New Possibilities in Higher Education at the Nexus of Generational Change and Technological Innovation

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One thing is certain in life and that is change, something we all experience in big and little ways every day of our lives. We all emerged as newborns into families of varying sorts, progressed through a multitude of childhoods, and finally ascended to teenage years. We began renegotiating our relationship with parents who had their ideas of who we should be and how we should live, which more often than not clashed with our own emerging definition of ourselves in the world. Younger generations have struggled with older generations for possibly as long as human history, with each new generation challenging the norms, perspectives, and expectations of their predecessors in light of the latest social, environmental and technological changes that emerged. Game-changing innovations have shaped and influenced the context of social evolution as well as cultural revolution. With these generational differences nuanced by ever evolving technological innovations, how can we in higher education best prepare to meet the needs of changing workplace and communities? How do we bridge the gaps between the older generation academics who grew up using typewriters and the younger generation student body using Facetime, social media and text messaging? Besides becoming more adept and proficient in using technology, which is one step in the right direction, we need to harness more of the vast resources available in online education to offer course work to an increasingly demanding student body who wants instant access, responsesiveness and mobility. Online education is here to stay withdemand growing each year. We in higher education need to become highly skilled and more effective in meeting students where they are; we need to teach and engage them more efficiently and effectively, especially in light of upcoming innovations in artificial intelligence, on-demand access to information, and the internet of things arising out of big data analytics. It behooves us to stay relevant in higher education as forces impact how people learn today and tomorrow.