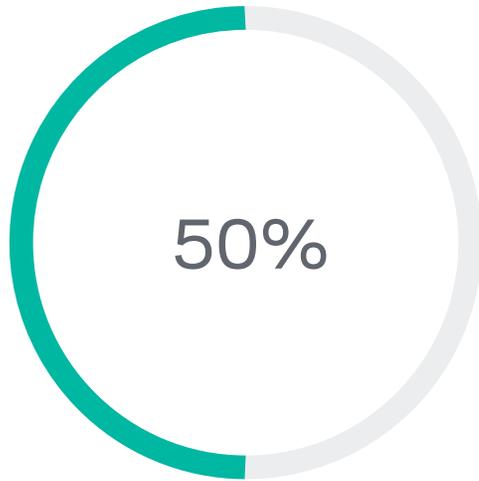


# Staying Flexible:

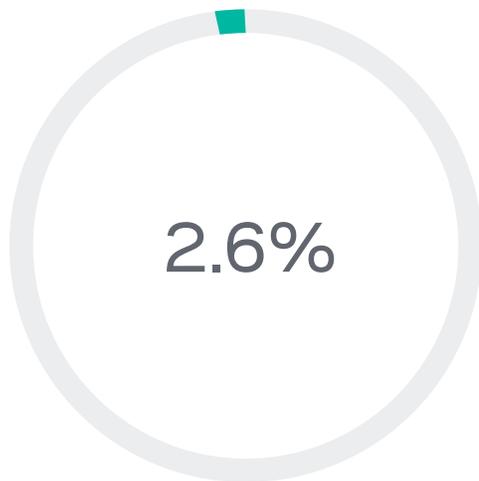
3 Tips for Creating an Online  
Learning Program for Gen C

In 2013, over 7.1 million college students enrolled in an online course,

contributing to the steady 260 percent increase in online enrollment over the last decade. As the current and future student populations -- made up of Millennials and Gen Zs, a generation collectively now referred to as Generation C -- become even more digitally reliant, we'll see more students flock in record breaking numbers to more flexible learning environments.



Nearly half of all college students will be enrolled in an online course by 2020



Only 2.6 percent of higher education institutions currently offer a MOOC

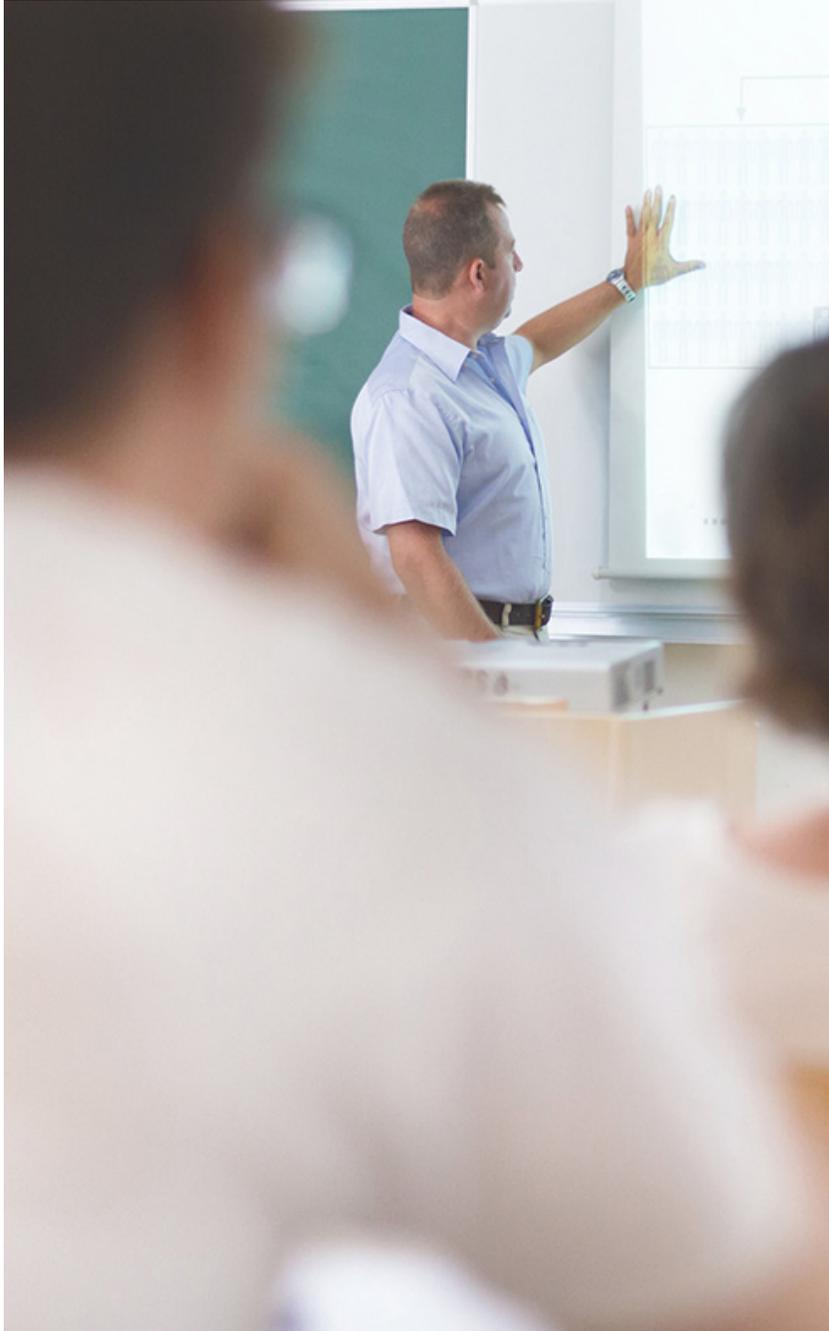
What's contributing to this growth? "Flex-classes," a preferred learning style among Gen Cs that offers "flex-attendance" options to join classes "in-person" or "online" throughout the duration of a course. This allows students to more efficiently and affordably learn anytime, anywhere. In fact, if the current enrollment growth rate continues, nearly half of all college students will be enrolled in a flexible online learning course by 2020.

