Strategies for Creating an Innovative and Healthy Learning Environment for Millennial Nursing Students

Laurie Stark, PhD, RN
College of Nursing, Colorado Technical University, Schaumburg, IL, USA
Candace Eden, DNP, CPHQ, CPPS, NE-BC
Joint Commission, Oakbrook Terrace, IL, USA

Background:

Millennials, anyone from the age of 25 to 40 years of age, represent the largest portion of the current and future workforce in the world. The majority of current nursing faculty is comprised of baby boomers. As systems and environments change in healthcare, there is a call for nurse educators to be transformative in their ability to address the needs of millennial nurses. There is an emerging awareness that the use of traditional teaching methods, based on their own nursing education and experience, is not the best fit for educating today’s nursing students. This disparity is often a cause of frustration and discouragement for both groups. Nurse educators cannot afford to continue to educate and to lead in the same way they always have. Accepting these differences in learning and practice while embracing new teaching methodologies is key to a successful teaching/learning milieu.

Objectives:

The goal of this literature review is to better understand the unique educational and leadership needs of the millennial nursing student and new nurse. The acceptance of the need to change teaching methodologies allows for nursing faculty to engage students in an optimal learning environment, while providing role satisfaction for the faculty member. Fresh teaching approaches along with specific strategies for implementation will be presented that can be used to accomplish this much needed change. This intentional education will aid nurse educators and nurse leaders to work more effectively with this population thus setting the student up for success in both the nursing education experience and in future employment in a nursing role.

Results:

An overarching search of major databases for peer reviewed literature provided 58 articles regarding teaching and leading millennials. From those, 23 were chosen that related specifically to the millennial student. Typically the student has come from a parental-type environment of: comfort with challenging authority figures; requiring praise and reward for doing the minimum; expecting quick promotion; demanding to have work-life balance; being more individualistic rather than group oriented; having the ability to use technology at all times without recourse; and wanting their supervisors to care about the individual on a personal level. The literature search findings provide strategies for nursing faculty and nurse leaders to adapt to the millenial by: integrating technology as a teaching/learning tool; encouraging students to journal their experiences for later discussion; changing teaching methods within a given session frequently by adding simulation, group discussion, patient case discussion rather than lecturing for an hour; providing immediate feedback in real time; modeling professionalism with technology use, dress, and behavior; and being explicit when describing expectations.

Conclusions/Implications for Practice:

The graying of the nursing workforce is calling for a paradigm shift in regard to what is needed to provide meaningful entrance into the role of the professional nurse for the millennial workforce. The use of targeted strategies for nursing faculty to engage their millennial students include: incorporation of communication technology such as the use of texting, podcasting, and social media; presentation of real-
Title:
Strategies for Creating an Innovative and Healthy Learning Environment for Millennial Nursing Students

Keywords:
Baby boomers, Millennials and Nurse Educators

References:


Abstract Summary:
From 25 to 40 years, millennials are the largest workforce in the world. Nursing cannot afford to continue to educate and to lead in the same way we always have. This presentation provides a number of innovative ways to prevent frustration and connect baby boomer faculty and leaders with millennials.

Content Outline:
1. Introduction
   1. Millennials
      1. Also known as Generation Y (Hunt & Tucciarone)
      2. Born between 1982 and 2005

   • Largest workforce in the world (Deloitte)

   1. Baby boomers
1. Comprise the majority of current nursing faculty (Tulgan)
2. Emerging awareness that the use of traditional teaching methods is a mismatch with educating millennials (Oermann, Bower & Konwersky, Johanson)
   1. Why do we need to change for millennial students?
   2. Educational needs of millennials
3. Three pronged approach to creating a healthy and productive learning environment
   1. Gain a deeper understanding of the differences
   2. Acceptance of the differences in learning and practice

- Embrace new communication and teaching methodologies

1. Body
   1. Understanding the differences between millennials and baby boomers (Stewart, Walton et al, Revell & McCurry)
      1. Communication
         1. Communication style to which millennials are most responsive
         2. Texting and instant messaging are the chosen methods of communication
            1. Active and intentional attention to prosody (manner of speaking/behavior while speaking) (Dzurec)
            2. Communication style to which baby boomers are most responsive
   3. Use of Technology
      1. Millennials:
         1. No memory of a world without the World Wide Web, cell phones, or personal computers (Nevid)
         2. They are an Internet-surfing, iPoding, texting, Googling, Facebooking, and IMing generation (Snethen).

