

TEACHING & LEARNING

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Today's Student on Our Campus: Dealing with the Y's

Sarah Morris
Assistant Director, Student Services

Today's student is known as Generation Y, or Why, as we sometimes refer to them. They are a generation of pampered, over-protected young people according to some, while others describe them as confident, optimistic and caring towards others. What we know about these students has influenced our interactions and expectations of them on campus, especially in Student Services. For Saint Mary's to recruit and retain this new wave of students we need to understand where they come from and what they value. Only when we do this can we start to respond and tailor our services to meet their needs.

Some of the common attributes of this generation are: adaptability, ambition, acceptance of diversity, self-confidence and the ability to multi-task. All of us have witnessed students walking around campus text messaging while talking to their friends about everything and anything. Some research would describe them as very secure in their own self, being taken care of, perhaps overly so, by parents. This generation believes in their own self worth and the special skills they can offer an employer, or University. Parents too believe in them and have fostered this specialness in their child, our student. This belief alone has changed how we interact with parents.



Photo: Kelly Clark

Ten years ago we did not have the same level of parent orientation programs as we do now. Today we welcome parents and families, the same way we do students, through intentional programming. Though their needs are different, students expect parents to be part of all of their experiences. This generation grew up calling their parents their best friends and learned to question them, like they now

question us. We need to welcome parents as support persons and count on them to assist their student to succeed at University.

In the classroom this generation respect faculty who get to know them as individuals, put them in roles that push their limits, deal with them quickly and interactively, customize solutions for them and act as a mentor. A tall order in a class

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Teaching and Learning at Saint Mary's

A forum on teaching and learning sponsored by the Quality of Teaching Committee and edited and produced by the Centre for Academic and Instructional Development. Articles and responses by faculty, students and staff are welcome.

Quality of Teaching Committee Members 2006/07

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The opinions expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the editor or the Quality of Teaching Committee. The editor reserves the right not to publish a submission.



Sarah Morris,
Assistant Director, Student Services

of 100! They have little patience for understanding rules, regulations and see everything as negotiable especially because of their "special circumstances". We need to collaborate and teach them what they don't know, to mentor them when they need it and to coach them when they ask for our input. We can take advantage of their openness, acceptance and optimism to help them along the way.

More than any other generation this one has been brought up to focus on the self. In high school many participated in self-esteem classes. It is no surprise then that they are fascinated with their appearance, whether in piercing, tattoos or clothing. They band together with others, not by connecting human-to-human but through ICQ, Facebook, YouTube and designer cell phones. This may explain why they aren't great at asking for help but are wonderful at instant messenger. We just need to read the SMUSA discussion boards to see how they research resources on campus. For as much as they are focused on their self and self-esteem

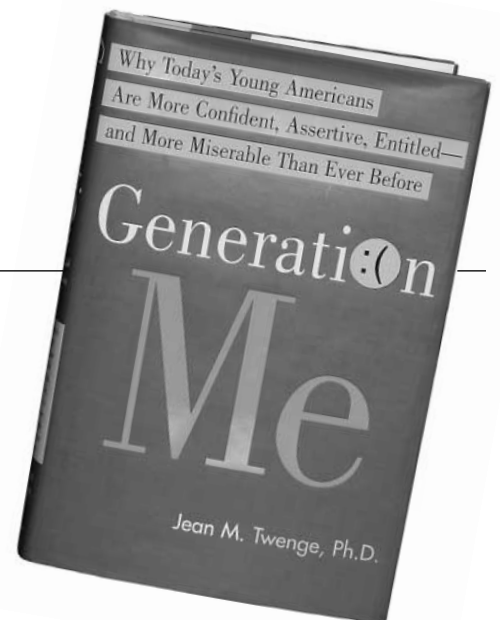
To understand more of the influence of popular culture on this generation, read *Generation Me*, by Jean Twenge – available for loan from the CAID reference library.

Call the Centre for Academic and Instructional Development, 420-5088, or drop in to the CAID office, MM202C.

they are not great risk takers, view common obstacles as insurmountable and are paralyzed by the multitude of choices available to them. They have been encouraged to dream large and feel like failures when these dreams don't come true. Again this is where we can step in, breaking large tasks down, working to build their self-confidence and sense of responsibility and teaching them that obstacles are a normal part of life.

