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## 3 big ways today's college students are different from just a decade ago

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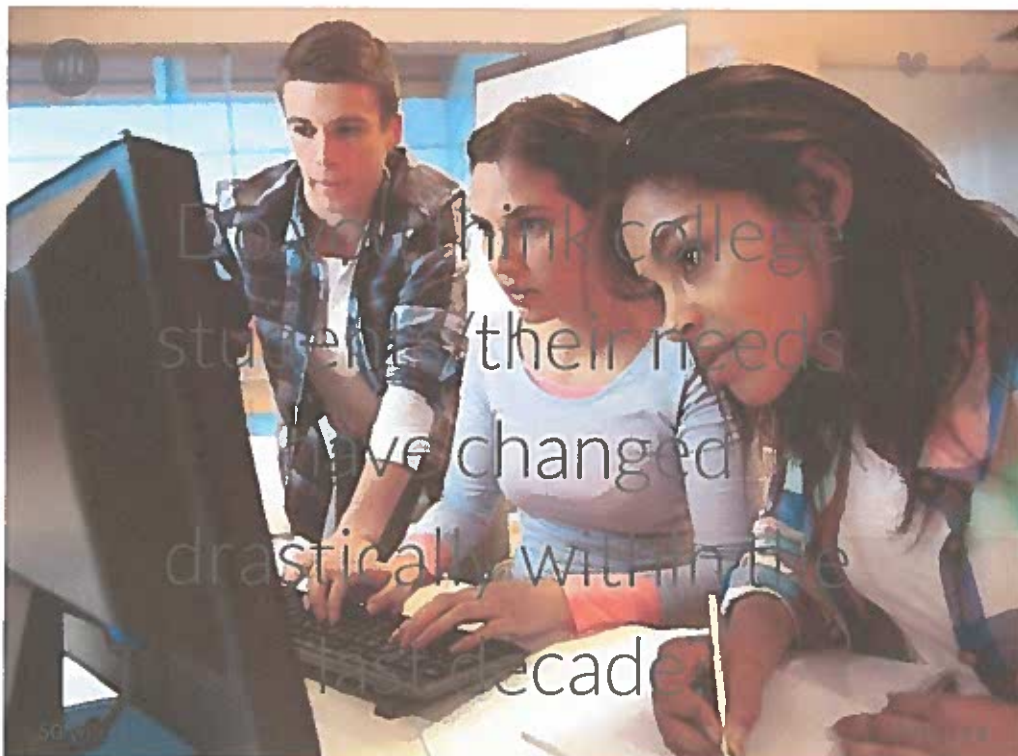
Gen Z, the digital generation, non-traditional students, and potentially many more descriptions have been used to label the current postsecondary body of students, but what may not be so evident is exactly how much their preferences, lifestyles and experiences have radically changed from even a decade ago.

And it's these large changes that are critical for colleges and universities not just to take notice of now, but also to anticipate what students and their needs may look like in 2027.

### 1. The "Traditional" 4-Year Experience is Rare for Most

According to adaptive course solutions provider [Knewton](#)<sup>[1]</sup>'s survey of users and clients, "college today only vaguely resembles what it looked like 20, 10, or even five years ago...serving a more diverse student population than ever before," and the skills being taught are for jobs that never before existed.

First time college-goers are on the rise, in part, because a high school diploma no longer cuts it in today's knowledge-based economy.



An [infographic by Knewton](#) <sup>[2]</sup> notes that 20 million students attend American colleges each year, and of these students:

1 in 5 is at least 30 years old

2 in 5 attend 2-year community colleges

36 percent of community college students are 1<sup>st</sup>-generation college-goers

And with the cost of college—combined with this more economically-diverse student body—more and more students are attending part time (37 percent) so they can balance work and school.

Also, with an increase in students attending college, more are entering higher education at varied levels. According to Knewton:

In 1 year, over half a million families have to pay \$1.5 billion and borrow over \$380 million for remedial coursework

The dropout risk for 4-year-degree-seeking students who need remediation is 74 percent worse than non-remedial students

Only 60 percent of student who start a 4-year college graduate within 6 years

2/3 of adults who return to college after a year away don't graduate

2 in 3 students have loan defaults that are for \$10K or less

***(Next page: New challenges; new ways college students are learning)***

## **2. Common Challenges Occur Due to Too Much of Everything**

Sales and service training provider the [Miller Heiman Group](#) <sup>[3]</sup> released another [infographic](#) <sup>[4]</sup> discussing how the common challenges faced by students today center on having too much stimuli and not enough time to connect and collaborate.

