

**BCH Academy
for Teaching &
Educational
Innovation and
Scholarship**



BCH Academy Seminar

January 29th, 2026

Minding the Generational Gap: Strategies to Bridge Learning Across Generations

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Boston Children's Hospital
Center for Educational
Excellence & Innovation

Where the world comes for answers



Disclosures

The speaker(s) do not have relevant financial relationships to disclose.



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Your engagement

Please keep your cameras on to help us foster an engaging and connected experience for one another and our invited speakers.



Introductions



Lisa DelSignore, MD
Yale School of Medicine

Learning Objectives

1. **Compare** and contrast different generations in today's health professions learning environments
2. **Discuss** strategies for bridging gaps in the educational learning environment that may result from generational differences
3. **Identify** opportunities to integrate new educational strategies into everyday teaching practices and curricula
4. **Explore** ways to promote inclusivity considering generational differences in the educational learning environment

Contact BCHacademy@childrens.harvard.edu with
any questions, feedback, comments, or ideas for
seminars!

Thank you!

Disclosures

As mentioned, I have no relevant personal or financial disclosures...

....EXCEPT for the fact that I am a MILLENNIAL (just barely)

Session Outline

- Introductory large group activity (5 minutes)
- Interactive didactic (20 minutes)
- Small group case discussion (10 minutes)
- Large group report out (10 minutes)
- Wrap-up strategies (5 minutes)
- Questions, reflection exercise (5 minutes)

How well do you know your generations?





Join at menti.com | use code 1913 6873



Based on what YOU know, what identifiers would you use to characterize the Baby Boomer generation (born 1946-1964)?

fast bold
creative
inspiration leader focus
transpiration



Menti

Generational Learning



Choose a slide to present



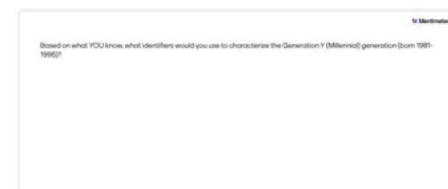


Menti

Generational Learning



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LD



Menti

Generational Learning



Choose a slide to present

To Mentiimeter

Based on what YOU know, what identifiers would you use to characterize the Baby Boomer generation (born 1946-1964)?

★ 👤

To Mentiimeter

Based on what YOU know, what identifiers would you use to characterize the Generation X generation (born 1965-1982)?

★ 👤

To Mentiimeter

Based on what YOU know, what identifiers would you use to characterize the Generation Y (Millennial) generation (born 1981-1996)?

★ 👤

To Mentiimeter

Generational Learning

Based on what YOU know, what identifiers would you use to characterize the Generation Z (Gen Z, Zoomer) generation (born 1997-2012)?



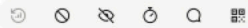
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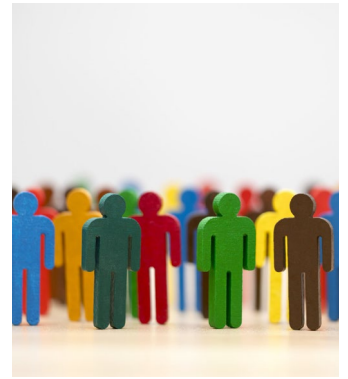
Generational Learning

 **Mentimeter**Join at <https://www.menti.com/al6vwt3m2gpe>

Generational Learning

**Choose a slide to present**

What is a generation?



- Individuals who are born and living at about the same time
- Group of individuals who have similar attitudes, values, ideas, styles, and challenges *because* of share age, experiences and environments
- Distinct from prior and future groups of individuals