While this generation reports the highest self-esteem, any university counselling service will argue differently. Their self-esteem is built on shaky ground, being that of material possessions. Since 1987 the number of diagnosed cases of depression & anxiety has tripled and shows no signs of slowing down. Their obsession with technology has left them somewhat isolated and alone, and many have not developed the people skills to connect with employers, staff or faculty. With this generation, we need to start thinking of helping them develop skills they will need in the workplace and in life.

How can we help them? Model the behavior you want, explain why you are asking certain things of them (especially around policies as they need transparency), learn their language, praise them in public and let them know that they matter. They are a generation influenced by factors that are unique to their time and for us to interact with them effectively we need to be aware of these factors – and act accordingly!



Given the new responsibilities that I have taken on through the AVP's office related to academic planning, program reviews, faculty relations and strategic initiatives, I am pleased to announce that Roxanne Richardson has been hired on a half-time contract to assume responsibility for many of the ongoing projects of the Center.

Roxanne has been at Saint Mary's for over ten years working in a research capacity, and teaching part-time in the Environmental Studies Program. She has supervised directed studies and Honors students, taught very large first year classes, second year classes, and senior seminar courses. She has used learning inventories

in her class, accommodated students with disabilities, developed links between senior students and community organizations, given several panel presentations through the Centre, developed posters for open houses and given presentations, both on and off-campus, to promote Saint Mary's Environmental Studies Program.

Roxanne's duties will include responsibility for the faculty newsletter, *Teaching and Learning at Saint Mary's*, New Faculty Orientation and New Faculty Network. She will help develop and deliver workshops, provide one-on-one consultations, assist faculty with teaching award nominations, contribute to the work of the Quality of

Teaching Committee, identify new initiatives, and, everyone's favorite, assist with "other duties as assigned."

I know Roxanne will bring new ideas and fresh perspectives to the Centre. Mary and I look forward to working with her and I know Roxanne looks forward to working with colleagues in her new role at Saint Mary's.

This article by Roxanne Richardson will serve to introduce her as our new associate in the Center for Academic and Instructional Development (CAID).

Margaret-Anne Bennett
Director

Who Me? Teach?

Roxanne Richardson

Instructional Development Associate, CAID

From the time that I first entered school at the age of six, I loved to learn, but I felt I would never be able to teach, or to motivate others to learn. Over the years, I found classes boring, lacking in humour and stimulation. I always thought it was better to just go and read about whatever I wanted to know. After finishing my Masters in Environmental Science in Dublin in 1982, I still hadn't changed my mind about teaching. That happened very slowly and with several false starts. It began when I was asked to teach part of a course. Since I had originally started my professional life as a nurse, it was thought that I would be an ideal candidate to teach the section on environmentally-related human health issues.

With a lot of pushing and prodding from my peers, I agreed to teach for two weeks. I was told that as long as I knew my material, I would have no problems in the classroom. What surprises me is that I believed them. I remember, on that first day, walking bravely into the assigned room to meet my students, almost confident that I was ready for the task. Very quickly, my belief that I could never be a teacher was reaffirmed.

I'm a person that ruminates over bad experiences for far too long. I decided that I just could not teach. I was boring, spoke without any real enthusiasm (probably because I was petrified), and I was unable to stimulate even short discussions. Some

people have a great gift, I told myself, and teaching was certainly not one of mine. I loved research, field work, laboratory work, and I decided that I would pursue any opportunities that arose. With three young daughters, I continued to work while they were in school and I was quite content.

Then life changed. Without any forethought, I suddenly found myself thrown into the role of teacher again. In 1995 I agreed to home-school one of my daughters for a year, as she was floundering in the public school system. Both my daughter and I "survived" the year, but I knew that I really didn't have "the right stuff" to be a teacher. She returned to school, and I continued to work in a research capacity, and became involved in a volunteer capacity for an international development organization.

