

## ROCK N' ROLL TO RAP: GENERATIONAL DIFFERENCES IN ACADEMIC AND CLINICAL SETTINGS

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***“For the first time in our history, we have four separate and distinct generations working shoulder-to-shoulder and face-to-face in a stressful, competitive workplace.” (Lancaster & Stillman, 2002)***

### Areas of generational difference

#### The Impact of technology

Older generations who did not grow up with today's technology and have been slow to learn can be compared to the newer generations who operate at “twitch speed” with instantaneous access to info at the click of a mouse. What effect does this difference have on our relationships with students and faculty/colleagues of other generations and how can we bridge this gap?

#### Attitudes

Older generations adhered to Simon and Garfunkel lyrics: “Slow down, you move too fast, gotta make the moment last,” while newer generations are more impatient and want, expect, and demand instant gratification. How has this difference in attitude affected our professional relationships and how can we bridge the gap?

#### Family and Diversity

In 30 years we've gone from 10% to 28% of families being led by a single parent. Families are now more diverse than ever before: they are blended, interracial, gay and lesbian, divorced. In 68% of American homes, the only parent or both parents work to make ends meet. As a result, they spend 40% less time with their kids than parents of 30 years ago. The newer generations have spent thousands of hours watching “every imaginable type of person sashay across the TV screen.” They have mixed and mingled with other kids from different cultures and backgrounds in daycare, classrooms, and after-school programs. How can Baby Boomer faculty relate to a new diversity-savvy generation of students and young faculty?

#### Employment

According to Verret (2000), the new generations have never known unemployment. “Work is there for them if they want it. They are in the driver's seat - they choose you. Money isn't the prime motivator-they can get that anywhere. Unlike previous generations that would grumble at being poorly

treated but stay for the sake of a paycheck, these workers won't put up with it." What effect does this fact have on us as department heads, clinic directors, other faculty, and clinical educators?

Expectations and strategies in relationships with students as well as colleagues from other generations

It can be instructive to complete the following exercise by filling in your personal responses to the following questions:

- In a cross-generational faculty meeting (that hotbed of communication) it bothers me when a younger/older faculty member ...

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- What I value the most in my academic life is:

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- If I could change one aspect of the supervisory relationship with those from another generation, it would be:

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- What can I learn from younger/older students/colleagues?

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- Does the type of teaching, research, or clinical service we provide differ according to what generation we are from?

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- I want the younger/older generation Audiologists/SLPs to know that:

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- The best way to reward me is to:

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- Strategies for relating effectively to a colleague or student of a different generation:

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**A guide to knowing yourself:**

From **When Generations Collide**  
 By Lynne C. Lancaster and David Stillman  
 (2002, Harper Business)

	<b>Influential People</b>	<b>Places</b>	<b>Defining Events</b>	<b>Traits/Key Words</b>	<b>Things/Symbols</b>
<b>Traditionalists</b> (Born 1900-1945) 75mill. strong	Joe DiMaggio, Joe McCarthy, Dr. Spock, FDR, Lindberg, Betty	Pearl Harbor, Normandy, Hiroshima, Korea, Bay of Pigs, Iwo Jima, Sarajevo	WWI, Roaring 20's, Great Depression , New Deal, WWII, Korean	*Military style of management *Loyal *Faith in institutions *Patriotic	**"Save for a rainy day" and "Waste not, want not" (things were often scarce) *Swastikas *Coca Colas

	Crocker, John Wayne		War, GI Bill		*Drive-ins
<b>Baby Boomers</b> (Born 1946-1964) 80mill. strong	MLK Jr., Kingston Trio, Nixon, JFK, Rosa Parks, Janis Joplin, The Beatles, The Stones	Watergate, Chappaquid- dick, Kent State, Woodstock, Sit-ins, Love- ins, The Moon	Vietnam War, Watergate, Women's Movement, Human Rights Movement, OPEC oil embargo, Recession	*Competitive- ness, *Interpersonal Communication, *Optimistic (anything is possible)	*TV *Bell bottoms *Mood rings *Junk food *Rolex watches *Beads *Brooks Brothers Suits
<b>Generation Xers</b> (Born 1965-1980) 46mill. strong	Bill Clinton, Bill Gates, Ayatollah Khomeini, O.J Simpson, Madonna, Michael Jordan	Former Soviet Union, Somalia, Chernobyl, Starbucks, International Space Station, Internet	The Media, AIDS, child molesters, drunk drivers, MADD, loss of nuclear family	*Skepticism *Resourceful *Independent	*Cable TV *Digital TV *Satellite TV *VCR's *FAX *Video games *Microwaves *Pagers *Cell phones
<b>Millennials</b> (Born 1981- 1999) 76mill. strong	Chelsea Clinton, Prince William, Leonardo DiCaprio, Venus Williams, Ricky Martin, Britney Spears	Virtual and tangible classrooms, Dawson's Creek, Oklahoma City, outer space, cyberspace	Columbine, readily available illegal drugs, proliferatio n of gangs, 9/11/2001	*Optimism *Loyalty *Realistic *Appreciative of Diversity	Since in diapers they had access to: *Internet *Cell phones *Pagers *Computers

