

# New Learning Strategies for Generation X

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## New Learning Strategies for Generation X

Generation X workers resent the labels that have been used to describe them: slackers, arrogant, disloyal, having short attention spans. In fact, these descriptions are less likely to reflect the behaviors of individuals in Generation X than the perceptions of managers who are not attuned to new ways of [learning](#). This Digest investigates ways in which the learning characteristics of the young adults classified as [Generation X](#) reflect the need for the new teaching and learning strategies promoted by cognitive scientists, such as learning in context, cooperative learning, and real-world application of knowledge.

## The Life Experience Gap

The gap between [Generation X](#) and earlier generations represents much more than age and technological differences. It reflects the effects of a changing society on a generation. Young adults born between 1961 and 1981 have radically different life experiences than those in generations before them.

In their youth, many Generation Xers were "latchkey kids"--children who saw both of their

parents working and/or furthering their education. Many of them were raised in single parent homes, the children of divorced parents. They grew up with "fast" food; "remote control" entertainment; and "quick response" devices such as automatic teller machines and microwave ovens, all of which provided instant gratification.

As young adults, Generation Xers find themselves facing limited economic prospects and a society different from any preceding them. The previous generation saw rapid economic growth and expanding opportunities. Generation Xers see corporate downsizing and layoffs, limited opportunities for career positions, and an economically troubled socie...

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..., p. 1. <[http://www.physics.wisc.edu/~shalizi/Generation-x\\_Articles/brinkley/](http://www.physics.wisc.edu/~shalizi/Generation-x_Articles/brinkley/)>

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