Why Do Generational Differences Pose a Challenge to Educators?

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Overview

• What are the differences?
• Why do they pose a challenge?
• What can we do to help faculty and students succeed?
Being an Effective Educator

- Acknowledge the generational differences
- Appreciate why the differences exist
- Flex to accommodate
- Leverage strengths
Generations

- Baby Boomers
  Born 1946–1964

- Generation X
  Born 1965–1980

- Millennial

- Gen Z
  Born 1995–2012

Age – 25-38

Age – 7-24
Millennial vs Gen Z

- Gen Z is not just a younger Millennial
- Different values
- Different learning preferences
Different Life Experiences

- Technology
- Connectivity & information flow
- Finance
- World events
- Prior generations
Values

Boomers
- Optimism
- Team orientation
- Personal gratification
- Involvement
- Personal growth
- Workaholic

Gen X
- Diversity
- Techno-literacy
- Fun
- Informality
- Self-reliance
- Autonomy
- Pragmatism

Millennial
- Optimistic
- Civic duty
- Confident
- Achievement oriented
- Respect for diversity
- Social
- Work that has meaning
- Peer loyalty

Gen Z
- Individual responsibility
- Loyalty
- Compassion
- Thoughtfulness
- Socially conscious
- Self-reliant

Seemiller C, Grace M, 2015
Professional Priorities

• Medicine is a calling. Live to work. Work until the work is done.

• Medicine is a profession (yesterday?)

• Medicine is a great career, but it is time to go home (today?)
Communication

- **Boomers**: In person
- **Gen X**: Direct, Immediate
- **Millennial**: Text message, Facebook, E-mail, No Voice Mail, Cell phone, Twitter, Blogs, Staying connected, in touch
- **Gen Z**: Text message, Group texts, Fear Of Missing Out (FOMO)
Information Management

Older generations

Personal information is private & protected

Younger generations

Continuous & real-time broadcasting
Social networking
Interaction Style

- **Boomers**: Team player, Love to have meetings
- **Gen X**: Entrepreneur
- **Millennial**: Participative, but not necessarily face-to-face
- **Gen Z**: Continuously connected, Values in-person contact for the most important communications
Technology

**Boomers**
Helpful but not always first instinct to reach for technology

**Gen X**
Depend heavily on technology

**Millennial**
Essential to every aspect of life

**Gen Z**
Assumed
Connectivity is a necessity
Internet is a right
Interactions

• Prefer text messaging over face-to-face
• What’s lost?
• Richer communications in person
• Change to refine listening & negotiation skills
• Strengthen personal connections
• Read body language & facial expressions
Hi Dr.  

Thanks very much for answering questions over the weekend.

Does the ACL (or PCL) actually do anything different in the extended versus flexed state? The displacements you describe (p 382) seem to be the same relative movements of the bones: "posterior displacement of femur on tibia" versus "anterior displacement of tibia." Or am I missing something?

Thanks again,

Response (by Jack Schumann on 10/10/2009 23:49)

Hello  

I'm happy to answer questions.

It is safe to say that the ACL and PCL are working on whichever bone is not fixed. When we are standing, the tibia is fixed and the ACL prevents posterior displacement of the femur and PCL prevents anterior displacement of the femur. When sitting or lying down with the knee flexed, the femur is fixed and the ligaments are working to prevent movement of the tibia. The ACL then prevents anterior displacement of the tibia and the PCL prevents posterior displacement of the tibia.

Heart question

on 10/10/2009 20:55)

Hello Dr.  

Is the Anatomy of Heart included in the thoracic questions for the test (I know the heart, but do I need to study it in depth)? Thx!