In November, 1996, extrinsic forces came into play again. Liette Vasseur, a previous Director of Environmental Studies, was given a large CIDA grant and she needed a part-time instructor urgently. Since I had been doing some work in the laboratory at SMU, and Liette was aware of my academic background, she cajoled me into taking over the Environmental Studies Seminar Course. The first year was dreadful but I found that the students were tolerant, full of enthusiasm, and willing to teach me what was expected.



Roxanne Richardson
Instructional Development Associate, CAID

I like to think that I now have more than ten years of teaching experience – opposed to one year of teaching experience for ten years. Over the years, I've worked with a teaching mentor, attended and participated in workshops, attended curriculum development retreats, read as much as possible, and I recently attended the Educational Developers' Conference at the University of Guelph. I am still learning, but my experiences, both good and bad, have shown me that we can learn to teach and to enjoy teaching. We may not all win teaching awards, but we can be effective and enthusiastic teachers, open to new ideas in and out of the classroom, and willing to share them with colleagues.

Roxanne is located in MM216E. Phone 496-8242 or email roxanne.richardson@smu.ca

Incorporating Peer Review Into Writing Assignments

Julie-Ann Stodolny

Director, Writing Centre

I have heard from faculty members (and read about many more) who have tried to incorporate peer review into their classes and have given up in frustration after trying it a couple of times. They don't feel that their students are benefiting from it, they don't see much (if any) improvement in their students' writing, or they simply don't feel that it's worth the work.

However, peer review offers many benefits to both students and faculty: it can help students develop critical thinking and writing skills, provide them the opportunity to see and learn from stronger students' work, and even provide you with better products to mark.

The important thing to remember when incorporating peer review in your classes is that students need both structure and guidance. While there are many different types of guidance you can give, if students don't receive any, they will inevitably respond to papers (or presentations) with comments like the following:

"It's a good paper, I like it."

- Translation: the reviewer doesn't want to offend his or her peer or doesn't know what to look for.

"I've fixed this sentence in this way."

- Translation: the reviewer has edited the student's paper but hasn't explained to the writer what the problem is or what to avoid in the future.

"You should indent the first line of your paragraph."

- Translation: the reviewer is focusing on sentence-level errors without examining the larger issues in the paper.

"What did you do last Friday?"

- Translation: the reviewer has no clue what to do and has simply skimmed over the paper to finish quickly.

So, how can structure and guidance help you to avoid these problems? First of all, it is important to realize that students often interpret peer review as an editing session. If you want them to do more than simply edit each others' papers, there are several things you can do.

First of all, you can think about the structure of the review session. Do you want a response-centred review, where students explain their responses to the writer (what they liked or did not like, what worked and what didn't work, what was confusing, etc), or do you want an advice-centred review (where students give advice as to how a paper's argument, structure, clarity, etc. can be improved)?

With the response method, group members simply describe their personal responses to the draft as it is written. The writer does not respond to comments or defend the paper. Because students are not giving advice, the writer must consider what the audience reads/hears, and how that response is different from what he or she was trying to explain or argue. However, with an advice-centred review, the writer must still decide what advice to take or to reject, and he or she is still ultimately responsible for the finished draft. Additionally, the writer may receive advice on *how* to fix something that he or she didn't know was wrong, as opposed to being told that something needs to be fixed, but not understanding what is wrong in the first place or how to fix it.



Julie-Ann Stodolny
Director, Writing Centre

Second of all, how much guidance do you want to give? Giving guidance is subjective – there is no one "right way" to give it. However, with both response and advice-based reviews, giving students a focus is paramount; otherwise, they are likely to only pick up on grammar issues (and often mistaken ones at that). Do you want them to look for a clear argument? For structural problems? For an effective use of research? Providing a simple outline of questions to ask or issues to look for can help guide your students in the right direction.

Also keep in mind other contextual factors like who chooses the groups; (i.e., you or the students), the make-up of a group in terms of gender, race, and academic performance, the review's location, (in-class or take-home), and the amount of time given for peer review. All of these conditions will affect the responses you receive and the types of benefits that students will receive.

