The Changing Face of Healthcare: Appreciating Generational Diversity in Experiential Education

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Regis University Rueckert-Hartman College for Health Professions School of Pharmacy &
University of Colorado Skaggs School of Pharmacy & Pharmaceutical Sciences
We are the experiential teams for Regis and University of Colorado Schools of Pharmacy and we have no conflicts of interest to disclose
Objectives

• Identify characteristics, values, and behaviors of different generations

• Create inclusive working and learning environments to facilitate the educational experiences for all students

• Develop tools to communicate more effectively with those in generations other than your own
The beauty of the world lies in the mixing, managing, acceptance, and appreciation of generational differences.

~ Ty Howard
Collaborative Commitment

• To be more effective in our interpersonal interactions

• To understand and appreciate certain behaviors better

• To tailor communication techniques to deliver clear expectations

• To continue to educate ourselves in the evolution of people
So where is the challenge?
Who is involved in the challenge?

• Supervisors
• Co-workers
• Patients
• Students
Generation Defined

• A “generation” is defined as a group of people who share the same formative experiences
• Most frequently, birth year is used to define a generation as about a 20-year span
• Each generation shares a unique set of values and traits
• However, generational characteristics are not universally shared by all in that group
• Those born on the ‘cusp’ may have a blended set of characteristics

## Generations Defined

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Generation</th>
<th>Born</th>
<th>Age of adults in 2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Greatest Generation</td>
<td>Before 1928</td>
<td>88-100+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Silent Generation</td>
<td>1928-1945</td>
<td>70-87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baby Boomers</td>
<td>1946-1964</td>
<td>51-69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generation X</td>
<td>1965-1980</td>
<td>35-50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

_Pew Research Center, 2015_
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Generation</th>
<th>Seminal Events</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Silent</td>
<td>WWII, The Great Depression, The New Deal, Korean War, Rise of Labor Unions, the discovery of penicillin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baby Boomer</td>
<td>Salk Vaccine tested on pubic, Rosa Parks refuses to move to back of bus, Congress passes Civil Rights Act, birth control pills introduced, JFK elected, Martin Luther King Jr. and Robert F. Kennedy assassinated, first moon landing, Woodstock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generation X</td>
<td>Intel’s first chip invented, first email system, personal computer introduced, CDC’s first report on AIDS, Reagan assassination attempt, Challenger explosion, World Trade Center Bombing, Hurricane Katrina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Millennial</td>
<td>Rise of computers and technology, rise of social media, school violence, Desert Storm, Oklahoma City Bombings, Google, early exposure to adult issues, diversity, Ebola</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Schuman H, Rodgers W. 2004; Smola KW, 2002
## Generational characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Silent</th>
<th>Baby Boomer</th>
<th>Generation X</th>
<th>Millennial</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outlook</strong></td>
<td>Practical</td>
<td>Optimistic</td>
<td>Skeptical</td>
<td>Cautious</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Work ethic</strong></td>
<td>Dedicated</td>
<td>Driven</td>
<td>Free Agent</td>
<td>Self-Centered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>View of authority</strong></td>
<td>Respectful</td>
<td>Pay your dues</td>
<td>Competence</td>
<td>Respect must be earned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Communications</strong></td>
<td>Formal memo</td>
<td>In person</td>
<td>Email or voicemail</td>
<td>Text/Social Media (Instagram, Twitter, Facebook)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Relationships</strong></td>
<td>Self-sacrifice</td>
<td>Personal gratification</td>
<td>Reluctance to commit</td>
<td>Inclusive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Work-Life Balance</strong></td>
<td>“Don’t get it”</td>
<td>Responsible for balancing everyone else</td>
<td>Want it now</td>
<td>Flexibility and options</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Perception of feedback</strong></td>
<td>“No news is good news”</td>
<td>“Once a year, with lots of documentation”</td>
<td>“Sorry to interrupt, but how am I doing?”</td>
<td>“Whenever I want or seek it”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Zemke R, et al. 2000*
Specific generational differences

• Communication styles and expectations

• Work styles

• Attitudes about work-life balance

• Use of technology

• Views regarding loyalty and authority

• Acceptance of change
Workforce Statistics by Generation


In millions

Note: Annual averages plotted 1995-2014. For 2015 the first quarter average of 2015 is shown. Due to data limitations, Silent generation is overestimated from 2008-2015.

