

# Investigating the Efficacy of an Online Multigenerational Awareness Course for Occupational Therapy Students -A Pilot Study

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## Objective of research

To evaluate whether an MGA course improves faculty knowledge of generational differences and their ability to prepare students for fieldwork and clinical practice in age-diverse settings.

## Introduction/Rationale

Occupational therapy students must develop advanced communication and collaboration skills to navigate **generational diversity** in multigenerational healthcare settings. Despite this need, resources to prepare students are limited. This study explores how an innovative online **Multigenerational Awareness (MGA)** course can inspire change by **equipping faculty** to better prepare students for these challenges and advance inclusive, forward-thinking educational practices



## The Course

- 1) Video interviews with participants from 6 recognized generational category.
  - Silent
  - Baby Boomer
  - Gen X
  - Millennial
  - Gen Z
- 2). Responded to 20 identical questions focusing on:
  - family & experiences
  - technology & communication
  - security & society
  - religion & values
- 3). Six modules for student interaction and reflection.

## Methods / Approach:

**Eight faculty participants** from occupational and physical therapy programs completed **pre- and post-course surveys** assessing **knowledge, teaching strategies, and course utility**. The MGA course included interactive modules, generational interviews, and reflective exercises. **Reflexive Thematic Analysis (RTA)** identified themes from qualitative responses, emphasizing the course's impact on teaching practices.

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## Results / Practice Implications:

Pre and post survey themes were identified. Participants valued the course's innovative design and its role in fostering inclusivity and adaptability, aligning to prepare students for diverse clinical environments.

### Pre-Enrolment Themes

- (1) The need to understand different generations.
- (2) The importance of self-awareness in multigenerational teaching.
- (3) A need to incorporate effective teaching methods.

### Post-Enrolment Themes

- 1) An expanded insight into multigenerational dynamics and how perceptions change with information.
- 2) Shifts in self-awareness and the effects on teaching approaches shift.
- 3) An engaging course for generational understanding and reflective change

## Discussion

As a result of the pilot study, four key points were identified by faculty participants as future considerations.

- 1) Successful engagement of multigenerational students.
- 2) Student perceptions of generational differences, current practices in academic settings.
- 3) Educational pedagogy - effective learning tool in OTEPs.
- 4) Technology application in an **academic** setting.

## Limitations

- 1) The sample size was small and only included faculty from one university in the Midwest and may lack generalizability to larger academic populations.
- 2) Surveys were not standardized but were informed by the literature and expert opinion. The researchers, with an extensive backgrounds in research, cultural awareness, and multigenerational awareness, created the surveys until group consensus was achieved.
- 3) No students were involved with the evaluation of the course at this time.
- 4) Participant lack of access to high-speed internet for uploading generational videos.

## Conclusion / Contribution:

Aligned with the theme "**Inspiring Change, Innovating Futures**," this study demonstrates how MGA courses can transform occupational therapy education by promoting generational understanding and collaboration. By embracing innovation, the profession can prepare students for age-diverse healthcare environments, fostering inclusivity and ensuring readiness for the future of practice.