How generations evolve



Generational diagonal

Generational Archetype (characteristics)	Current Generation	Birth and Childhood	Defining Era	Midlife	Elder years
Prophets (passion, vision, values)	Baby Boomers	Indulged children, born after a crisis in time of consensus on new societal order	Young crusaders of a spiritual awakening	Cultivation of moralistic values	Wise elders guiding another historical crisis
Nomads (hell-raising youth, practical)	Generation X	Underprotected children	Alienated young adults in an awakening world	Pragmatic leaders during a crisis	Tough post-crisis elders
Heroes (collective, community)	Millennials	Protected children born after a spiritual awakening	Valiant, patriotic young team workers during a crisis	Energetic midlifers	Powerful elders during another spiritual awakening
Artists (consensus-building)	Generation Z	Overprotected children born during a crisis	Sensitive young adults in a post-crisis world	Indecisive midlife leaders during spiritual awakening	Empathetic post awakening elders

Generational differences

				
	Baby Boomers	Generation X	Generation Y	Generation Z
Years Born	1946-1964	1965-1980	1981-1996	1997-2013
Current Age	60-78	44-59	28-45	11-27
Core Values	Optimism Don't ask for help Idealistic Competition	Independence Self-reliance	Community Flexibility	Creativity Diversity Individualism Flexibility
Work Ethic	Loyalty, Hard Work, Perseverance	Self-reliance	Ambition, Multi-tasking	Adventurous, Multi-tasking
Major Technology Advances	Transistor radio Computers	Microwaves Compact Discs Dial-up internet, E-mail	Cell Phones Texting Google, Wireless	Smartphones Social media
World Events	Civil Rights protests Vietnam War	Watergate Cold War	Desert Storm Great Recession (2008) 9/11 Terrorist Attack	Universal electronic surveillance COVID pandemic Racial justice

What generation are you?





Join at menti.com | use code 1999 4306

What generation are you? (birth years)

Mentimeter



Menti

Generation year



Choose a slide to present

What generation are you? (birth years)

0 0 0 0
Baby Boomers (1946-1964) Generation X (1965-1980) Generation Y (1981-1996) Generation Z (1997-2013)

0

0

0

0

Baby Boomers (1946-1964)

Generation X (1965-1980)

Generation Y (1981-1996)

Generation Z (1997-2013)



