Teaching Methods and Millennial Nurse Retention

Posted on January 30, 2020

Introduction

The literature review supports the purpose of this study, which is to determine the impact that teaching methodologies, training, development, and engagement have on Millennial Nurse retention. The purpose of this literature review is to examine the different research studies about nurse retention and the teaching methodologies that are present and can be applied to the new nurses in order for organizations to better retain their nurses, specifically the millennial generation. The review will also include a critical review of the literature and the methodology used in the existing literature. This will provide a perspective of the kind of literature currently used. Through the literature review, concepts including millennials, generational theories, adult learning theories, and retention and teaching methodologies that are best suited for millennial nurses will be examined.

The initial section of the literature review provides an overview of millennials and then discusses primary research that is the foundation of this study. The literature review progresses to include adult learning theories, Active Learning and Educating millennials, and Millennial nurses' learning preferences. The purpose of establishing a foundational understanding of the millennial cohort is to understand how adult learning theories apply and support existing research indicative of Millennial nurse learning preferences and the impact this has on retention at Magnet status hospitals.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework explains the different views that are found in and which guide the research. The main themes that will be explained in the literature review are as follows:

1. Millennial
2. Transformational learning and Adult Teaching theories
3. Teaching methodologies that are best suited for millennials
4. How teaching methodologies impact Millennial Nurse retention

In the first theme, the review will look at the nature of millennials and the generational theories of how those who are in this generational cohort prefer a different style of teaching that better supports how they learn and how millennials have come to prefer a different environment in their work areas in relation to the nurses. The second theme looks at transformational learning and the different adult teaching methodologies and theories that can be applied in the classrooms in order to enhance

millennial education and later enhance their retention in their professional areas, specifically nursing. The third theme looks at the manner in which these teaching methodologies affect the retention of Millennial nurses. Finally, the review will look at how the teaching methodologies impact millennial nurse retention.

Millennial

Millennials, according to Hendricks and Cope (2013), are defined as individuals that are born between 1980 and 2000. According to Hendricks and Cope, millennials may also be known as echo boomers because they are the children of baby boomers or those who were born during the period of increased birth rates that occurred between 1946 and 1964. Millennials represent a unique generation, different from any other. The Millennial generation, also commonly referred to as Generation Y, is the digital generation. Millennials are people who have grown up with the World Wide Web and instant access to information. Digital technologies are engrained in their daily activities of living. The use of instant messaging, emailing, cellular devices, tablets, and video games has caused communication to evolve and change; today, it is less personal and more digital, changing the manner in which millennials learn, find information, communicate, and function (Considine et al., 2009). The Millennial generation is vastly different and has significantly impacted areas such as education, employee development and training, and the exchange of information.

Growing up with modern technology, this generation is highly skilled in the digital world. Haugen and Musser (2013) state that Generation Y strives to succeed and has a need and demand for professional development and career growth. The authors show that combining all these factors is indicative of an exciting new workforce. The millennial generation, those born between 1980 and 2000, is now entering employment in vast numbers, and they will shape the world of work for years to come. Attracting and retaining the best of these millennial workers is critical to the future of any kind of business, especially health care (Howe and Strauss, 2000). The career aspirations of millennials, their attitudes about work, and their knowledge of new technologies will define the culture of the 21st-century workplace.

According to Johanson et al. (2012), because millennials are technology savvy and reliant on technology, their behaviors in the classroom have been different from the previous generation, and this has caused educators to introduce teaching methodologies that suit their needs and preferences. As Haugen and Musser (2013) explain, Millennials' use of technology clearly sets them apart. One of the defining characteristics of the millennial generation is their affinity with the digital world. They have grown up with broadband, smartphones, laptops and social media being the norm and expect instant access to information.

