

Unlocking The Mystery Of Gen Z Engagement In The Office & Classroom

Gina Castleberry
Head of School



What I Do When I'm Not At A Conference: Ancora High School



Engine for Success

Accredited online, asynchronous, open entry/open exit high school completion program for adults who completed at least 9th grade



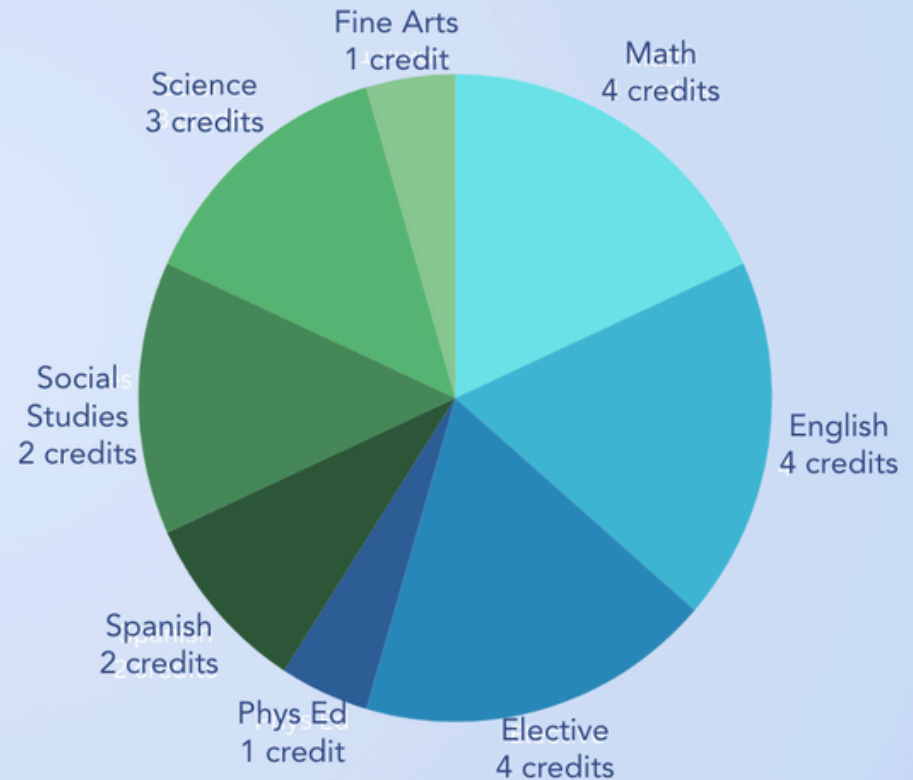
Technology Enabled

Canvas learning management system, McGraw Hill courses, automation, and passionate course coaches maintain the high quality of instruction and student experience.



Partnerships

As a non-profit organization, we do not create large marketing campaigns. We rely on partnerships with organizations who refer students to us.



“We are pleased and very enthusiastic to establish this new pathway for Ancora’s students to easily continue to grow and build a skillset that can lead to personal and career success,” said Chris Motz, chief partnerships officer at UMGC



UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND
GLOBAL CAMPUS

ANCORA
HIGH SCHOOL



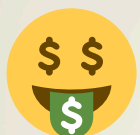
Presentation Overview

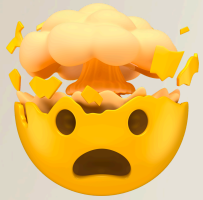
- ✨ Debunk 5 common Gen Z myths
- ✨ Understand their real strengths
- ✨ Learn collaboration strategies
- ✨ Prompt discussions

Audience Participation

 Prompt:

 What years were Gen Z born?

 What percent of the workforce will be Gen Z by 2030?



Who is Generation Z?

- Born after 1996
- Projected to make up ~30% of U.S. workforce by 2030 (~50 million workers)
 - 51% of working Gen Z live paycheck-to-paycheck
- Most racially and ethnically diverse generation yet

Audience Participation

 Prompt:

 What does 'hard worker' mean to your generation?