Generational differences in the workplace: communication preferences



Face-to-face communication

Telephone-based

Synchronous

Technology-based communication

E-mail

Chat

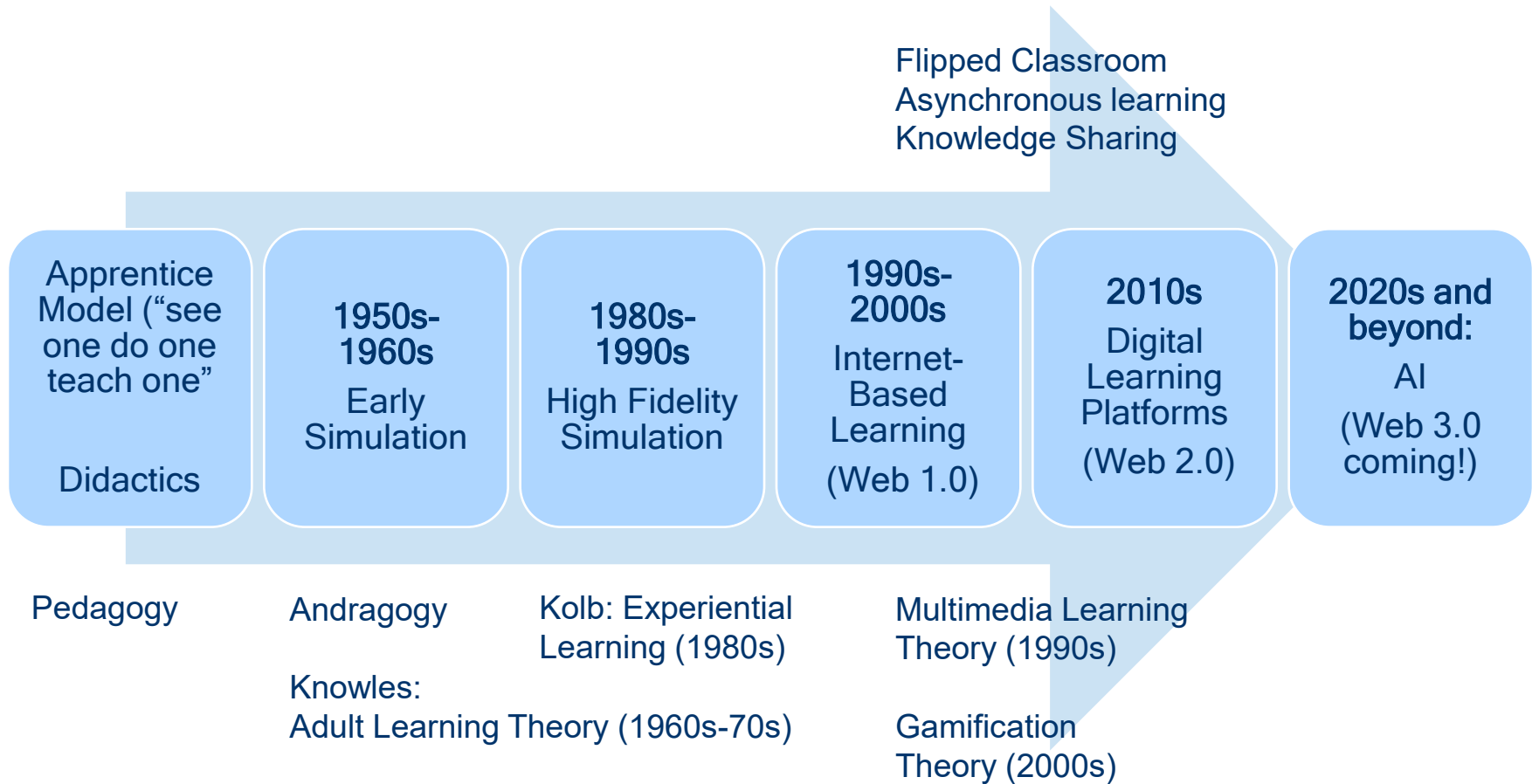
Video-based

Asynchronous

Immediate accessibility

Evolution of Health Professions Education & Technology

Evolution of health professions education and technology



Additional themes driving reform in health professions education

Working in
interdisciplinary
teams

Emphasis on
patient
safety/quality

Competency
based
assessment

"Explosion" of
medical
knowledge and
new technology

Adult learning
theory & focus on
active learning
strategies

Diverse and
inclusive learning
environments

Generational
learners
("digital natives")

Generational differences: preferred learning styles



Verbal instruction

Passive learning

Active learning

Technology-based learning

Teamwork and collaborative learning

Millennial (Gen Y) and Gen Z learner expectations



Safe, structured learning environments
("brave spaces")



Interactive, hands-on learning
(24/7 asynchronous opportunities)



Technology use in all settings



Collaborative, team-based, game-oriented learning
opportunities



Immediate and frequent feedback

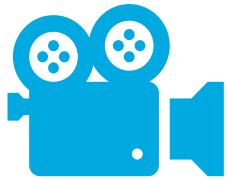


Mentorship



Customization

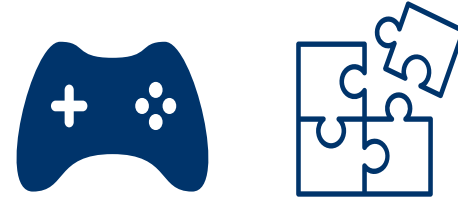
Engagement strategies



Video-based learning



Podcasts



Gamification and Problem Solving



Active Learning
Strategies



In person
communication



Critical Appraisal of
Resources (AI)

“Rules” of Engagement



Content is important, but delivery is key!



Support with credible and relevant resources; digital professionalism



Limit multi-tasking, unnecessary distractions

Ongoing challenges to consider



Prep Time



Creativity
Re-usability



Resources

Small Group Exercise

Small group case discussion

For the next 8 minutes, you will be in breakout rooms of ~4-5 individuals discussing the following case and related question prompts

I will read the case aloud and then provide a copy of it in the chat with the discussion prompts

I ask that you choose a reporter for your group (whose birthday is closest to today) to report out in a large group upon reconvening

“Same goal, different playbooks”

Imagine you coordinate a mandatory interprofessional education series that is attended by learners from multiple roles: physicians, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, nurses, clinical pharmacists, RTs, and social workers. Learners range from early-career health care professionals new to their role (primarily Millennials and Gen Z) to mid- to late-career health care professionals who serve as educators and supervisors (primarily Gen X and Baby Boomers).

