Five Generations in the Nursing Workforce!
Does “Adult Learning Theory” Still Apply?

Julie Ann Bell, DNP, RN-BC, CPN

Objectives

Upon completion of this activity, the learner will be able to:
1. Compare and contrast the five generations in the nursing workforce
2. Discuss applicability of adult learning theory to today’s learners
3. Identify strategies which may be successful for multi-generational education
4. Reflect on application of ideas from today’s program into practice

Five Generations

“Traditionalist” or “Silent Generation” – Born 1937-1945

- Defining Moments:
- Communication Tools:
- Characteristics:
- Preferred Teaching/Learning Strategies:

“Boomers” – Born 1946-1964

- Defining Moments:
- Communication Tools:
- Characteristics:
- Preferred Teaching/Learning Strategies:

“GenX” – Born 1965-1976

- Defining Moments:
- Communication Tools:
- Characteristics:
- Preferred Teaching/Learning Strategies:
“GenY” – Born 1977-1991

Defining Moments:

Communication Tools:

Characteristics:

Preferred Teaching/Learning Strategies:

“iGen” or “GenX” – Born 1992 to now

Defining Moments:

Communication Tools:

Characteristics:

Preferred Teaching/Learning Strategies:

**Does Knowles’ “Adult Learning Theory” Still Apply?**

Malcolm Knowles

- 1960s – “adult education” = vocational education, life enrichment, or high school completion; few adults on 4-year campuses

- Education technology: slides, overhead projectors, movies, mimeographs

- Adult Learners: self-directed, empowered, desire learning rooted in experience and reflection
  - Does this still apply?

Cognitive, constructivist, transformational & other learning theories contend that life’s experiences are building blocks for learning. If so,

- How do varying life experiences impact staff education?

- Do the life experiences of a traditionalist/boomer/GenX educator (e.g., counting drips in the drip chamber) make sense or contribute to learning for Gen X, Y or Z staff?

- How do we integrate the experiences of a GenY or iGen learner into the learning environment?
Strategies for Multi-Generational Teaching/Learning

New Content
- Lecture
- Course / Conference
- Online module
- Journal / books
- Web search
- Video
- Concept Maps

Review
- Hands-On
- Bulletin boards
- Posters
- Discussions – in person / online

Apply
- Case Studies
- Project-Based Learning
- Virtual worlds
- Debates
- Simulation
- Role Play
- Online discussion groups

Create
- Video
- Webpage
- Journal article
- Poster
- Event

Reflection

A new teaching strategy I would like to try:

For this class:

Benefits to trying this new strategy:

Barriers to trying this new strategy:

Ideas for how to address the barriers:

A few things to try with your PowerPoints:
References


Julie Ann Bell, DNP, RN-BC, CPN
Nursing Professional Development Specialist
Behavioral Health Services
Mission Hospital, 428 Biltmore Avenue, Asheville, NC 28801
julie.bell@msj.org Office: 828-213-5017