How Generations Define “Hard Work”

Long hours + loyalty

Value face-to-face interaction, lifetime employment, and dedication as personal identity¹.



Baby
Boomers
1946-
1964



Millennials
1981-1996

Passion + hustle + impact

Work long hours if inspired by purpose, flexible schedules, and meaningful outcomes³.



Generation
X
1965-1980



Generation
Z
1946-1964

Self-reliance + adaptability

Navigate shifting economies balancing independence and commitment².

Intentional, balanced, pragmatic

Reject “pointless work,” demand flexibility, and tie hard work to personal goals and well-being⁴.

1. Rezi.ai (2023), Generations in the Workforce – <https://www.rezi.ai/posts/gen-z-work-ethic>

2. Wikipedia, Generations in the workforce – https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Generations_in_the_workforce

3. Center for Creative Leadership, Truths About Millennials – <https://www.ccl.org/articles/leading-effectively-articles/truths-about-millennials-in-the-workplace>

4. Deloitte, 2024 Gen Z and Millennial Survey – <https://www.deloitte.com/global/en/issues/work/genz-millennial-survey.html>

Myth 1: Gen Z is Lazy and Entitled

✓ Truth: Ambitious, entrepreneurial, often overextended

📊 43% have side hustles

🧠 Takeaways:

- Value ownership, not micromanagement
- Offer real-impact projects
- Provide consistent feedback and recognition

🎉 Fun Facts: Many run TikTok side businesses and 80%+ engage in experiential learning

Myth 2: They Have No Attention Span

 Truth: Selective, not inattentive



 8-second span myth debunked (BBC)

 Takeaways:

- Use visuals and clarity
- Break tasks down
- Leverage interactive tools

 Fun Fact: Will binge 3-hr podcasts

Myth 3: Tech-Obsessed But Tech-Illiterate

✓ Truth: Digitally fluent and self-taught

📊 Tools: Canva, Notion, Figma

🧠 Takeaways:

- Let them lead tech how-tos
- Be open to new tools
- Encourage experimentation

🎉 Fun Fact: They learn AI prompts on Discord

Myth 4: Too Sensitive or 'Woke'

✓ Truth: Prioritize mental health, inclusion, values

📊 75% left jobs for misaligned values



Takeaways:

- Transparency on values
- Respect identity and openness
- Normalize wellness support



Fun Fact: Therapy is as normal as sports for Zs

Myth 5: They Don't Want a 9-to-5

✓ Truth: Want structure + flexibility + meaning



Value stability but expect boundaries
(McKinsey)



Takeaways:

- Set clear outcomes
- Respect healthy work-life integration
- Offer autonomy



Fun Fact: Made 'quiet quitting' a global convo

Audience Participation

 Prompt:



Have you implemented or observed any practices that have improved Gen Z experiences in the classroom or workplace?
-or-



Have you observed practices that have discouraged Gen Z and created friction?



Manager Action Plan Checklist

Update onboarding with modern tools



Utilize experiential learning and mentorship, enabling growth



Seek cross-generational feedback



Implement frequent communication, development check-ins



Set blackout dates if needed, but don't frown on use of vacation time



Prioritize competitive compensation + benefits: healthcare, 401(k), paid leave.



Offer flexible work (especially hybrid)



Celebrate Gen Z wins (even nontraditional)



Let Gen Z voices shape inclusive culture; co-lead innovation/DEI projects or ERGs



Outline career and salary progression opportunities



Don't text during off hours and definitely don't call



Don't micromanage





Thank you!

Shares?
Questions?



Contact: Gina.Castleberry@Ancora.com



(931) 802-0190



References & Resources

BBC: <https://bit.ly/genz-attention>

Canva: <https://bit.ly/genz-canva>

Deloitte: <https://bit.ly/genz-deloitte>

Google DEI: <https://diversity.google/annual-report/>

McKinsey: <https://bit.ly/genz-workplace>

NACE: <https://www.naceweb.org/talent-acquisition/student-attitudes/generation-z-in-the-workplace>