



Passing the Vibe Check: Keeping Up with Gen Z and Alpha Students



Melody Morrison, M.M., NCTM

2022 MTNA Collegiate Chapters Symposium

Generation Z (1995-2009)

Demographics
Born during the “Dot.com Boom”
Majority heavily use Smartphones
Most diverse generation in history
Very educationally focused
Ambitious
Open to change
Responsive to visual forms of learning
Known for their many phrases and “Gen Z lingo”

Lesson Ideas
Introduce music of other countries
Introduce music of underrepresented composers
Assign supplemental research projects
Integrate YouTube and TikTok
Use Gen Z lingo

Additional Reading on Gen Z:

[Generation Z Goes to College](#) by Cory Seemiller and Meghan Grace (Book)

[The Generation Z Guide: The Complete Manual to Understand, Recruit, and Lead The Next Generation](#) by Ryan Jenkins (Book)

[They’re Coming: Rethinking Training and Development for Generation Z](#) (Blog Post)

[How Generation Z Students Are Learning](#) (Blog Post)

Generation Alpha (2010-2025)

Demographics
Called the “global experiment”
Technology considered extension of oneself
Live in world of constant cognitive stimulation
Very educationally focused
Individualistic
Used to highly personalized learning
Bonds with other Gen Alphas through popular games, shows and apps

Lesson Ideas
Nurture Gen Alpha students’ specific interests
Integrate app usage into lessons and assignments
Make lesson assignments/objectives very clear
Integrate important things from Gen Alphas’ lives

Additional Reading on Gen Alpha:

[Generation Alpha](#) by Mark McCrindle (Book)

[Understanding Generation Alpha](#) (Blog Post)

[Is Your School Generation Alpha Ready? How To Prepare?](#) (Blog Post)

YouTube Channels

Fun	Educational
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Piano Guys (Any age) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Piano/cello arrangements of pop songs ➤ Seth Everman (Ages 8+) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Piano humor and fun use of keyboard sounds ➤ Peter Bence (Any age) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Virtuoso piano arrangements of pop songs ➤ Kurt Hugo Schneider (Any age) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pop song mashups and arrangements • Creative song arrangements using household items ➤ Grantwoolard (Any age) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classical music mashups ➤ Jacob Collier (Ages 8+) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GRAMMY-award winning artist who uses extreme reharmonization and close harmonies ➤ Daniel Thrasher (Ages 10+) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Piano-based humor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Prodigies Music Lessons (Ages 0-7) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colorful lessons about solfege and rhythm geared toward kids ➤ Hoffman Academy (various levels) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Music Theory and analysis (piano centered) • General piano instruction • Repertoire study • Ear training and dictation • Improvisation and Composition ➤ Kennis Russel (Ages 8+) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Music theory • Backing tracks for improvisation ➤ Piano Pig (Ages 12+) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chords • Improvisation tools ➤ Visual Musical Minds (Ages 0-7) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clapping songs/off the keyboard exercises ➤ Music Education for All (Ages 8+) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rhythm tutorials and exercises • Harmony and scales ➤ Music Matters (Ages 8+) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Huge variety of music theory topics ➤ Adam Neely (Ages 12+) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Video essays on new horizons in music and music theory

TikTok Profiles

Fun

- **Kirstenoboe**
 - General music humor
- **Jimm3rz**
 - Music education humor
- **Annelammusic**
 - Piano humor
- **Musicmancino**
 - Piano humor
- **Jadonarmon**
 - Classical piano humor
- **Jenanemusic**
 - Band/Choir humor
- **Halfdiminishedseventh**
 - Music major humor
- **Dredimura**
 - Guitar humor

Educational

- **Itspiano.time**
 - Piano ear training
- **Ellalgrace**
 - Music theory education
- **Petercgray**
 - Piano practice and song arranging tips
- **Musictheoryforidiots**
 - Music theory education
- **Learnmusictheory**
 - Music theory education
- **Tiktokmusictheory**
 - Music theory/composition education
- **Mikegeorge360**
 - Music theory/composition education
- **Songpsych**
 - Pop song genre history
- **Violadagoomba**
 - Baroque music education/humor
- **Piano inspires**
 - Composer/piano education

Generation Z Communication Guide

Term	Definition	Example
Basic	A term to describe someone or something who is unoriginal and too mainstream	“Using only I and V chords is basic”
Bop	A great song or beat	“Beethoven’s <i>Hammerklavier</i> sonata is a bop”
No Cap	No lie, no exaggeration	“You should practice 1 hour a day this week, no cap”
CEO	When someone is the “CEO” or something it means they are extremely good at it	“Debussy was the CEO of non-functional harmonies”
Glow Up	To go through a major positive change, physically or mentally	“Wow, this piece really had a glow up in the past week!”
High-key	(Opposite of low-key) “very” or “really” – used when you want to emphasize something	“These octaves are high-key intense”
Hits Different	When something stands out from the rest or makes you feel different compared to other things	“Rachmaninoff’s second piano concerto hits different”
Slaps	A verb used to describe how great something is	“Grieg’s <i>Piano Concerto in A Minor</i> slaps”
Sus	Short for “suspicious” – used when something doesn’t seem right or normal	“That passage was a little sus this time, let’s try that again”
TBH	Abbreviation for “To be honest”	“TBH, this piece will be a lot of work”
Vibe	The mood or state of something	“Most people like the vibe of Satie’s <i>Gymnopedie</i> ”