The Writing Centre has many resources for faculty members looking to incorporate peer review into writing assignments. If you want advice for structuring a peer review session, examples of question sheets, the theoretical background of peer review, or practical models of designing the session, or if you just want feedback on what you have tried in the past or are thinking of trying in the future, please call me at 491-6201 or email julie-ann.stodolny@smu.ca.

WHO! (Writing Help Online!)

Under development for the past few months, WHO! is a fully online WebCT resource, offering writing practice for students in four different areas: Arts, Commerce, Science and Grammar.

The Writing Centre is seeking faculty feedback on this new interactive student writing resource. Take a look and see if it could be helpful to you in your

classes. Content can be modified for individual courses, and your suggestions for improvement are welcome. Please contact Julie-Ann Stodolny (julie-ann.stodolny@smu.ca, 491-6201) for more information.

WHO! was launched March 30, 2007. Access WHO! from your Faculty Academic tab on SMUport.

Posting Handouts Online Introduced Instructor to Online Learning Possibilities

April, 2006, *Online Classroom* (Article reprinted with permission from the *Online Classroom*)

Like many instructors who venture into the online classroom, Brenda Rambo, assistant professor of psychology at Middle Tennessee State University, began gradually by enhancing her courses with Web content. Her initial motivation was to provide her students with online handouts, which would eliminate the hassle and expense of making photocopies. From this simple beginning, she has progressed to offering user-friendly fully online and hybrid courses that have changed the way she teaches and the way her students learn.

"I decided to build basic websites for all my courses to stop the handouts and to provide the syllabus and reading schedules. The more I did that, the more I was intrigued by how much it benefited the students and how much more of the learning process they could be in control of," Rambo says.

The department had few online courses available to undergraduates, so Rambo decided to create an online version of developmental psychology, a required course for psychology majors. The course proved to be very popular.

What's the reason for the popularity of the course? "Most students work 25 to 35 hours a week. Many work full-time jobs and take full loads. A lot of students also have families, so coming to class is a big inconvenience. They may be very motivated learners, but they need to do it when they can do it. I have found that most of my students who take my online courses say that they love being in charge of their learning, doing it when they have time to do it," Rambo says.

In addition to flexibility, the design of Rambo's courses provides students with an active learning experience. Rambo uses WebCT, but her design goes beyond the basic layout, which makes the courses more user friendly than they would be otherwise. She divides each course into the following sections:

- **Course content and related materials**—This section includes the syllabus, calendar pop ups, reading schedule, meeting schedule (for hybrid courses), chat group assignments, and case studies.
- **Communication tools**—This section includes links to e-mail, discussion

boards, and chat rooms.

- **Study tools**—This section includes study sheets that help students prepare for exams and other tools that Rambo has designed to help students study.
- **Assignments**—This section lists all the assignments with links to assignment requirements, instructions, rubrics, and any forms needed to do the assignment.
- **Handouts and forms**—This section includes all handouts and forms related to the course.
- **Class notes**—In this section, Rambo provides course content in several formats, including lecture notes, PowerPoint presentations, and outlines.
- **Grades**
- **Textbook website**—"It's important to have a great textbook, but it's also important that the textbook has a great website," Rambo says.
- **Quizzes and exams**

Unexpected benefit

As Rambo taught her online course, she began offering the same online resources to her face-to-face students. "I didn't require them to take tests online, but they had everything I had—PowerPoint, the textbook website, practice tests—and they could do everything an online student could do, but they had to come to class," Rambo says.

New Subscription – *Online Classroom*

The Center for Academic and Instructional Development (CAID) is pleased to offer the Saint Mary's community access to an electronic journal on teaching with technology.

The article is reprinted with permission from an archived edition.

The *Online Classroom* provides practical advice in developing or improving online courses, or the web component of classroom based courses. Each issue features tips and insights from successful

When they have access to the online materials, students tend to come to class more prepared. "They would hold up their hands and say, 'Doctor Rambo, we don't want to hear this because we've already done all this. Let's talk about life. Let's talk about life applications of the concepts in the book.' It changed everything I did that semester because they came to class so prepared and wanted new information," Rambo says.

