

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



# **BCH Academy Seminar**

January 29<sup>th</sup>, 2026

## **Minding the Generational Gap: Strategies to Bridge Learning Across Generations**



**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.



**Boston Children's Hospital**  
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**To receive credit for today's BCH Academy Seminar:**

**Text 277242 → 1-844-998-2674**

## **Your engagement**

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



**Boston Children's Hospital**  
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**Boston Children's**

Where the world comes for answers



# 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](mailto: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](https://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  
leader focus  
transpiration  
inspiration



Menti

Generational Learning



Choose a slide to present





LD

**Menti**

Generational Learning

**Choose a slide to present**

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

Based on what YOU know, what identifiers would you use to characterize the Generation X generation (born 1965-1980)?

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

**Menti**

Generational Learning

**Choose a slide to present**

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

Based on what YOU know, what identifiers would you use to characterize the Generation X generation (born 1965-1980)?

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

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



LD

▼

**Menti**

Generational Learning



MENTIMER

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

Generational Learning

**Choose a slide to present**

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# 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                   |

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\*Current stage of life as of 2024

Reproduced from Howell et al

# 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<br>Don't ask for help<br>Idealistic<br>Competition | Independence<br>Self-reliance                           | Community<br>Flexibility  | Creativity<br>Diversity<br>Individualism<br>Flexibility               |              |
| Work Ethic                | Loyalty, Hard Work, Perseverance                            | Self-reliance   | Ambition, Multi-tasking   | Adventurous, Multi-tasking  |              |
| Major Technology Advances | Transistor radio<br>Computers                               | Microwaves<br>Compact Discs<br>Dial-up internet, E-mail | Cell Phones<br>Texting<br>Google, Wireless                      | Smartphones<br>Social media   |              |
| World Events              | Civil Rights protests<br>Vietnam War                        | Watergate<br>Cold War                                   | Desert Storm<br>Great Recession (2008)<br>9/11 Terrorist Attack | Universal electronic surveillance<br>COVID pandemic<br>Racial justice | ea           |

# What generation are you?





LD

Menti

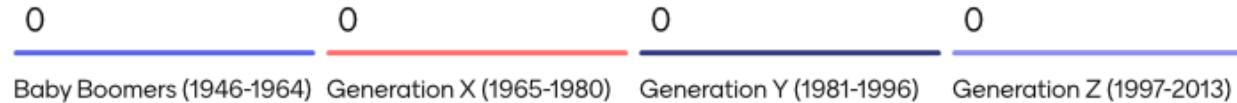
Generation year



Join at [menti.com](https://menti.com) | use code 1999 4306

What generation are you? (birth years)

Mentimeter



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)

