



Summary of What the Research Says About Academic Achievement & Generation Y

The Generation Y model started in the Olympia School District in Washington State in October of 1996 as a 5-year U.S. Department of Education Technology Innovation Challenge Grant. Extensive external evaluation was required and the Northwest Regional Education Laboratory (NWREL) provided the bulk of assessment tasks. In addition, the U.S. government established an Expert Panel on Educational Technology to evaluate 134 promising models of educational technology to see if improved learning occurred. After two years of intense evaluation only Generation Y and one other model met all the Panel's stringent criteria for an effective technology model for K-12 schools. This report is a summary of those two major studies. Complete results can be found at

<http://www.genyes.org/products/geny/genyresearch>

Seven years of data collected by the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (NWREL) from the nationwide Gen Y project indicate that the program is an effective alternative for schools wishing to integrate technology into their regular curriculum and increase their use of project-based, student-centered learning practices. The model provides individualized support for educators who wish to increase their use of technology without becoming distracted from the essence of their jobs -- building and delivering effective curriculum units and lesson plans.

More than 10,000 teachers have received technology integration support from trained Gen Y students. Surveys done on these thousands of teachers reveal that they had overwhelmingly positive responses to the Gen Y program and believed it had an impact on the way they would teach in the future.

- 89% agreed that as a consequence of Gen Y, their students learned content better
- 97% would like to work with another Gen Y student next year
- 98% reported that as a consequence of Gen Y, they would continue rebuilding their lessons to make more use of technology
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- 82% reported that the Gen Y experience would change the way they teach in the future.

Another NWREL study compared students' standardized mathematics and language arts test results of those students who had taken the Gen Y class with those students who had not over a three period after the Gen Y students participated in the program. The following two charts summarize the data taken over a three-year period.

These tests were based on Washington state standardized tests given to these students as part of the normal events during the year. (Gen Y students = 44, non-Gen Y = 328)

- Over the three years, Math scores of Gen Y students increased 22.7% compared to average increases of 11.1% for non-Gen Y students.

- Language arts scores of Gen Y students increased 6.8% compared to average increases of 5.6% for non-Gen Y students.
- Math score achievement for Gen Y students was significantly better [$p < .01$.], with less than a 1% chance that this difference could have occurred by chance.

The U.S. Expert Panel on Educational Technology (20 expert evaluators) concluded,

“The evaluation documents substantial learning gains on the part of participating students. The reviewers were impressed by the creativity of the project, creating a role reversal in which students help support the school’s technology infrastructure and partner with teachers in curriculum development. The latter is crucial to the success of the project and to fostering learning gains for all students in participating districts. While a few projects have taken similar approaches, this particular implementation is better conceived, more thoroughly implemented, and more carefully documented than other comparable programs.”

Other conclusions made by the Expert Panel included:

- “The program goals and designs are convincingly supported by research”
- “There is compelling demonstration that the program develops complex learning and thinking skills.”
- “There is complete and compelling demonstration that the program contributes to educational excellence for all. Gen Y was able to demonstrate that they have increased both the participation and the performance of underserved groups of learners.”
- “There is complete and compelling demonstration that the program promotes coherent organizational change.”
- “The research design carried out by the NWREL meets high standards of quality.”
- “There is compelling demonstration that the program is adaptable for use in multiple contexts.”

These stringent criteria used by the Expert Panel closely parallel the current No Child Left Behind funding criteria. The states of Maryland, Wisconsin, Pennsylvania, Kansas, Washington, Utah, Texas, and others have provided substantial EETT funds to districts implementing Gen Y.