmable labour': workers who through learning continuously gather new skills and acquire new knowledge have the resulting power to re-invent themselves (Castells, 1996). These ideas are also connected to Bourdieu's (1989) conceptualisation of educational gains as 'cultural' or 'social' capital, which can subsequently be converted into economic capital.

These are fundamental paradigmatic shifts in the understanding of learning and its role in life. Generation Y's key attitudes to skills and learning patterns are due to their life experiences in a globalising world that offered them technological access to new learning resources. In the context of a rapidly changing world, educational systems need to adapt in order to meet the changing needs and expectations of these generations. In particular the system needs to reflect the collaborative, team-oriented, visual and kinaesthetic learning styles that are favoured by this generation. The educational system has to offer the current generations a learning environment that reflects a contemporary learning context, equips them with various methodologies to acquire new knowledge, and enables them to cope with and make use of the unique opportunities and challenges that a globalised economy might bring upon them over their lifetime. In other words, the education system will have to change dramatically. In addition to that, institutions and opportunities for life-long learning have to be created to allow Generation Y to constantly adapt their skills to the needs of the economy and society. For this purpose, we explore three examples of good practice that might inspire a transformation of the educational system.

### **The Tensta Template**

One recent example of a test-bed for dramatically changing an educational system is the Tensta Gymnasium in the city of Kista, Sweden's "Silicon Valley". Tensta has cutting-edge ICT research and development facilities, although it should not be mistaken for a cyber-yuppie school in which such changes bode well with cosmopolitan parents and corporate sponsoring from stock-rich ICT start-ups. In fact, Tensta is a multi-ethnic school that comprises children that are 80% ethnic minority fugitives and displaced people. It had been struggling with decreases in enrolment due to poor academic performances and a voucher system that allowed local parents to choose alternative schools with better academic track records. A persistent drop-out problem and epidemic disengagement and boredom from the student body was acknowledged from all stakeholders. Multi-lingual and multi-ethnic problems within the student body were a daily matter of trouble, and the teaching staff felt overwhelmed by their tasks. Parents were alienated from the schooling process but felt unable to compensate for the school's failures at a family level, in private at home. In a way, global realities were reflected in this school as in many other schools in Europe, Britain, or other countries.

Over a period of three years an ambitious revamping took place. Teachers and administrators introduced new integrated curricula, pedagogical changes and architectural innovations to create a place for mutual engagement. Efforts to emphasise interdisciplinary thinking and global understanding, and focus and cultural history went hand in hand with investing in the deployment of sophisticated media and information technologies. Apart from personal mobile computing devices for each student, these technologies were spread across generous and open learning spaces, wellness- and nutrition-focused break-out rooms while shaping the institution, nevertheless, in an unmistakable Swedish cultural grounding. The latter was meant to appease local sensibilities and traditional critics wary of the implemented change, but also to infuse a Swedish host country foundation to the multi-ethnic and multi-cultural studentship, making them aware of also adopting Swedish local particulars in addition to their pre-existing ethnic identities. The project was presented to local businesses and various universities and life-long learning institutions in order to create partnerships and mutual interest in the development of this Generation Y and Generation Z student body that will eventually become their graduate body and workforce.

Suárez-Oroco and Sattin (2007) describe a personal visit to Tensta as encapsulating the solution for many educational problems that they encounter regularly during their research. The education they found was interdisciplinary, multi-cultural, used different media technologies and was based on group work. The wholesale reform of Tensta led to a significant increase in student performance (although ministerial performance

ratings were stopped as it was deemed unfit to evaluate the complex new schooling system at hand). Enrolment requests were up twofold, and parents using their vouchers to move their children away from Tensta were down to nil.

Tensta might have been able to create a template as to how education can acknowledge current economic and social realities, engage and bind students from an early age, teach them critical thinking and the ability to embrace learning as a life-long method to deal with inevitable changes they will be faced with. Above all, Tensta comprehends the social patterns seen with Generation Y'ers and nurtures them, namely by placing a premium on collaboration and interdisciplinary and ever-evolving work patterns, providing immediate feedback, taking multiple perspectives on problems by respecting student-proposed ideas yet arguing for alternative views on the issue, moving across language and cultural boundaries, increasing diversity and increasing complexity in the curriculum yet making it more accessible at the same time, and using contemporary instruments (here, state-of-the-art ICT) familiar to students in order to enhance their engagement.