Based on a cross-generational commonality to stay digitally connected and plugged into mobile devices, these two generations expect more accessible, technology-forward learning environments that give them the flexibility, mobility and freedom to learn when and where they want.

However, Gen C's demand for more flexible online learning options is not currently being met by higher education institutions. A Babson Survey Research Group study in 2013 shows that only 2.6 percent of higher education institutions currently offer a Massive Online Open Course (MOOC), and 55 percent of institutions are still undecided about offering online courses.

## While some educators are resistant to implementing flex-class options,

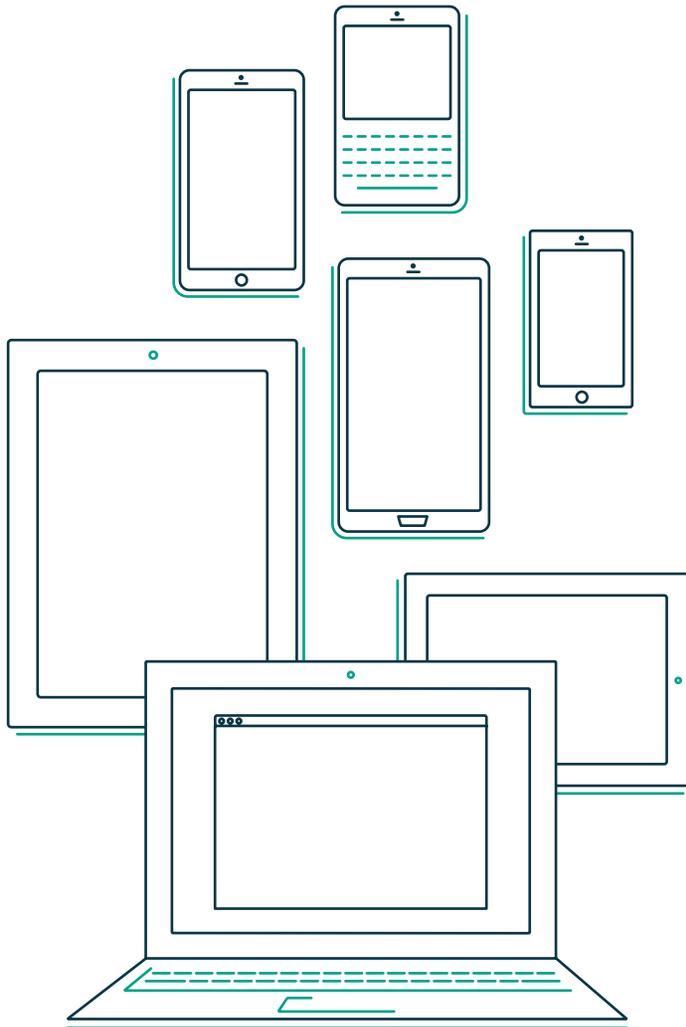
these programs offer higher education institutions an opportunity to reach more students and boost enrollment. Not only do online flex-classes help stimulate enrollment growth, they also create a more personalized, self-directed learning experience for Gen C students.