According to the Group's research, the five most common challenges faced by today's students are:

1) *Keeping up with changes in technology*: Tech has made change a constant, and that makes learning more difficult for students who deal with institutions' outdated tech or limited flexibility of when and how they can use it.

2) *Dealing with information overload*: With so much information always available, learners are becoming overwhelmed and have trouble both retaining information long-term, as well as sorting through relevant information.

3) *Not enough time*: With packed schedules and jobs, today's student doesn't have time to invest in what doesn't pay off. Learning has to have tangible ROI.

4) *No interaction or collaboration*: Outside of personal social media habits, today's learners often feel as though they are learning in a silo, with no connections to the real-world.

5) *Content doesn't align*: Today's learners often report struggling with recognizing how the course content aligns to their future careers.

### **3. Online Learning Influences Most Learning**

According to Knewton, online learning is having a big impact on traditional learning, thanks to non-traditional student needs and time-management challenges. For example, 4.7 million American undergrads were taking at least 1 course online in the fall of 2013, which is more than 1 in 4 undergrads; and 25 percent of students have used open educational resources.

Technology and learning solutions company Exult <sup>[5]</sup> recently released data <sup>[6]</sup> that further narrows down the online learning trends that are dominating learning in 2017.

According to Exult, the 6 key trends with the most impact include:

1) App-based Learning <sup>[7]</sup>: Learning apps are emerging as a preferred mode, given that they support offline viewing of content and can be accessed on-the-go. With the growing urge of using mobile devices and the need for learning anywhere anytime, learning apps are gaining a lot of traction.

2) Microlearning <sup>[8]</sup>: The increasing need for just-in-time learning and dwindling attention spans is giving microlearning popularity. Smaller chunks and more focused approach help learners to yield the takeaways effectively. 60 percent of the companies polled by Exult are willing to consider microlearning for employee training and development.

3) Learning Videos <sup>[9]</sup>: 2017 is the year of videos and interactive videos. According to a CICSO report, by 2019, 80 percent of global internet traffic will be video. While videos engage

learners effectively, interactivity adds a lot more value to the learning. Forrester Research states that employees are 75 percent more likely to watch a video than read documents, emails or web articles.

4) Mobile Learning <sup>[10]</sup>: Immediate availability of knowledge in the moment is the biggest cutting edge factor of m-learning. By 2020, mobile learning is estimated to be a \$70 billion global industry.

5) Gamification <sup>[11]</sup>: Gamification can not only make learning engaging and motivating, it can give learners a realistic experience. It is predicted to grow \$11.10 billion by 2020, at a CAGR of 46.3 percent, notes Exult.

6) Virtual Reality and Augmented Reality <sup>[12]</sup>: Recent research cited by Exult states that 95 percent of respondents think VR as being useful for enhancing training. VR and AR can offer an immersive learning experience and a collaborative platform for learners and teachers. AR/VR could hit \$150 billion revenue by 2020, with AR taking the maximum share of around \$120 billion and VR at \$30 billion.

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URLs in this post:

[1] Knewton: <https://www.knewton.com/>

[2] infographic by Knewton: <http://elearninginfographics.com/college-today-infographic/>

[3] Miller Heiman Group: <https://www.millerheimangroup.com/>

[4] infographic: <https://www.millerheimangroup.com/learner-ready/five-not-little-challenges-learners-face-today/>

[5] Exult: <https://www.exultcorp.com/>

[6] released data: <https://www.exultcorp.com/e-learning-trends-2017/>

[7] App-based Learning: <https://elearningindustry.com/subjects/free-elearning-resources/elearning-apps>

[8] Microlearning: <https://elearningindustry.com/tags/micro-learning>

[9] Learning Videos: <https://elearningindustry.com/tags/video-in-elearning>

[10] Mobile Learning: <https://elearningindustry.com/subjects/elearning-concepts/mobile-learning-mlearning>

[11] Gamification: <https://elearningindustry.com/tags/enterprise-gamification>

[12] Virtual Reality and Augmented Reality: <https://elearningindustry.com/tags/virtual-reality>