Based on the success in her Web-enhanced undergraduate course, Rambo has incorporated online learning into a graduate-level prepracticum course. That class meets every other week, and during the weeks the class does not meet, students participate in threaded discussions. By moving discussions online, Rambo has been able to concentrate on developing students' counseling skills. "Because we have had such intense personal discussions about all the course contents online, when we go to class I can demonstrate everything from the book. Before, all I had time to do was lecture on the content of the book. I didn't have time to demonstrate. Now I have time to do face-to-face counseling for three- to five-minute segments with every student and debrief what happened.

Contact Brenda Rambo at brambo@mtsu.edu. Reprinted with permission, *Magna Publications*, March 2007

online course developers and instructors on topics such as course design, facilitation, assessment, interaction, student support and use of emerging technologies. *Online Classroom* is published by Magna Publishing, who also publishes *The Teaching Professor*.

To access either or both publications, contact the CAID, 420-5088, caid@smu.ca, for registration instructions. Once registered, faculty may access both the newest release and fully indexed, archived issues.

ONLINE CL@SSROOM
IDEAS FOR EFFECTIVE ONLINE INSTRUCTION

Centre for Academic Technologies (CAT)

Teaching Technology Associates – Spring & Summer 2007

Mary Kendall Brooks, Centre for Academic and Instructional Development

With Spring Convocation comes more change in our compliment of Teaching Technology Associates. This spring Aaron Muise is completing the requirements for his Bachelor of Commerce degree (majoring in Computing and Information Systems and Human Resource Management). His database troubleshooting talent (and dry sense of humour!) has been a valuable asset. We wish to acknowledge his many contributions to the CAT and the Centre for Academic and Instructional Development and extend our congratulations and best wishes.

Keisha Archibald will be temporarily leaving the CAT in May, as she begins a four month work term with RIM (Research In Motion) here in Halifax. We will miss her, and look forward to her return!

Joining the TTAs in the CAT is Emile Johnson, a 3rd year Bachelor of Commerce student (majoring in Managing Information Systems). Emile is from Nassau, the Bahamas, and is a welcome addition to our team.

Drop-in assistance in the CAT is usually available but an appointment will ensure

help when you need it. The CAT will be open and staffed full time during the spring and summer. Please call the CAT at 496-8168, email cat@smu.ca; or contact

Mary in the Centre for Academic and Instructional Development at 420-5088, email caid@smu.ca to schedule an appointment.

WebCT Support Centre

Are you planning online content as an integral part of your classroom based course, but don't know where to start?

Have you used WebCT in previous semesters but don't know how to restore content for your upcoming courses?

What is WebCT?

Help is just a click away – visit the WebCT Support Centre:
www.smu.ca/administration/caid/webct.html

University of Prince Edward Island 24th Annual Faculty Development Summer Institute

Active Learning and Teaching in University & College July 30 – August 3, 2007

Since 1984, hundreds of participants have attended this Institute from Canadian, American and overseas colleges and universities including a number from Saint Mary's University.

In the finest tradition of active learning, participants in the Institute are given a voice in the classroom. And like all effective teachers, facilitators operate from an agenda that is adaptable to the learning needs of participants.

The Dean's Offices and the Saint Mary's Quality of Teaching Committee welcome expressions of interest for attendance at the 2007 Summer Institute. A maximum of one professor from each of the three Faculties may be selected.

To apply for 2007 sponsorship, please submit a letter to the Center for Academic and Instructional Development (CAID) indicating that you wish to attend and outlining what you hope to learn, and why. Letters should be received by April 27th, 2007.

For more information on the UPEI Summer Institute, visit: <http://www.upei.ca/extension/FDSInstitute.htm>

Teaching Scholar Program

Call for Proposals – 2007/08 Academic Year

In 2006/07 Saint Mary's introduced a Teaching Scholar Program. The purpose of the program is to promote the development of inquiry into teaching and learning within the university. At the core of the program is the Teaching Scholar.

The Teaching Scholar will be both an advocate for teaching and learning initiatives and a teaching scholar in his/her own right.