### **Germany's 'Bildungs' Initiative**

Another example of good practice in education is an initiative in Germany. Federal Chancellor Angela Merkel has recently declared the *Bildungsrepublik Deutschland* policy initiative, a word play on the Federal Republic of Germany's German name, 'Bundesrepublik Deutschland'. 'Bildung' is commonly translated from German into English as 'education'. However, in German, *Bildung* has different connotations from its English counterpart. 'Education' in English is derived from the Latin *educere*, which means 'to lead out of'. The connotations here are of the student – a passive, humble, receptive participant in his or her own ascent toward enlightenment. Furthermore, education is in this sense essentially a goal-oriented pursuit, as any ascent would be. *Bildung*, on the other hand, could be translated into English as 'education'; it equally can be taken to mean 'formation', 'growth', 'shaping', 'cultivation', 'civilization', or 'refinement'. *Bildung* is not limited by specific goal-orientation, nor is it passive. *Bildung* is ongoing, unlimited in scope and most importantly, encompasses the whole person. No one is leading the student anywhere in fixed guided lines. Material is made available, but it is up to the student to put it to use. *Bildung* is the education one gives oneself. A degree is no guarantor that *Bildung* has taken place.

According to German government plans, investment into education along the national "*Bildungsrepublik*" idea has been identified as a strategic and tactical key area to weather and eventually exit the current financial crisis and economic recession. After reacting with much delay in launching its own national economic stimulus package in comparison to other European states, Merkel's "*Konjunkturpaket II*" (economic stimulus package 2) will comprise 50bn Euros for 2009 and 2010 (ZDF, 2008). More than 50% of the public spending will go into revamping the education sector, which includes primary schools, a re-organised two-tier secondary school system, investment into tertiary education institutions (universities and polytechnics) as well as vocational training tracks and mature education schools in order to provide opportunities for the general population for life-long learning in form of anything from evening degrees and additional-skill-gaining to health and physical education activities. This initiative would be the biggest public initiative to re-organise a nationwide education sector since the foundation of Germany as a state entity in 1871. The *Bildungsrepublik Deutschland* policy initiative in Germany is an example of the reinvention of education in times of crisis.

### **ICT Workers as Example for Lifelong Learning**

Another example of best practice relates to the workplace rather than the school as a site of learning. One profession which is regularly singled out as providing an early view of what the future of work might have in store is information communication technology

(ICT) work (Gill, 2002; Seltzer and Bentley, 1999). Besides other characteristics, information communication technology work is a profession that constantly needs to reinvent itself due to the pace of technical change (Kotamraju, 2002). ICT workers can indeed not rely on the technical knowledge they have acquired in secondary and tertiary education to stay up to date because new programmes and new technologies make the technical knowledge they acquired irrelevant.

ICT workers develop various ways of dealing with change. Research has shown that while most workers accept that they might at one point be no longer that interested in new technologies, most of them keep up to date through reading magazines and books on technology in their spare time (Kelan, 2008, Kelan, 2009). In addition they explore new technologies through taking jobs in this area and learn the new technology on the job.

ICT workers stressed in this research a methodology for learning new technology is a useful skill they acquired in formal education (Kelan, 2009). Rather than learning a specific technology, they have learned methodologies regarding how to approach learning about technologies. These methodologies will be the single most important resource they can draw on during their life course (Kelan, 2008, Kelan, 2009). In order to remain competitive and employable, they gain what Kanter (1995) calls 'employability security' through up-to-date knowledge. Such methodologies and ways of teaching and learning are exactly what educational institutions have to provide to allow Generation Y and indeed Generation Z to develop the educational tools that keep them competitive.

