



Addressing Generational Issues in Medical Education

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Abstract

Challenge

In medical education, it can seem like students are from another world, that it is hard to engage and keep students involved in lecture material, that it is becoming more difficult to work with some colleagues or patients, and that past techniques for dealing with problems do not work anymore. Medical educators have to be aware of generational differences and develop new techniques to accommodate for differences.

Rationale

Generational issues are emerging as factors to be considered in many sectors of the health profession including dealing with patients, colleagues, and students. Attitudinal problems, satisfaction, and turnover are just a few of the complications that can arise from generational differences (White, 2005). In a recent survey (Davison, 2005), it was documented that 40% of those participating did not know or understand generational differences and their affects on the health profession. Awareness of generational issues and techniques for dealing with these issues in all areas of medical education will be important for the success of our students and clinics.

References

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Strategies for Effective Teaching with Different Generations

Academic Characteristics	
Generation X	Millennials
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Independent Problem-solvers Entrepreneurial Distaste for social sciences and anything "touchy-feely" Information over introspection, "Just the facts please" Appreciate technology Defy Authority Want immediate feedback/gratification 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Optimists Special Sheltered Confident Team-oriented Achieving Pressured- worry about grades Conventional Progressive Accepting of Authority Community Expect Technology
Instructional Methods	
Generation X	Millennials
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communication is key Spell it out in the syllabus Make assignments and content relevant Explain why topics are being taught Make it real, how does it relate to the "Real World" Let them control learning through individual activities Avoid lectures or sag on the stage Be creative Be personable Competitive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communication is key Must have clear objectives/standards Must know how they will be evaluated Want sample exam questions or to see example assignments Must be organized and well-prepared Incorporate technology, whenever possible Coaching over counseling Love group activities
Assignments/Activities	
Generation X	Millennials
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Give them choices and let them decide Case studies Individual projects Group discussions not group activities Presentations – Entertainers Role Playing Skits Games 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Team projects or activities Activities within the community Open discussions Case studies Internet resources/activities Online discussions Collaborative Learning Videos Self- Assessment Simulations

Differences in Generations As Patients

Pre-Boomers (Veterans)

- Do not challenge physicians, do what they are told
- More satisfied with healthcare overall
- Long-term relationships with physicians
- Seek health information from providers

Boomers

- Crave convenience & control---do not like to wait
- Want physicians to listen to them and answer questions
- Appreciate advances in medicine but still critical of own experiences
- Get some information from web and then go to provider

Generation X and Millennials

- Not at their peak of healthcare years so hard to evaluate at this point
- Highest uninsured rates
- Switch health plans as much as jobs
- Probably visit ready with a diagnosis and recommended treatment or test

Differences As Managers/Administrators

Pre-Boomers (Veterans)

- Top Down Management Style
- Used to giving and taking orders --- like to lead
- Micromanage
- Information given on need-to-know basis
- Keepers of the Grail; repository of information

Boomers

- Concerned about participation and fairness
- Hold pointless meetings so everyone is involved
- Work long hours and expect the same; sacrifice for work
- More process focused than results or outcome focused

Generation X

- More Outcome focused
- Distaste touchy-feely
- Independent; non authoritative; leadership is a whatever
- Don't sacrifice family for work
- Do not tolerate poor performers
- Flexible and accommodating