**UNIT ONE**

**1.0 UNDERSTANDING GENERATIONAL GAPS**

**FUNCTIONAL AREA:** During this unit of instruction the student will learn characteristics common to the four generational stages and how they can be used in the training process.

**1.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVE:** Name the characteristics common to each of the four generational stages.

* + 1. Generational Gaps provide many characteristics

1. Diversity

B. Generational Mixing

C. Merit

D. Difficulties working side by side

E. Understanding different mindsets

F. Education and Training

***Note: Have students bring or discuss an item that defines their generation or who they are.***

1.1.2 Overview of generational characteristics

1. Veteran or Silent Generation
2. Baby Boomer or Boomer Generation
3. Generation X, or Xers
4. Generation Y, or Nexters

1.1.3 Veteran or Silent Generation

1. 1922-1942
2. Value communication
3. Loyal
4. Wants acknowledgement of experience
5. Driven to get the job done whatever it takes
6. Keeps family and work lives separate
7. 5% of today’s workforce
8. Viewed by other generations as:
   1. Boomers say…inflexible, can’t keep up with technology, work as a team to keep focused
   2. Xers say…lack of technical skill but fun to teach and work with until the job is done
   3. Nexters say…they are reliable and know how to lead. All positive
9. Major life experiences of Veterans or Silent Generation

1. World War II

* 1. Depression
  2. Standing in line for cigarettes, stockings
  3. Coupons for stamps, meat, butter, shoes, gas
  4. Andrews Sisters, Bob Hope, Bing Crosby, radio soap operas

1.1.4 Boomer Generation

1. 1943-1961
2. 45% of today’s workforce, will dominate until 2015
3. Very sensitive to being portrayed as aging/slowing down
4. Last generation of stay at home moms
5. Nurturing/raising children utmost importance to this era
6. Viewed by other generations as:

1. Veterans say…too self centered, tell too much about their personal lives at work

2. Xers say...work too much and take it too seriously, too political and calculating

3. Nexters say…work way too much

1. Major life experiences of Boomers

1. Television became popular

2. First man to walk on moon

* 1. Martin Luther King legacy/desegregation
  2. Woodstock
  3. Movies: Psycho, Westside Story, Sound of Music, Rocky
  4. Toys: Barbie Doll, Hula Hoop, Lionel Trains, Radio Flyer, cap guns
  5. Music: Elvis Presley, Everley Brothers, Mommas and the Pappas, Beatles
  6. Sports Figures: Rocky Marciano, Mickey Mantle, Roger Maris

H. General Commonalities

1. Many define themselves by the work they do

2. Idealistic, competitive, question authority, strong work ethic

3. “Me Generation”, feel world revolves around them

1.1.5 Generation X

1. 1962-1981
2. 40% of today’s workforce
3. Generation without a childhood, “Latchkey Kids”
4. Confronted with:

1. Drug addiction

2. AIDS

3. Sexual freedom

4. Uncontrolled violence

5. Educational requirements

6. Environmental/world problems (believed created by past generation)

1. Typical Household is both parents working or divorced
2. Communication via portable phones, beepers, e-mail
3. Want strong balance between personal life and work
4. Acceptance of different lifestyles, roles, and cultures
5. Place considerable emphasis on immediate gratification
6. Unimpressed by status of others
7. One-fifth live in poverty
8. Viewed by other generations as:

1. Veterans say…they complain, hold too many certificates and not enough real education, they arrive late/leave early, don’t value Veterans experience

2. Boomers say…they are lazy, impatient, too much time with computers instead of people, disrespectful

3. Nexters say…laid back about difference; Nexters try to resolve conflicts between Boomers and Xers

1. Major life experiences of Generation X

1. Roe v. Wade

2. Challenger shuttle explosion

3. Berlin Wall dismantled

4. Fall of Communism in Eastern Europe

5. AIDS identified

* 1. Movies: ET; Raiders of the Lost Ark; Star Wars; Silence of the Lambs
  2. Toys: Game Boy, Rubik’s Cube, transformers
  3. Music: Michael Jackson, Madonna
  4. Sports: Mike Tyson, Mary Lou Retton, Carl Lewis

1. General Commonalities
   1. Clashing in workplace with Boomers
   2. Creative/adaptive to change
   3. Expect to change careers and employers numerous times
   4. Impatient for change
   5. Multi-task oriented
   6. Preppie dress

1.1.6 Generation Y

1. 1982-1998
2. Newest Generation entering the workforce (10%)
3. Parents/politicians made concerted effort for this Generation to avoid:

1. Drugs/alcohol

* 1. Profanity
  2. Improper TV
  3. Un-chaperoned gatherings
  4. Aggressive behavior
  5. AIDS
  6. Teen Pregnancies

1. Viewed by other Generations as:

1. Veterans say…compared to Generation X, Nexters have great manners, feel they know a lot and with experience will mirror the Veterans, complain about crude language

2. Boomers say…want Nexters on their team to do technical activities/web page work, etc.; undisciplined

3. Xers say…spoiled/selfish, new breed of Boomer, likes to work with them due to technical skills

1. Major life experiences of Generation Y

1. First children’s summit at UN

* 1. 1987 stock market drop
  2. Princess Diana killed in car crash
  3. Mother Teresa dies
  4. Dolly the lamb is cloned
  5. Movies: Titanic, Braveheart
  6. Entertainment: Video games, play station, X Box
  7. Cartoons: Southpark, Simpson’s, Beavis and Butthead
  8. Sports: Michael Jordan, Wayne Gretzky, Carl Ripken, Jr.