# Generational differences in the workplace: communication preferences



Face-to-face communication

Telephone-based

Synchronous

Technology-based communication

E-mail

Chat

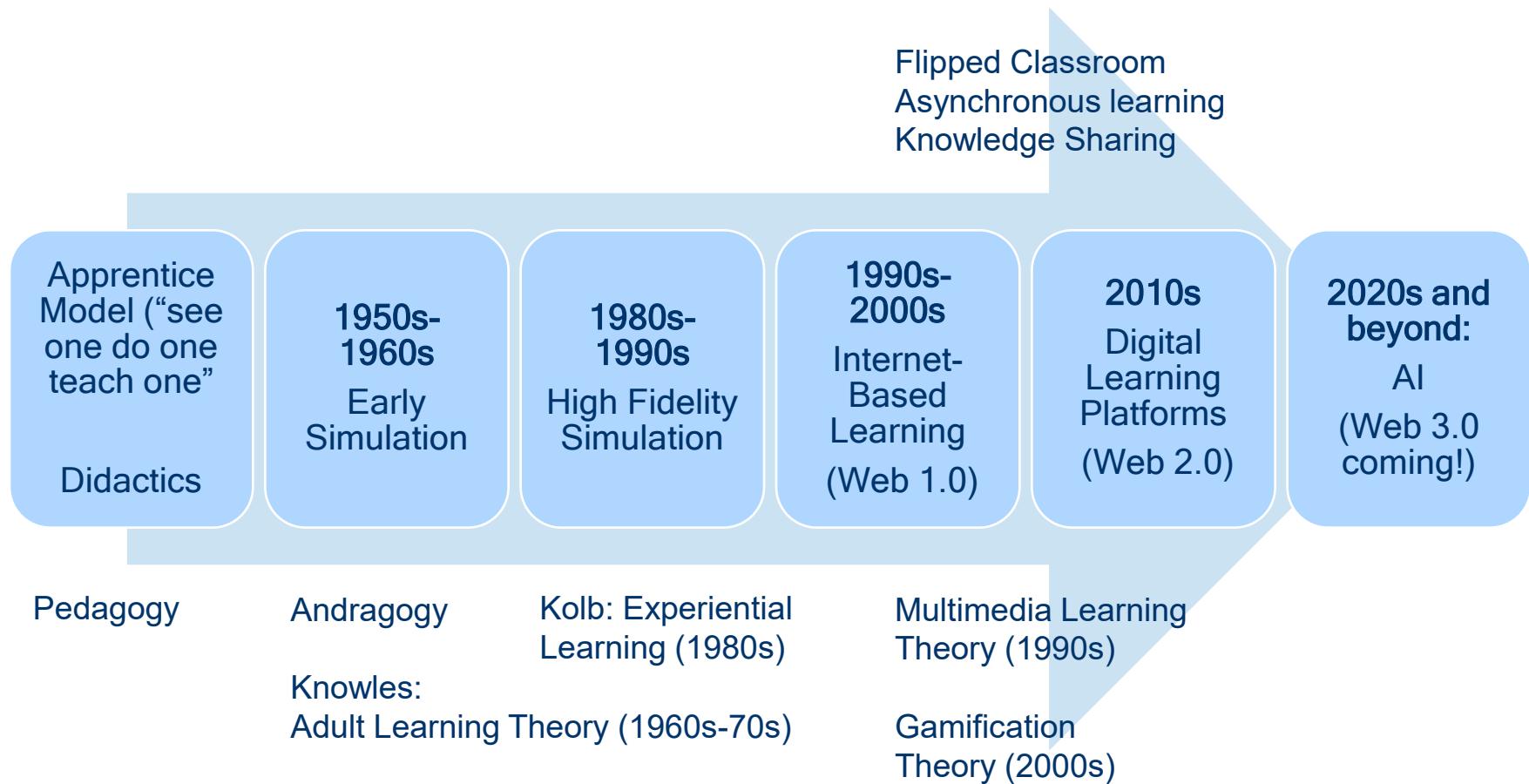
Video-based

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

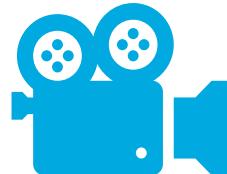


Mentorship



Customization

# Engagement strategies



Video-based learning



Podcasts



Gamification and Problem Solving



Active Learning  
Strategies



In person  
communication

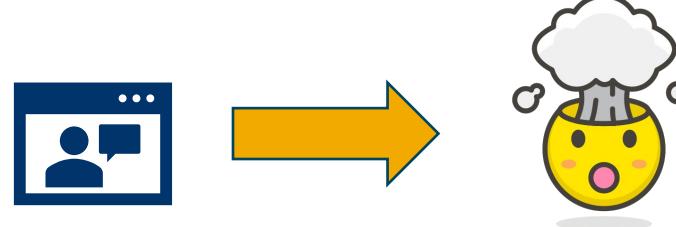


Critical Appraisal of  
Resources (AI)

# “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.”

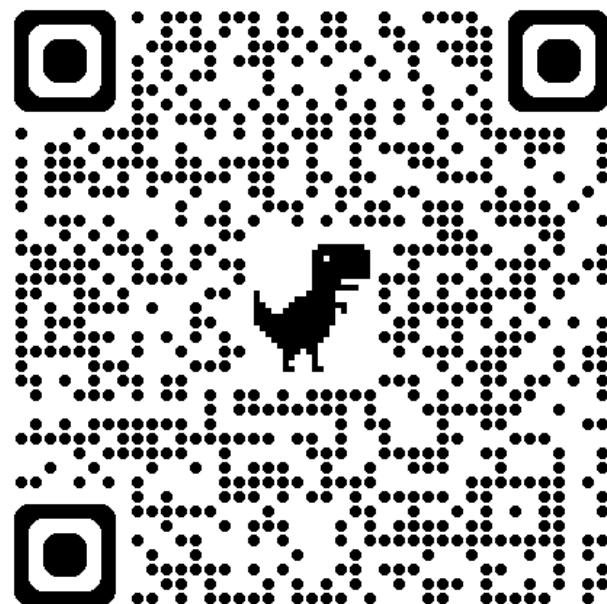
# “Same goal, different playbooks”

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](mailto:lisa.delsignore@yale.edu)

508-728-8466

Thank you for joining this session today!

# References

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# Thank you