- *Advocacy*: The Teaching Scholar will identify a teaching/learning issue associated with the priorities and initiatives outlined in the 2002 – 2007 Academic Plan; bring it to the attention of colleagues and others within the university, and possibly further afield; and act in an advisory, consultative capacity across campus with respect to this issue.
- *Scholarship*: The Teaching Scholar will conduct a teaching/learning focused research project and disseminate the results.

The Scholar will be given a one course reduction (1.0) in teaching for an academic year and will be associated with, and supported by, the Center for Academic and Instructional Development (CAID).

For further information on the role and work of a Teaching Scholar, please refer to the article on the 2006/07 Teaching Scholar, Dr. Shelagh Crooks, on the CAID webpage: www.smu.ca/administration/caid/scholar.html

Submission Procedures

Interested faculty should forward a 4 – 5 page proposal to the Director, Center for Academic and Instructional Development, outlining:

- Teaching/Learning Issue
- Research Topic and Goals
- Rationale and Relevance to Academic Plan Priorities
- Methodology and Results
- Dissemination Strategies

The ability of a faculty member to participate in this Program in the 2007/08 aca-

ademic year should be compatible with the operational requirements of the Department. Proposals should therefore be supported by the Chair of the Department and the Dean of the Faculty.

Submission Deadline

Proposals should be submitted to the Director, Center for Academic and Instructional Development, by April 27, 2007.

Proposal Consultation

Applicants who wish to discuss their ideas and/or proposal before submission, are invited to contact Dr. Shelagh Crooks, 2006/07 Teaching Scholar, phone 420-5824, email shelagh.crooks@smu.ca

Selection Process

Applications will be reviewed by the Director, CAID; a sub-committee of the Quality of Teaching Committee, and the Vice-President, Academic and Research. The successful applicant will be notified of his/her selection by May 25, 2007.

Plan Ahead

Association of Atlantic Universities (AAU) 11th Annual Teaching Showcase

Acadia University
October 20, 2007

Call for Presentations will go out in early summer.

An email notification of the Call will be sent to all full and part-time faculty and professional librarians from the Center for Academic and Instructional Development (CAID).

Quality of Teaching Committee Travel Grants

Faculty planning to submit an application to the Quality of Teaching Committee for a Small Project /Travel Grant are asked to note changes for the 2007/08 fiscal year.

Information and application forms are available at http://www.smu.ca/administration/caid/dev_grants.html

What Are We Really Teaching? Or How the Duplicitous Tyranny of Content Quashes Student Learning

Eileen M. Herteis, Director

Purdy Crawford Teaching Centre, Mount Allison University

Tuesday, May 1, 2007

1:30 – 3:30 pm

SB260

The course description says Introduction to Psychology (or Shakespeare, or Political Theory), but what are we really teaching? This interactive session will examine content from two perspectives: what it is and why we try to cover so much of it!

First—whether we realize it or not—we are often teaching and assessing much more than discipline-specific material. A vast “hidden curriculum” lies beneath the surface: material which students are expected to know, but which they are never explicitly taught. Second, the tendency to shoe-horn more and more content into already super-saturated classes results in a race against the university

Join us as we welcome Eileen Herteis back to Saint Mary's University for this interactive workshop.

*Please register by contacting CAID:
420-5088, caid@smu.ca*

Registration deadline Thursday, April 26, 2007



Eileen M. Herteis, Director
Purdy Crawford Teaching Centre
Mount Allison University

11th Dalhousie Conference on University Teaching and Learning

May 2 & 3, 2007

*Engaging Students as Thinkers
and Writers In Every Discipline*

Pre Conference Workshop, May 1, 2007

The Process of Designing Explicit Instruction
for Critical Thinking

Geraldine Van Gyn, University of Victoria

For further information on the conference theme, pre-conference workshop and keynote speakers, visit the Dalhousie website:
<http://learningandteaching.dal.ca/dcutl/>

Plan now to attend.

Registration information will be sent to Saint Mary's faculty in early April.

calendar and consumes any time for our students to acquire and practice inquiry or critical thinking skills. It serves mainly to teach them bad study habits. Can our students really learn more if we *cover* less?

This session will explore what we mean by *content*, excavate the *hidden curriculum*, and engage participants in reflection and discussion about their teaching goals, their students' learning objectives, and the intersection between the two.

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