1. General Commonalities
   * 1. Always had or known about: remote control, MTV, microwave popcorn, AIDS
     2. Never heard of: hard contact lenses, statement “You sound like a broken record.”
     3. Self reliant, stable, heritage oriented, volunteerism, escapism, tolerant and accepting of divers life styles
     4. More than 40% must take remedial math and English after high school, vocational experience limited
     5. Prefer caring, informal work environment, have positive outlook on work and enjoy working in groups
     6. Wizards with technology and multitasking
     7. Non-smoking, recycle
     8. Want to connect with community
     9. Expect accommodation to varied lifestyles
     10. Inventive
     11. Create and value responsible supervision

1.1.7 Futuristic Generation

1. 1999-Current
2. By 2050 predicted population will increase from 5.5 to 11 billion
3. Production of goods and services will need to quadruple
4. Generations we are training today, will be the teachers of this futuristic generation

**1.2 LEARNING OBJECTIVE:** Verbalize the commonalities and differences between the four generations and how they can be utilized in the training process.

1.2.1 Generational diversity of class reflects commonalities and differences of generations

***Note:*** *Divide class into two groups. Have the groups discuss the things they have in common and their differences. Have open class discussion on group actions. If possible, see that each generational group is represented in discussion groups.*

1.2.2 These commonalities and differences can be utilized in the work and training environment

1. Veteran Generation
   1. Don’t rush things
   2. Younger trainers must be careful to build rapport
   3. Some Veterans uncomfortable learning from “weird 20 year old”
   4. Establish rapport by acknowledging the employee’s background and experience
   5. Ask permission to coach
   6. Don’t assume all Veterans are technophobes
      1. Many do fine with technology
      2. Just not preferred method
2. Boomers
   1. “I know all that” chip on shoulder
   2. Focus on personal challenges
   3. Provide developmental experiences
      1. Give assignments that help them earn recognition
      2. Use these assignments to develop skills

4. Provide non-authoritarian learning environment

1. Generation X
   1. Allow plenty of time for questions and answers
      1. They ask a lot of questions
      2. Try resource/contact list for them to take home
   2. Give plenty of elbow room
   3. Add games and fun activities to training programs
   4. Don’t expect them to respect you just because you are the trainer
      1. Must earn respect through knowledge
   5. Place high priority on learning and developing new skills
   6. Set clear objectives
2. Generation Y
   1. Nexters enjoy training that incorporates interaction with their colleagues
   2. Be sensitive to conflict when Xers and Nexters work side by side
   3. Establish mentor programs
   4. Acceptance of differences

a. Will need to move faster to keep up with them

* 1. Vary Delivery modes
  2. Independent learners

1.2.3 Changes in training delivery concepts

1. It was once thought that the average attention span was about 50 minutes
2. It is now thought that we need to change or method of delivery every 5-6 minutes
3. This is the amount of time that correlates with the change associated with current media devices and entertainment
4. Instruction has now become another form of entertainment

1.2.4 Differences in reading styles

1. Veterans
   1. Respond to material in summary form
   2. Readers Digest format
2. Boomers
   1. Overviews that can be scanned
   2. Amazing like the Internet
3. Gen Xers
   1. Need visual stimulation with fewer words
   2. Do not read very much
4. Nexters
   1. Do not read a lot but still need visual stimulation
   2. Video games dominate

1.2.5 Differences in job expectations

1. Veterans
   1. Work best when there is personal contact
   2. Look for strong leadership and directions
2. Boomers
   1. Extended work week from a standard 38 to 60 hours
   2. Added a month to the work year
   3. Want recognition and fame
3. Gen Xers
   1. Want to go home at 5 and play
   2. Look for jobs with:
      1. Flexible schedules
      2. Independence
      3. Professional growth
      4. Interesting work
      5. Time off
4. Nexters
   1. Motivated by similar incentives as Gen Xers
   2. Need more direction than Gen Xers

**1.3 LEARNING OBJECTIVE:** Identify and evaluate instructional methods and techniques to utilize strengths of generational groups.

1.3.1 Training/workshop style preferred by generational groups

1. Veterans – independent rather than working as a team
2. Boomers – OK with team work
3. Gen Xers – somewhat independent, will do ok with teamwork, but prefer self-directed options
4. Nexters – like interaction with colleagues

1.3.2 Effective training strategies that cross generational lines

1. Provide feedback and rewards for a successful class
2. Be sensitive when giving feedback and give immediately
3. Be objective, not subjective
4. Make it fast paced, involving the learner, and fun
5. Make safe to participate and to disagree
6. Make it positive, learner centered, and individualized
7. Make it matter
8. Make learner’s experience count
9. Strive for a comfortable environment, making testing less stressful
10. Make it make sense

1.3.3 Training should create an environment that optimizes generational needs

1. Accommodate generational differences
2. Create training/workplace choices and options
3. Operate from a sophisticated training/management style
4. Respect competence and initiative
5. Nourish retention

1.3.4 Use situational exercises to show how to incorporate learning techniques required for different generational groups

1. A 27 year old wiz-kid manager complains that a 63 year old colleague treated her like the “girl that should be sent out for lunch”. What techniques could be used to assist these persons in working/training together?
2. A manager asked the employees to stay late to attend a training session. Boomers were willing to do so, Gen Xers argued the request was unreasonable because they “have a life” outside of work. In a training situation, how could these differences be met to make the training successful?