About 20 participants attend each weekly 60-minute, in person session that focus on core clinical workplace-based topics that span across roles.

One recurring topic is **“speaking up about safety concerns,” with a focus on reporting near misses and on creating psychologically safe reporting environments.** You are reviewing learner feedback from this session in anticipation of making changes for the upcoming year. Participants are asked to report their level of training or years of professional experience so that responses can be reviewed in aggregate by these groupings.

“Same goal, different playbooks”

Early career clinicians report “this session feels passive and policy-heavy”; “it doesn’t connect to real safety issues we see day to day in the clinical environment”; “we are told to speak up about safety, but it doesn’t feel safe to do so, especially when people more experienced than you are involved in the safety issue.”

Mid-to-late career clinicians report, “I’m not sure what they want from these sessions as I’ve been to them so many times and it’s repetitive. I notice many junior clinicians in the audience on their phones, and they never speak up to answer questions. It feels like those of us who have been around are the ones participating.” “When we trained, we learned safety practices through experience and not reporting systems, and we provided good care.”

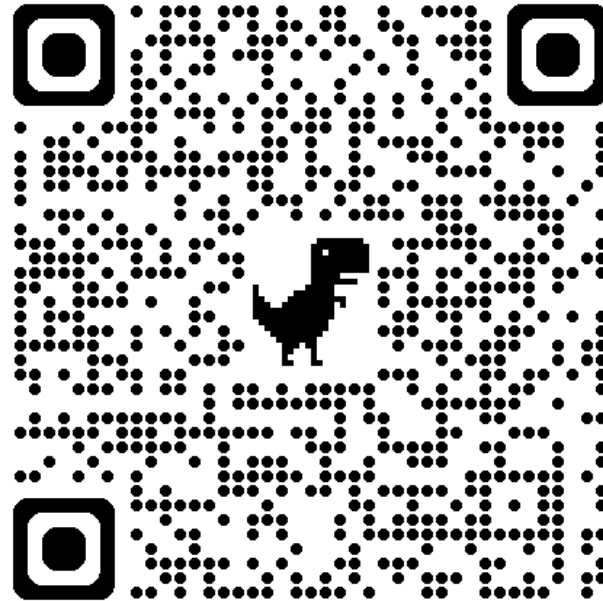
“Same goal, different playbooks”

Your task based on this feedback – think about how you might redesign this session to bring multiple generations together in a way that improves engagement across roles and career stages, honors clinical experience while incorporating new safety science data and models the culture of safety you want to see in practice.

Consider these questions for discussion:

1. What assumptions might different generations bring to learning about safety? Speaking up about errors or near misses?
2. How would you restructure this session? What would participants *do* during the session?
3. What support would health professions educators need to teach in this redesigned format?

Small group case discussion



Strategies to Bring Generations Together

Generational similarities



- Be valued for what they do and how they contribute to the learning environment
- Keep up with technology changes and advancements*
- Have individual personalities and values
- Desire respect
- Eager to learn and seek feedback

Bridging intergenerational gaps

- Focus on importance of diversity of perspectives
- Promote open-mindedness
- Work to understand perspectives (appreciative inquiry)
- Allow learners more independence (build autonomy)
- Create face to face learning opportunities
- Be accepting of guidance and advice
- Mingling and teamwork!



Tying it all together

What is 1 instructional design change that could help multiple generations of learners learn together more effectively in your own educational setting?



I'm here for you!

Happy to answer any questions, provide additional clarity on information from this talk today, or provide consultation for you in the future!

Contact me:

lisa.delsignore@yale.edu

508-728-8466

Thank you for joining this session today!

References

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Thank you