### Generational Clashpoints

	Career Goals	Rewards	Balance	Retire- ment
<b>Traditionalists</b>	"Build a legacy"	"The satisfaction of a job well done"	"Support me in shifting the balance"	Reward

<b>Baby Boomers</b>	“Build a stellar career”	“Money, title, recognition, the corner office”	“Help me balance everyone else and find meaning myself”	Retool
<b>Gen Xers</b>	“Build a portable career”	“Freedom is the ultimate reward	“Give me balance now, not when I am 65!”	Renew
<b>Millennials</b>	“Build parallel careers”	“Work that has meaning for me”	“Work isn’t everything; I need flexibility so I can balance all my activities”	Recycle

	<b>Job Changing</b>	<b>Feedback</b>	<b>Training</b>	<b>Etiquette</b>
<b>Traditionalists</b>	...carries a stigma	“No news is good news”	“I learned it the hard way; you can too”	Respect your elders
<b>Baby Boomers</b>	...puts you behind	“Feedback once a year, with lots of documentation”	“Train them too much and they’ll leave”	Respect your elders
<b>Gen Xers</b>	...is necessary	“Sorry to interrupt, but how am I doing?”	“The more they learn, the more they stay”	How can we “respect our elders” if we need to challenge them in a meeting?
<b>Millennials</b>	...is part of my daily routine	“Whenever I want it, at the push of a button”	“Continuous learning is a way of life”	How can we work on equal ground as a team if we have to start each sentence with “Mr. so-and-so?”

**(Edited by McCready)**

**Boomers, Gen-Xers and Millennials: Understanding the New Students**  
**By Diana Oblinger**

- With an average faculty age of over 50, many decision makers in higher education graduated in the 1970s. The experiences of a 1970s generation of students are likely to be quite different from those of the current student body.

- Enrollment has increased in the last thirty years; more students attend college part-time than in previous years; a higher proportion of students are women; and more students are over age 25.
- The life experiences that shaped today's students are quite different from those of previous eras. Each generation is defined by its life experiences, giving rise to different attitudes, beliefs, and sensitivities. The "Depression Generation" experienced World War II and the Cold War. "Baby Boomers" grew up with the space race, the civil rights movement, Vietnam, and Watergate. Generation "X" saw the fall of the Berlin Wall and the emergence of AIDS and the Web.
- Some more experiences of Generation "X" students include the following: 1) The Chinese government killed protesters in Tiananmen Square, 2) The U.S. stock market crashed, 3) The Chernobyl nuclear accident occurred, 4) The Exxon Valdez caused an oil spill, 5) The Challenger space shuttle exploded, and 6) The first computer disk was sold.
- Gen-Xers do not necessarily represent current college and university students. A new group is entering higher education – a group called the "Millennial Generation." The Millennials were born in or after the year 1982. Millennials exhibit different characteristics from those of siblings just a few years older. Millennials: 1) gravitate toward group activity, 2) identify with their parents' values and feel close to their parents; 3) spend more time doing homework and housework and less time watching TV, 4) believe "It's cool to be smart," 5) are fascinated by new technologies, 6) are racially and ethnically diverse, and 7) often (one in five) have at least one immigrant parent. Their learning preferences tend toward teamwork, experiential activities, structure, and the use of technology. Their strengths include multi-tasking, goal orientation, positive attitudes and a collaborative style.
- Technology is assumed to be a natural part of the environment by the "Millennial Generation." The younger the age group, the higher is the percentage who use the Internet for school, work, and leisure. This comfort with technology often leads to a perception that the use of technology in schools is inadequate. Students consider themselves more Internet-savvy than their teachers. They indicate that their teachers' use of technology is uninspiring.
- In a recent survey, 84% of current college and university students reported owning their own computer, with 25% owning more than one computer. Also, students spend an average of 11 hours per week online. Finally, 73% of students say they are more likely to conduct research by using the Internet than by using the library.
- One way to describe the above trends is the emergence of an "information-age mindset." Jason Frand has described ten attributes of an information-age mindset. These include the following: 1) Computers aren't technology, 2) The Internet is better than TV, 3) Reality is no longer real, 4) Doing is more important than knowing, 5) Learning more closely resembles Nintendo than logic, 6) Multitasking is a way of life, 7) Typing is