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Educational Trends

• Gender: By 2021, women are projected to earn 58% of bachelor’s, 62% of master’s and 51% of doctorate and professional degrees

• Information gathering: 40% of students reported that the television was their primary source of obtaining news, 34% from websites, 11% from newspapers, and 8% from radio

• Leisure: Today’s college grads have spent less than 5,000 hours of their lives reading but over 10,000 hours playing video games and over 20,000 hours watching TV

• Technology: In 1990 the student-computer ratio in the classroom was 20 to 1; in 2009, the ratio of students to computers was 5.3 to 1

• Grade inflation

NCES, 2014.
Key Medical Gender Demographics

• In 2010, a higher percentage of females than men were employed in a medical profession
• Women comprise half of the new medical school graduates
• In 2012, 74% of physicians were male, 26% were female
• In 2014, 67% were male, 33% were female
• In 2014, 12% of physicians, both male and female, opted for part-time careers, nearly half for family reasons

NCES, 2014; America’s Physicians Survey 2014
Get out of your comfort zone...

- TBL Style of Arrangement for Group Discussions
Working with Baby Boomers

Characteristics
• Largest generation
• Optimistic
• Skewed work-life balance
• Brought up in competitive environment
• Will revolutionize retirement
• “Work ethic” and “Loyalty” are synonymous

Things to consider
• Recognize their experience as a valuable asset
• Use them as mentors
• Recognize role overload and conflicting demands
• Assist with time demands
• Not comfortable with working at speed of technology

Working with Generation X

Characteristics

• Dedicated to people, projects, ideas and tasks, but not longevity and lifetime employment
• Parallel thinkers
• Independent and resourceful
• Comfortable with diversity
• Direct with feedback and requests
• Accepting of change
• “Want it now!”

Things to consider

• They like and want flexibility
• Want to be developed
• Want to be engaged
• Want affiliation
• Want others to “lighten up”
• Want to be appreciated
• Want balance

Working with Millennials

Characteristics

• Using computers since Pre-K
• E-Learners
• In a state of continuous partial attention
• Used to instant communication and feedback
• Accustomed to giving feedback
• Optimistic
• Oriented toward collective action
• SPEED

Things to consider

• Will change jobs every 2-4 years
• More free agents
• Hop-scotch approach will replace linear career pathing
• Expect to work 8-10 years then seek extended time off, like a sabbatical
• Technology allows them to work remotely
• May not want to work traditional hours but will be dedicated to completing a task

Myers KK, 2010.
Think-Pair-Share

Within your table think of examples when you have had challenges working with a member of another generation in one of the following areas:

- Mentoring  - Recognition
- Engagement  - Feedback
- Learning Styles  - Communication
- Productivity  - Professionalism
Discussion Questions

• What are ways to bridge the generations?
• How is your work environment adapting to different generations?
• In what ways could you effectively communicate your expectations for any generation student?
• What learning models might best fit a generation different than yours?
• Provide an example of a way that you would give feedback to a student who is older (second career) vs. a millennial?
Suggestions or Quick Tips

• Keep an open-mind about the generations of students. Look for ways to bridge the generations, not ways to label them (no stereotypes!)

• Engage them in continual professional development - think of ways to move from knowledge sharing to application of expertise

• Model the critical thinking processes you want to see

• Be mindful of feedback and what it means to you versus what it may mean to the students you are educating (tailor feedback to the individual)
“If information is used to pigeonhole people, it will become a dangerous weapon.”

Bottom Line

• Wishing people were more like you is not a strategy – need to adapt

• Respect work-life balance and know how that might differ to each person

• Utilize reverse mentoring, there is always something to learn from someone

• Conduct a demographic audit of your current practice environment/patient population to understand the preferences of those you work with

• Don’t try to manage the generation – instead, *lead and engage* the individual.
Questions?
References