- Spend more time using electronic media, an average of about 7 hours per day, than is spent in any other activity

1. Baby boomers:
   1. Knowledge translation (Kitson & Harvey)
      1. i-PARIHS framework
      2. Draws on the skills and capacity of facilitators who can work with individuals and teams to help them use the best available evidence in their practice
      3. Establish a culture of inquiry and innovation

- Better connection with students to ensure transfer of information from faculty to student (Revell & McCurry)
  1. Acceptance of the differences in learning and practice:
     1. Millennials do not want to hear the instructor lecture for an hour (Carlson)
        1. Get out from behind the lectern and become front and center in the learning process
     2. More effectively grab their attention by using engaging but brief lecture starters
        1. Personal vignettes
        2. Demonstrations
        3. Puzzles
        4. Short movie or video clips

- Given the limited attention spans: Apply the Rule of 10 (Nevid)
  1. Change what we do during class every 10 to 15 minutes
1. Shift from lecture to discussion to video clip to demonstration and back again during the class period
2. Use of innovative teaching strategies may provide a more engaged student who recognizes their purpose results in better retention of knowledge (Strang, Bagnardi & Williams, Revell & McCurry)
   1. Modeling professionalism in regard to the use of technology
   2. Dress and behavior
   3. Being explicit when describing expectations
3. Integrate technology as a teaching/learning tool (Berg & Orlowski, Nevid)
   1. Podcasting can be used in a variety of ways:
      1. In review of content already covered
      2. Preview lecture upcoming content
      3. Provide study review notes
   2. Wikis invite participation without the need for everyone to be in the same place at the same time
      1. Useful not only for class assignments
      2. Enhanced distance learning
   3. Place a greater emphasis on collaboration with others and sharing work assignments (Nevid)

• Hands on teaching (Hunt & Tucciarone):
  1. Simulation
     1. High fidelity
     2. Low fidelity
     3. Standardized patient
  2. Group discussion
  3. Immediate feedback in real time (Hunt)
• Conclusion
  1. What results can be expected and why change is important
     1. Better engagement of students ensures transfer of information from faculty to student
     2. Improved preparation for workforce
        1. How these changes will impact recruitment and retention of staff
        2. Savings for organizations (DeLoitte)
           1. Faculty and employers need to create a connection between purpose and retention for nursing students and new graduate nurses
           2. Learning professional behavior so fitting in with potential hiring organization, boomer staff and faculty (Moore)

  1. Increased role satisfaction for nursing faculty

First Primary Presenting Author
Primary Presenting Author
Laurie Stark, PhD, RN
Colorado Technical University
College of Nursing
Lead Faculty
Schaumburg IL
USA

Professional Experience: Nurse Educator of clinical courses, Leader of Nurse Educators, Director of a Pre-licensure Nursing Program with clinical expertise across the nursing care continuum with emphasis on transition from student to practicing Registered Nurse.
Author Summary: Dr. Laurie Stark has more than a decade of experience in nursing education and over four decades in nursing. During that time she has observed two themes that are common to both nurse educators. First: Incongruence between nurse educators’ expectations and the behaviors of their students. Second: Undeniable that fewer of the best and the brightest are choosing nursing for a profession and even fewer who do choose nursing are staying in the role.

Second Secondary Presenting Author
Corresponding Secondary Presenting Author
Candace Eden, DNP, CPHQ, CPPS, NE-BC
Joint Commission
Consultant
Oakbrook Terrace IL
USA

Professional Experience: Candace Eden has over 40 years of nursing experience with 22 of those years as a leader in Quality, Risk and Patient Safety. She currently is a Domestic Consultant for Joint Commission Resources providing consulting and education regarding regulatory and patient safety standards for hospitals and ambulatory care clinic settings. Other experience includes a role as a patient experience Executive Consultant and clinical expertise in cardiac, critical care and emergency patients.

Author Summary: Dr Eden has spoken locally, nationally and internationally on the topics of TeamSTEPPS communication, critical care and acute care risk concerns, HPV knowledge among men who have sex with men, key elements to opening a successful cardiac decision unit, and patient experience improvement for nursing and medical staff.