# Know Your Audience: The iGens Have Landed!

For the past 20 years, higher-education instructors have grown accustomed to teaching millennials, which is now an unfortunate mindset. The bulk of today’s college students belong to the next generation, the iGens, and they differ greatly from their predecessors. As a result, higher ed instructors as good communicators need to know their audience and create a new pedagogy.

According to Twenge (2017), iGens were “Born in 1995 and later, they grew up with cell phones, had an Instagram page before they started high school, and do not remember a time before the Internet” (p. 2). They check their phones more than 80 times a day—which means in your one-hour class, their full attention is diverted at least five times—and they spend less time on their homework than the previous generation. Twenge importantly notes, “iGen’ers academic skills lag behind their Millennial predecessors’ by significant margins” (p. 63).

Specifically, Twenge details some other educational traits of the iGens:

* They “are more hesitant to talk in class and to ask questions.”
* They are fine with lectures if the information is going to be on the test.
* “They like discussion but don’t want it to take too much time from learning the material.”
* Used to watching three-minute videos, they have short attention spans and might fall asleep without an in-class video.
* They don’t like to read books or magazines.
* They cannot judge the content of what they read—i.e., they lack critical thinking (pp. 307-308).

Twenge’s book and other like Larry Rosen’s *Rewired* (2010) and Nicholas Carr’s *The Shallows* (2010) paint a similar portrait of our current audience. What matters the most is the need for college instructors to gain insight into this new generation and adjust their pedagogies accordingly.

**References**

Carr, N. (2010). *The Shallows*. New York, NY: W. W. Norton.

Rosen, L. (2010).  *Rewired*. New York, NY: Palgrave MacMillan.

Twenge, J. (2017).  *iGen*. New York, New York: Atria Books.

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