## **Conclusion**

This paper has explored the challenge of meeting the educational needs and expectations of Generation Y. The first part of the paper highlighted different assumptions and understandings about Generation Y in the workplace, and examined the educational experiences of Generation Y. It was discussed that Generation Y is said to be special, sheltered, confident, conventional, team-oriented, achieving and pressured (Howe and Strauss, 2000). In the workplace Generation Y are assumed to work to live and not live to work and to value respect and judge people on merit. It was highlighted how central technology is for Generation Y and that the learning style of Generation Y is said to be team-oriented, collaborative, multi-cultural, visual and kinesthetic. Reflecting upon first, general characteristics of Generation Y identified within the literature, and second, recent changes in society, technology, the economy, and education. In the second part, the paper then offered some tentative suggestions about what Generation Y may need in terms of education throughout their life course. We looked at what could be seen as examples of good practice for changing the educational system to allow for the changes in the economy and society. Such approaches are vital for developing life-long skills, knowledge and capabilities within present and future generations, to enable them to prosper in work, education, life and society.

## References

- Allen, P. (2004) Welcoming Y. *Benefits Canada*, 28 (9), pp.51-53.
- Andrus, L. (2008) The Millennials are here. Available from [http://www.mlive.com/businessreview/western/index.ssf/2008/06/the\\_millennials\\_are\\_here.html](http://www.mlive.com/businessreview/western/index.ssf/2008/06/the_millennials_are_here.html).
- Armour, S. (2005) Generation Y: They've arrived at work with a new attitude. Available from [http://www.usatoday.com/money/workplace/2005-11-06-gen-y\\_x.htm](http://www.usatoday.com/money/workplace/2005-11-06-gen-y_x.htm).
- Asthana, A. (2008) Generation Y: They don't live for work ... they work to live. Available from <http://www.guardian.co.uk/money/2008/may/25/workandcareers.worklifebalance>.
- Beck, U. (2000) *The Brave New World of Work*. Cambridge, Polity.
- Benedict, R. (1938) Continuities and discontinuities in cultural conditioning. *Psychiatry I*, pp.161-167
- Bourdieu, P. (1989) *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*. London, Routledge.
- Braid, M. (2008) How to connect with Generation Y, Available from [http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/life\\_and\\_style/career\\_and\\_jobs/recruiter\\_forum/article1813031.ece](http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/life_and_style/career_and_jobs/recruiter_forum/article1813031.ece).
- Broadbridge, A.M., Maxwell, G.A. and Ogden, S.M. (2007) Experiences, perceptions and expectations of retail employment for Generation Y. *Career Development International*, 12 (6), pp.523-544.
- Carnevale, A.P. and Fry, R.A. (2000.) *Crossing the Great Divide: Can We Achieve Equity When Generation Y Goes To College?*
- Castells, M. (1996) *The Rise of the Network Society*. Cambridge, MA., Blackwell.
- Economist (2009) Generation Y goes to work. Available from [http://www.economist.com/business/displaystory.cfm?story\\_id=12863573](http://www.economist.com/business/displaystory.cfm?story_id=12863573).
- Eisner, S.P. (2005) Managing Generation Y. *S.A.M. Advanced Management Journal*, 70 (4), p.4.
- Franz, P. (2008) Millennials taking reins of business. Available from <http://articles.lancasteronline.com/local/4/223761>.
- Giddens, A. (2002) *Runaway World: How Globalisation is Reshaping Our Lives*, 2nd ed. New York, Routledge.
- Gill, R. (2002) Cool, Creative and Egalitarian? Exploring Gender in Project-based New Media Work in Europe. *Information, Communication and Society*, 5 (1), pp.70-89.
- Gribben, R. (2007) Generation Y talking about a revolution. Available from <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/money/main.jhtml?xml=/money/2007/11/29/cmgen29.xml>.
- Howe, N. and Strauss, W. (2000) *Millennials Rising: The Next Great Generation*. New York, Vintage.
- Junco, R., Mastrodicasa, J. and Upcraft, M.L. (2007) *Connecting to the Net Generation: What Higher Education Professionals Need to Know About Today's Students*. National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA).
- Kanter, R.M. (1995) *World class: thriving locally in the global economy*. London, Simon & Schuster.
- Kelan, E. (2009) *Performing Gender: The Fluidity and Rigidity of Gender at Work*. Basingstoke, Palgrave.
- Kelan, E.K. (2008) Gender, Risk and Employment Insecurity: The Masculine Breadwinner Subtext. *Human Relations*, 61 (9), pp.1171-1202.
- Kotamraju, N.P. (2002) Keeping Up: Web Design Skill and the Reinvented Worker. *Information, Communication & Society*, 5 (1), pp.1-26.
- Mann, S. (2008) Understanding Generation Y. Available from <http://www.trainingzone.co.uk/cgi-bin/item.cgi?id=185058&d=680&h=608&f=626&dateformat=%25e-%25h-%25y>.
- Manuel, K. (2002) Teaching Information Literacy to Generation Y. *Journal of Library Administration*, 36 (1/2), pp.195-217

