

GROWTH AND MINDSET FOR A GENERATION AS A PROFESSION

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Growth defined. As a newer professor, my goal was to attend the 2018 LWI Biennial Conference and gather tools to help foster my personal growth as a professor. This conference not only helped in that area, but it also provided concrete tools to enhance my student's learning environment with lessons and rubrics that are geared toward mindset growth.

Two sessions in particular were transformative for me, and I have carried them with me since the conclusion of the LWI conference. The sessions entitled "Generation Z Goes to College"¹ and "How to Use Learning Outcomes and Assessments to Foster Growth Mindsets in Your Legal Writing Course"² were both exhilarating and resonated for separate reasons that formed a conduit circuit for a lightbulb moment.

The "Generation Z" session by Dr. Corey Seemiller explored and highlighted how the effects of societal changes have shaped and molded a new generation of students that are a pendulum swing away from the millennial generation. For example, members of Generation Z are more likely to want co-pilots as parents and to be more guarded about decision making. However, what stood out to me the most about Generation Z was the notion that these students want an approval relationship with professors and staff. The notion that familial relationships are now of transcendent importance within the academy is novel, in that students want to embrace us in their

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¹ Dr. Corey Seemiller, Plenary Session, LWI Biennial Conference, Milwaukee, Wisconsin (July 12, 2018).

² Carrie Sperling & Trina Tinglum, How to Use Learning Outcomes and Assessments to Foster Growth Mindsets in Your Legal Writing Course, LWI Biennial Conference, Milwaukee, Wisconsin (July 13, 2018).

learning and in their feedback. During the presentation, I instantly recalled three examples in which my students had received lower grades than expected and immediately pleaded for me not to judge them based on this one isolated body of work and not to be disappointed in them. The term “disappointed” was jarring at the time, because it implied a personal connection. The presentation clarified that, in addition to the critique of their body of work, members of Generation Z are also looking for personal affirmation. It was an a-ha moment.

This notion of in-depth feedback leads me to the second transformative session, entitled “How to Use Learning Outcomes and Assessments to Foster Growth Mindsets in Your Legal Writing Course,” by Trina Tinglum and Carrie Sperling. My goal in providing feedback has always been to enhance the students’ ability to reach their maximum personal legal writing abilities through concrete course objectives. However, after the conference, I would like to research how the mindset of faculty demonstrates itself through instruction and interaction with students. Can we look at our syllabus and use it as a tool to foster an environment that enhances the objectives of students for enriched personal relationships and still maintain the requisite professional decorum? Can we use online and social media platforms within the normal lecture structure and still foster a growth mindset that is beneficial for both the student and professor? I do not have the answers, but I am looking forward to researching and implementing strategies to engage the next generation and help to foster a stronger mindset in my incoming class.