- preferred to handwriting, 8) There is zero tolerance for delays, and 9) Consumer and creator are blurring.
- Elimination of delays: In a 24-7, customer-service culture, delays cause dissatisfaction and disengagement. Institutions are finding ways to eliminate delays in processes that range from admissions to academic support.
  - For today's learners, customer service is an expectation, not an exception. One reason often cited by adult learners for abandoning their studies is the lack of timely support. A "beep-a-tutor" program, available seven days a week, guarantees students that tutors will respond to their questions within one hour.
  - Experiential, Interactive, and Authentic Learning: The aging infrastructure and the lecture tradition of colleges and universities may not meet the expectations of students raised on the Internet and interactive games. Several programs address this problem. A University of Virginia interactive Web site, "The Valley of the Shadow" (<http://jefferson.village.virginia.edu/vshadow2/>) allows students to draw their own conclusions about the Civil War through original records.
  - Game systems such as Nintendo, were a common part of growing up for the majority of today's college and university students. A number of attributes of games make them good educational environments. Games often involve problem-solving and decision-making.
  - Conclusions: There may be an imbalance between students' expectations of the learning environment and what they find in colleges and universities today. As a result, institutions may find it valuable to ask how well they know and understand their "new students." Though each institution will find its own answers, a common set of principles may emerge that will help guide decisions and directions. The first step will almost undoubtedly be to better understand the "new" learners – Boomers, Gen-Xers, Millennials, and those still to come.

### **The Next Generation Student** **By Wendy Rickard and Diana Oblinger**

- **The student today:** Students today bridge two cultures, being comfortable in traditional learning environments yet attached to their cell phones, instant messaging, and e-mail. What makes them different from the previous generations of students are their numbers, their characteristics, their diverse learning needs, and preferences.
- **The next generation of students:** They are the Millennial Generation, sometimes called Ngeners or NetGeners.
- **New learning styles of multigenerational students:** Millennials are more comfortable with their learning differences than any other generation has been. They bring to the table a new set of collective and individual learning styles that challenge conventional notions about how education gets presented, delivered, and assessed. They learn best experientially.

They multi-task with ease, they're goal-oriented, they're social, and they generally have a positive attitude. However, a multitude of generations make up the 14 million students enrolled in colleges and universities today, so generalizing about students can be misleading.

- **The traditional students:** They are attending college full-time, working toward or finishing up a baccalaureate degree, and planning to pursue advanced degrees.
- **The non-traditional students:** They are older, employed full-time or have experience in the workplace, and attend school part-time.
- **How the next-generation student is changing higher education:** Next generation students are demanding a higher level of service than ever before, personal attention, flexibility, and educational outcomes that directly relate to their professional goals. Meeting their needs means enterprise-wide change, often involving technology. Participants emphasize the need for institutional leaders to respond to the needs of these new students or risk declining relevance and competitiveness.
- **Institutional Culture:** Even though students and faculty change, institutional culture seems resistant to change.
- **The nextgen student, technology, and higher education:** Parents who've felt their child was lost to PlayStation 2 or Xbox may be relieved to know that the countless hours their child spends with the joystick are not wasted. Pokemon cards teach data structures; Tycoon games teach economics and complex systems; flight simulators teach aeronautics and estimation; Cesar II and Age of Empires teach marketing and history; and the Sims teach community formulation, social identity, and architecture.
- **Changes that should be made in the learning environment to better support the next-generation learner:** 1) Affordable, convenient access to appropriate technology and increased opportunities for undergraduate research, 2) Classrooms designed to facilitate group work, flexibility, and adaptability of the curriculum, and multiple means of connectivity and communication, 3) Just-in-time support in areas of technology, class-content, and areas that promote student centeredness over administrative/faculty centeredness, 4) Inter-organizational networks promoting a global experience and global calendaring within colleges and evolution of transcripts to meet the needs of a more-collaborative effort, and 5) Teaching professors to be better teachers within the context of distance education, for example, teaching them to be proactive.

**THE MATCH GAME  
(1962-1999)  
(A three generation phenomenon!)**



**Who is this Man?**

**Match the description to the generation:**

<b>A. Depression Generation/ Traditionalists</b>	<b>* Grew up with the space race, the civil rights movement, Vietnam, and Watergate.</b>
<b>B. Baby Boomers</b>	<b>* Born in or after the year 1982.</b>
<b>C. Generation X/Gen-Xers</b>	<b>* Experienced World War II and the Cold War.</b>
<b>D. Millennial Generation</b>	<b>* Saw the fall of Berlin Wall and the emergence of AIDS and the Web.</b>

## Match Game, PART II



(Draw a Line from the Term to the Generation)

- Internet-Savvy
  - Bell Bottoms
  - Information-Age-Mindset
  - Beep-a-Tutor
  - Lifelong Career Legacy
  - Digital Landscape
  - Drive-In Movies
  - Digital Natives
- The Corner Office
  - Digital Bombardment
  - Authority and Obedience
  - Twitch Speed
  - “Just-in-Time” knowledge
  - MTV Mindset
  - Instant Messenger Generation
  - 24/7 world
  - Screen-to-Screen Relationships
  - Institutional Loyalty
  - Optimistic
  - Digital Imigrants
  - Making a Difference
- A. Depression Generation/ Traditionalists**
- B. Baby Boomers**
- C. Generation X/Gen-Xers**
- D. Millennial Generation**

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