- Matthews, V. (2008) Generation Z: new kids on the virtual block. Available from <http://www.personneltoday.com/articles/article.aspx?liarticleid=47303&printerfriendly=true>
- McCrindle, M. and Hooper, D. (2008) Generation Y: Attracting, engaging and leading a new generation at work. Available from [http://www.mccrindle.com.au/wp\\_pdf/NewGenerationsAtWork.pdf](http://www.mccrindle.com.au/wp_pdf/NewGenerationsAtWork.pdf).
- McLeod, A. (2008) Generation Y: Unlocking the talent of young managers. Available from [http://www.managers.org.uk/client\\_files/user\\_files/Woodman\\_31/Research%20files/Generation\\_Y\\_executive\\_summary.pdf](http://www.managers.org.uk/client_files/user_files/Woodman_31/Research%20files/Generation_Y_executive_summary.pdf).
- NextStep. (2008) *Engaging the Multi-generational Workforce*. Red City, California Next Step.
- Noguera, P. (2003) *City Schools and the American Dream: Reclaiming the Promise of Public Education*. New York, Teachers College Press
- Ogbu, J. (1982) Cultural discontinuities and schooling. *Anthropology and Education Quarterly*, 13 (4), pp.209-307.
- Orrell, L. (2007) *Millennials Incorporated: The Big Business of Recruiting, Managing and Retaining North America's New Generation of Young Professionals*. Deadwood, Oregon, Intelligent Women Publishing.
- PISA (2008). Available from <http://www.pisa.oecd.org/>.
- Reynolds, E. (2008) Ask Gen Y Survey. Available from <http://www.askgeny.co.uk>.
- Reynolds, L.A. (2005) Who Are the Millennials? a.k.a. Generation Y. Available from [http://www.deloitte.com/dtt/cda/doc/content/us\\_consulting\\_millennialfactsheet\\_080606.pdf](http://www.deloitte.com/dtt/cda/doc/content/us_consulting_millennialfactsheet_080606.pdf)
- Seidl, W. (2008) Meeting demands of Generation Y should be HR's target, Available from <http://www.personneltoday.com/articles/2008/04/03/45231/meeting-demands-of-generation-y-should-be-hrs-target.html>.
- Seltzer, K. and Bentley, T. (1999) *The Creative Age: Knowledge and Skills for the New Economy*. London, Demos.
- Sennett, R. (1998) *The Corrosion of Character: The Personal Consequences of Work in the New Capitalism*. New York, Norton.
- Sennett, R. (2006) *The Culture of the New Capitalism*. London, Yale University Press.
- Strauss, W. and Howe, N. (2007) *Millennials Go to College: Strategies for A New Generation on Campus*. Great Falls, VA, Lifecourse Associates.
- Suárez-Orozco, M.M. and Sattin, C. (2007) *Introduction: Learning in the Global Era*. In Suárez-Orozco, M.M. ed. *Learning in the Global Era: International Perspectives on Globalization and Education*. pp.1-46. Berkeley, University of California Press.
- Tapscott, D. (1999) *Growing Up Digital: The Rise of the Net Generation*. New York, McGraw-Hill.
- Terjesen, S., Vinnicombe, S. and Freeman, C. (2007) Attracting Generation Y graduates: Organisational attributes, likelihood to apply and sex differences. *Career Development International*, 12 (6), pp.504-522.
- Twenge, J.M. (2006) *Generation Me: Why Today's Young Americans Are More Confident, Assertive, Entitled--and More Miserable Than Ever Before* New York, Free Press.
- ZDF (2008) "Mehr für Familien" und "gestärkt aus der Krise". Available from <http://www.heute.de/ZDFheute/inhalt/4/0,3672,7504772,00.html>.

*This document has been commissioned as part of the UK Department for Children, Schools and Families' Beyond Current Horizons project, led by Futurelab. The views expressed do not represent the policy of any Government or organisation.*