

Teaching Across the Generations: Challenges and Opportunities for Preceptors

Diane B. Ginsburg, M.S., R.Ph., FASHP
Clinical Professor, Assistant Dean for Student Affairs, &
Regional Director, Statewide Internship Program
The University of Texas at Austin
College of Pharmacy

Today's Agenda

- “My Generation”
- What are “Millennials?”
- Strategies for teaching across generations
- Effective communication skills
- Case studies

Learning Objectives

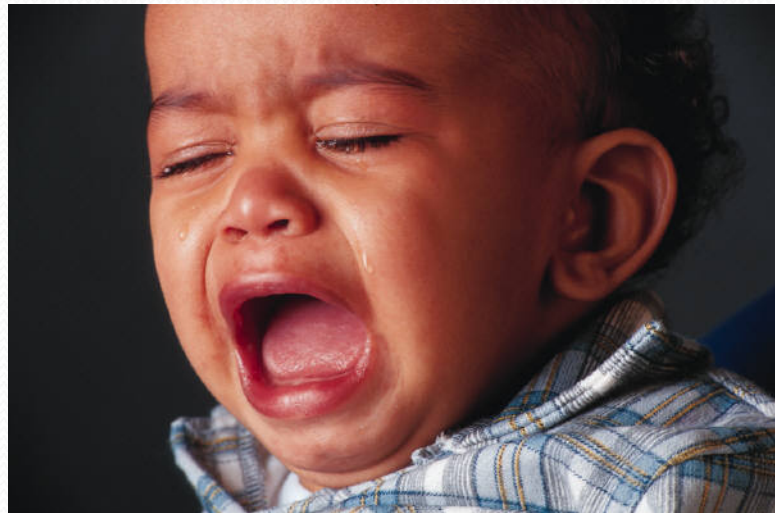
- Identify characteristics of the millennial generation
- Discuss the strategies for teaching across generations
- Develop methods for effective communication with students, residents, and peers

Self Assessment Questions

- Do millennial learners prefer subjective to objective tests?
- Technology and the digital age has made it harder for scholastic dishonesty by Millennials (true/false).
- Millennials have difficulty adapting due to the involvement of their parents (true/false).
- Peer pressure plays no role in Millennial identify development (true/false).

Some ground rules...

- Overgeneralizations will be rampant
- No judgments, just characteristics
- Ask questions, share examples, no whining 😊



Understanding Generations

- Never before has there been a workforce and workplace so diverse in race, gender, and ethnicity
- We have four (or more) generations working side-by-side in the workplace for the first time in history
- All have unique experiences and attributes which influence their attitudes towards work



Understanding Generations

- A group of people defined by age boundaries
- Those who were born during a certain era and share similar experiences growing up.
 - They have common cultural or social characteristics and attitudes.
 - Their values and attitudes, particularly about work-related topics, tend to be similar, based on their shared experiences during their formative years.

Understanding Generations

- Psychologists, sociologists, and everyday managers have identified important differences between these generations in the way they approach
 - Work
 - Work-life balance
 - Employee loyalty
 - Authority

Generational Issues

- A lack of understanding across generations can have detrimental effects on communication and working relationships and undermine effective services.
- Significant impact on student learning

Generations by Year of Birth

- The Lost Generation (1883-1900)
- The G.I Generation (1901-1924)
- The Silent Generation (1925-1942)
- The Boom Generation (1943-1960)
- Generation X (1961-1981)
- The Millennial Generation (1982-2001)
- The Homeland Generation (2001-?)