Fostering student-directed learning and discipline-centered skills—like creating searchable notes, performing real time research, peer-to-peer feedback, social network collaboration and more—are both crucial to increasing student engagement, according to the Center for Research on Learning and Teaching. Empowering students to make personalized learning choices in the classroom motivates them to take charge of their success early on, and allows educators to tailor learning tracks to keep pace with students who are ahead of the learning curve or have specific challenges that require additional guidance. Furthermore, online learning options allow Gen C students to manage their learning much like they would a job—honing time management skills to complete high priority work on time, working remotely when needed, connecting in peer discussions to deliver projects, etc.

With numerous institutional and student benefits associated with flex learning, the time is ripe for educators to build online learning options into current programs. So how can educators find the right tools and develop the right strategy to implement flex learning options? Here are three tips to keep in mind to jumpstart your online learning program.

# Make it Mobile

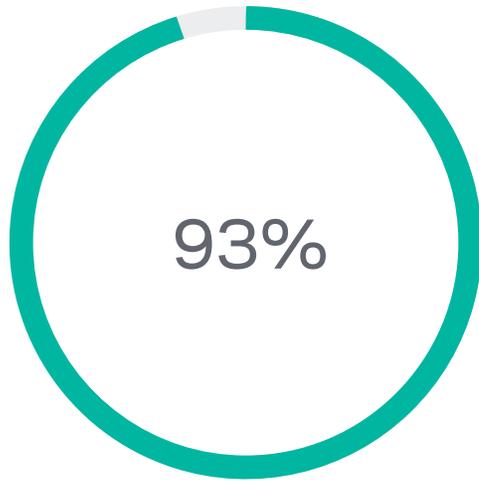


Today's college student owns an average of seven tech devices, spends nearly four hours a day using a smartphone and multitasks across at least five computer and mobile screens daily. Since today's student is accustomed to accessing information at the stroke of a mobile keyboard—anywhere, anytime—it's only natural that he or she leverage personal mobile devices to be more efficient with day-to-day tasks and streamline learning processes.

Mobile learning provides untethered access to learning and enhances productivity, engagement and efficiency in competing various tasks, according to students polled from a 2010 Speak Up report. The report also referenced students' support for using mobile devices to collaborate with peers, describing the instructional techniques most helpful in learning math as "discussing how to solve a problem with my classmates" and "helping other students with their math problems."

Online learning communities that foster student collaboration through mobile networking applications, especially those with video conferencing capabilities, allow students to learn and collaborate in a way that's most native to their personal socialization habits.

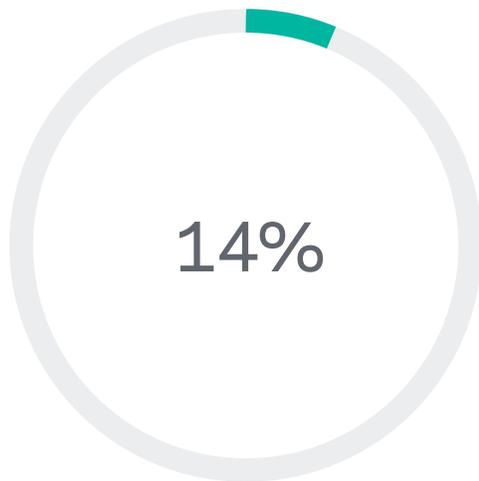
# Use Video



93% of Gen C visits YouTube at least once a week

Equally important to incorporating mobile devices into an online learning program is understanding how Gen C interacts with those devices. This generation has different online habits than previous generations, consuming video content like none other, with 93 percent visiting YouTube at least once a week and 14 percent using video at least once a day.

Incorporating video, especially live video conferencing, into online learning programs is not only the best way to hold this generation's attention, it is also an easy way to keep some important elements of the traditional classroom alive, like face-to-face interaction with peers or educators.



14% of Gen C uses video at least once a day

# Start with Snow Days

With the right tools and strategy in place, there's never a wrong time to introduce flex-learning options.

For educators looking to test the waters, start by implementing flex-classes to thwart the learning delays associated with bad weather. One of the biggest weather deterrents that disrupts student attendance and educators' lesson plans is snow days, and thanks to virtual flex-class options, snow day disruptions may be coming to an end for good.



Schools around the country have been implementing flex-class options to allow students the option to join classes online on days they can't make it to school, instead of making up the lost days at another time and often dipping deep into summer vacations. Students can tune in to their classrooms via mobile device or tablet to complete their learning initiatives for the day. The snow day approach is a realistic option for institutions looking to test the effectiveness of flex-class implementation.

Overall, the digitally native Generation C students are the agents driving flexible learning curriculum changes in higher education. As these students expect technology that allows them to study on-the-go and assume they will work remotely in their future careers, it will become imperative for educators and institutions to introduce these learning and working environments at the higher education level.

# about newrow\_

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