Response (by Jack Schumann on 10/10/2009 23:20)

Hello  

Yes, the anatomy of the heart is included in the thorax questions.
Feedback

**Boomers**
- Often giving feedback to others, but seldom receiving it
- Money talks

**Gen X**
- Need positive feedback to let them know they are on the right track

**Millennial**
- Accustomed to praise
- May mistake silence for disapproval
- Need to know what they are doing right and doing wrong
- Not always receptive to negative feedback

**Gen Z**
- Needs frequent feedback
- More receptive to negative feedback
Feedback Style

- Styles that appear informative, helpful to one generation may seem formal and “preachy”
  - Some older generations told there is a time and place for feedback
  - Younger generations may not have been taught this “rule”
Millennial Characteristics

- Confident, achievement oriented
- Internet generation
- Don’t assume adult roles readily
- Are informal
- Not interested in paying their dues
- Can be happy without having it all
- Willing to give earned respect
- Will choose lifestyle over specialty or income
Gen Z Characteristics

- Dependable
- Determined - Driven
- DIY is best
- Connected - FOMO
- Realistic - Shaped by turbulent world
- High concern for others
- Seek financial stability
- Desire to work toward something they care about
Gen Z Characteristics

- Multi-tasking
- More open minded
- Short attention span
- Hypercustom
- Live in phigital world
Learning Characteristics of Today’s Students

- Demand just-in-time, just-enough learning
- Multi-taskers that learn in sound bites
- Good at computer-based learning
- Prefer learner-centered learning
- Need to perceive relevance
What do Younger Generations Want?

- Supportive environment
- Frequent feedback
- Great responsibility
- Freedom to get the job done their way
- Work-life balance
- Continuous connectivity to peers
How Are Older Generations Viewed?

- Slow moving creatures that should get out of the way
- Wedded to seniority
- Technologically limited
- Workaholics that cannot balance work and life
How Are Younger Generations Viewed?

- Entitled
- Unrealistic expectations
- Poorly motivated, self-centered
- Continuously connected via technology
Why Do These Differences Pose a Challenge?

**Values**
- Not aiming at same place as faculty

**Interactions**
- Both sides could perceive disconnection

**Leadership**
- Clashes

**Feedback**
- System not built for frequent feedback
What Can We Do to Help Faculty and Students Succeed?
Change

“It is not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent that survives. It is the one that is the most adaptable to change.”

Charles Darwin
What Can We Do to Help?

• Recalibrate
• Adjust metric of appropriate professional behavior
• Cannot equate professionalism with hours worked
• Reward excellence, not endurance
• Prepare both sides of the divide

Smith LG, AJ M 118(4) 2005
What Can We Do to Help?

- Create a positive hidden curriculum

Mahoney JF, UPSOM 8/2008; Smith LG, AJM 118(4) 2005
Expectations

• Learners value clear understanding of fair, well-justified rules
• Set expectations
• Explain why – rules
• Draw a line on negotiations
Feedback

• Want constant feedback about progress
• Consistently give constructive feedback (and gentle negative feedback)
• Reward accomplishments with increased responsibility
Assessments

- Account for the fogginess of the generational lenses when weighing subjective assessments
Learning

- Different learning & communication styles
- Multi-tasking is the norm
- Teamwork? Maybe...
- Factor in students’ learning preferences
- Bring technology to the forefront whenever possible
Key Learning Difference

• Millennials are less confident in independent work
• Gen Z prefers more independent work
• Many of our current curricular approaches – TBL, PBL – are optimized for Millennial preferences
Connectivity

- Expect instant information access
- Always connected vs. always working
- Develop communication practices
- Competent use of technology
How to Communicate

- Send a text message to coordinate or address an immediate concern
- Use email only if you must send a document (and don’t expect a response)
- Share general information, updates and photos on social media
- Never leave a phone message, unless it is for someone’s parent
Compliance

• Will accept rules to achieve fairness
• May weigh compliance vs. consequences
• Explain rules, requirements, consequences – rationale and relevance
• Engage students in development of rules and environment
Strategy Considerations

• Millennials and Gen Z are active users, not passive consumers

• Expect more complaints: grades to services
Being an Effective Educator and Leader

• Acknowledge the generational differences
• Appreciate why the differences exist
• Flex to accommodate
• Leverage strengths
Things We Didn’t See Coming

- Art, literature, and business electives in medical school
- World Events: Bioterrorism, Disasters, Pandemics
Two More Things We Didn’t See Coming...

- The Millennial Generation
- Gen Z
So, In The End

- Knowledge evolves
- Generations evolve
- Society & Environment evolve
- Education must evolve
Suggested Readings

• Sticking Points, Haydn Shaw, 2013