Silent Generation

- Formative Lifetime Events:
 - Great Depression, FDR's New Deal, WWII, Korean War
- Knowledge and Work Heroes
 - Jack Welch, Lee Iacocca
- Work Themes
 - Loyalty, Hierarchy, Respect for Authority, Discipline, Conformity, Boundaries, Duty, Consistency and Uniformity

Baby Boomers

- Formative Lifetime Events
 - Man on the moon, Civil Rights Movement, Martin Luther King, Jr., Women's Liberation Movement, JFK Assassination, Cuban Missile Crisis, Vietnam War, Watergate
- Knowledge and Work Heroes
 - Bill Gates, Steve Jobs
- Work Themes
 - Involvement, Workaholism, personal gratification and goal attainment, promotion of equality, redefining everything, desire to please, workarounds to meet their needs, social consciousness

Generation X

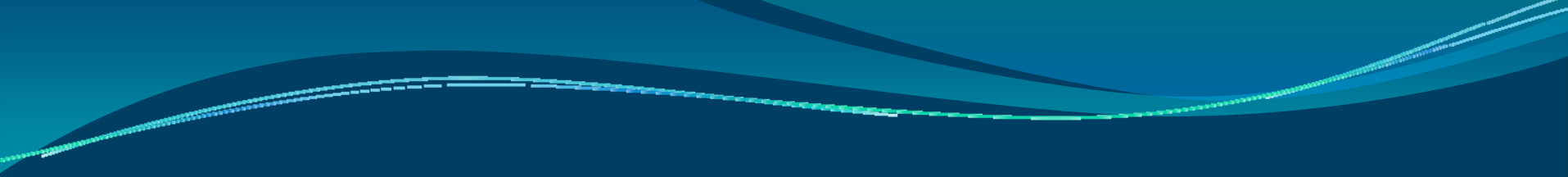
- Formative Lifetime Events
 - Energy Crisis, PC's, Computer Gaming, Reagan era, Berlin Wall falling, Challenger Disaster, Rodney King, OJ Simpson, WTC attacks
- Knowledge and Work Heroes
 - Jeff Bezos (Amazon.com), Jerry Yang and David Filo (Yahoo.com), Larry Page and Sergey Brin (Google.com), Jeff Skoll (eBay.com)
- Work Themes
 - Self-reliance, Focused on building skill portfolio, “Work to live, don't live to work”, non-traditional orientation about time and space, unimpressed by authority/hierarchy, skepticism, adventurous, tech savy

Generation Y aka “Millennials”

- Formative Lifetime Events
 - Oklahoma City Bombing, Clinton/Lewinsky scandal, Internet, Columbine, 9/11
- Knowledge and Work Heroes
 - Sean Fanning (Napster), Tom Anderson (MySpace.com)
- Work Themes
 - Re-emerging, self curious, life-long learning/intellectual curiosity, smart work/problem solving, team work, uninhibited communication, emotional literacy, holistic lifestyle, technology dependent

Valuing Generational Differences

	Silent	Boomers	Gen-Xers	Millennials
Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Loyal •Honors/Respects •Follows orders •Rewards later •Practical •Sacrifice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Loyal •Optimistic •Reasonable and dedicated •Team player •Workaholic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Adaptable to change •Techno-literate •Self-starters •Global mindset •Informal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Goal-oriented •Techno-savvy •Collaboration and achievement •Optimistic •Moral mindset •Social activism
Problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Prefers structure •Technology-challenged •Set in ways •Difficulty 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Enjoys much recognition •Elder care absences •Self-gratification 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Skeptical •Feel others owe them •Motivation •Child care absences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Requires supervision and support •Sociable



**What characteristics describe
how your generation engages
in learning environments?**

Learning Characteristics

Silent	Boomers	Gen-X
<ul style="list-style-type: none">•left-brain/logical•consistency & logic appreciated•computers are sometimes more trouble than they are worth•written materials in summary form	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•interactive•interested in problem-solving•computers can streamline inefficiencies•written materials organized for a quick scan, but also includes details	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•learn by doing•enjoy role-playing, willing to jump in and try•enhanced computer skills, make the computer do what you need it to do•Written materials with bullets, graphics, quotes

Millennial Minds...

- Soviet Union never existed
- Reality shows have always been on television
- Been able to watch wars and revolutions live
- Professional athletes have always competed in the Olympics

Core Traits of Millennials

- Special
- Sheltered
- Confident
- Team-Oriented
- Conventional
- Pressured
- Achieving

Implications for Educators

- Need constant feedback to reinforce their specialness
- High expectations of relationship with and availability of faculty
- More risk-averse than previous generations, especially intellectual risks
- Less comfortable working independently
- Expect non-stop interactions with their peers, comfortable with virtual communities
- Peer opinion is very important

Implications for Educators

- Count on adults to “walk their talk”
- Need clear instructions on what kind of help is acceptable or not in their learning experiences
- Perform tasks in which they can measure their objective progress
- Big projects or sustained engagement is really challenging
- First post stone-age generation from whom writing has never centered on a pen and paper

Your Teaching Style

How does your current style compliment/conflict with millennial traits?

Dealing with Generational Differences

Bridging Differences	Manage Differences
<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Identify Values•Assess value differences•Acknowledge implications•Change behaviors•Communicate needs•Build on commonalities•Accept differences•Tap into motivations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Set clear goals•Share a common purpose•Expect mutual accountability•Give real recognition

Communication

- Be conscious of verbal and nonverbal messages
- Communication medium is important, e.g. text, Facebook, e-mail, etc.
- “Knowledge is Power!”



Strategies for Success

- Be clear and specific with expectations
- Don't assume millennials know how to behave in professional situations
- Give guidelines on the use of technology



Cases

- Three interns are doing a rotation in your pharmacy. The intern that has been assigned to you is frequently late, arriving 20-30 minutes after the other interns. The other interns feel like your student is getting away with doing less work and are complaining to their preceptors and other staff. How would you handle this situation? What are the generational issues associated with this case?

Cases

- An intern at your site feels that their preceptor is “out to get them!” Everything he does is wrong, and he is concerned he is going to fail the rotation. You know the preceptor has very high standards and can be tough on students. The rotation did not start well for the intern; however, you know that his performance has improved. As the director of pharmacy, what would you do in this situation? What are the generational issues associated with this case?

Cases

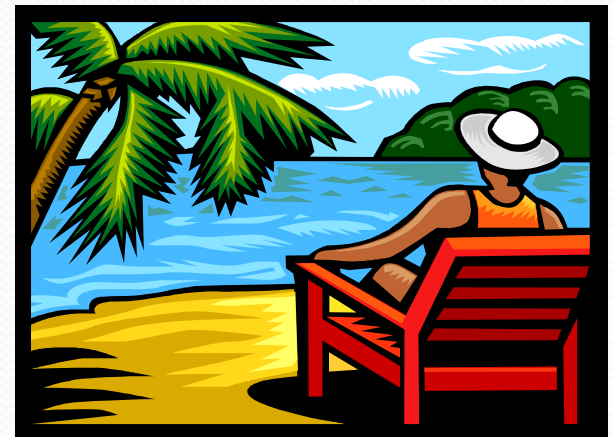
- A student on your anticoag rotation is having a difficult time handling the patient load and providing answers to basic therapeutics questions. He has documented some information incorrectly in the patient's chart. You are concerned that patient care may be compromised and he may jeopardize pharmacy's relationship with the clinic. What do you do? What are the generational issues associated with this case?

Cases

- You notice that the student in your pharmacy is frequently sitting around and only does things when she is asked. Every time you see her she is texting or updating her status on Facebook. You overheard the student saying to one of your technicians that she has no desire to practice in this type of environment, she is just “doing her time” in your pharmacy. What do you do? What are the generational issues associated with this case?

Summary

- Working with multiple generations
- Understanding is key!
- Be clear in your communications and verify understanding
- Recognize what you bring to the situation
- Relax :)



Thank you!

- dbgbox@mail.utexas.edu
- (512) 471-3631



Answers to Questions

- Millennial learners prefer subjective to objective tests. (False)
- Technology and the digital age has made it harder for scholastic dishonesty by Millennials (False).
- Millennials have difficulty adapting due to the involvement of their parents (True).
- Peer pressure plays no role in Millennial identity development (False).