The Millennial generation continues to increase in the United States workforce, largely due to immigration. Today, there are more than 75.4 million millennials working, making them the largest generation in the workforce today (Fry, 2016). As this number continues to increase, the need to

understand the millennial worker, what motivates them, how they learn, and what will retain them becomes exponentially more important. According to Murphy (2012), retaining millennials gives organizations a competitive edge. This is the first generation to enter the workplace with a better grasp of technology and key business tools. This leads to a different set of employees; this is true also in nursing. Organizations have to evolve in order to accommodate the needs of millennial employees. Millennials' needs and values matter because they are not only different from generational cohorts before them; they are also more numerous than any other generational cohort still in the workforce. Millennials already form 25% of the workforce in the US. By 2020, millennials will form 50% of the global workforce (Haugen & Musser, 2013). The millennial generation requires different retention strategies than previous generations.

Millennial workers voluntarily leave organizations in a short period of time. Some theories suggest this is due to boredom, the methods utilized for employee development and education, or lack of stimulation or motivation. This is especially true in industries such as healthcare. This is largely in part due to the accessibility of new jobs. The cutting-edge technology and use of information technology communication have created an environment that is challenging to comprehend. The reliance on information technology communication has created a false sense of competency in many cases.

This is impactful when you consider the necessity for employee development and continuing education. According to Lebowitz (2016), the results of the Global Millennial survey revealed that 63% of millennials said they left their employer because their leadership skills were not being developed. In healthcare, there is consistent innovation, therefore requiring the caregivers to be engaged, informed, and educated. The millennial healthcare worker has different standards and expectations and is motivated differently. Their behavior is impacted by their experience of the global economic crisis. Millennial cohorts place much stronger emphasis on their personal needs than on those of the organization. Because of this, employers, including hospitals, should be cautious. Millennials tend to be uncomfortable with rigid corporate structures and become disengaged by information silos.

They expect hasty succession and constant feedback in the work they do (Johanson et al., 2012). Most Millennial nurses do not receive the feedback or acknowledgement they need. This has led to 23% of nurses in the United States leaving their jobs, citing dissatisfaction with the working environment, according to a study by Price (2014). This is why the retention of millennial nurses is becoming an issue. Millennials are constantly seeking new opportunities, and they don't believe that their current place of employment aligns with their ideals; therefore, the issue of Millennial workers' behavior and expectations in the workplace causes organizations to have a difficult time retaining them (Haugen & Musser, 2013).

Millennials are the first generation in the workforce that has been immersed in technology their entire lives. Computers, the internet, digital forms of communication, learning activities, and immediate access have been part of their home, school, and work lives. There has never been a time they have been without technology. This has created an entirely new language and culture, which has poured into the workforce in nearly all industries, requiring a change in how employees evolve. The digital

natives have a limitless interest and curiosity in technology (Considine et al. 2009). Millennials are highly engaged in technology and the use of informational technologies; this suggests that when teaching or developing a millennial, the use of technology to do so should be included. This is critical in the workforce, especially in industries such as healthcare. This is a critical aspect of educating, developing, and retaining millennial nurses.

Millennials have very specific characteristics. They are impacted significantly by economic, political, and social backgrounds (The Millennial Generation, n.a.). According to Howe and Strauss (2000), the millennial generation is the next "Greatest Generation" (Strauss and Howe, 1997, pp. 119-121). They are the multitasking generation. They are continuous communicators. This translates well into the workforce and is critical in fields such as healthcare, specifically nursing. This establishes virtual real-time relationships in social, educational, and work-related endeavors (Dannar, 2013). The ability to multi-task can increase productivity, but one must not lose sight of the millennial need for balance. There is no compartmentalizing; millennials draw correlations from all aspects of daily living. Millennials have an innate power to influence society, and specifically organizations.

The emergence and reliance on social media, digital communication, and media are specific to Millennials. The ease with which information is exchanged and the need for interactive nontraditional methods of communication, teaching, and development stem from millennial influence. As an example, according to Dannar (2013), Millennials seek to create content, be engaged in active learning, and have specific values that translate to the workplace. These values influence behaviors that create norms and patterns that are distinctly millennial. There have been studies that examine generational learning styles and preferences. Some are indicative of transformational learning because the millennial sense of reality is different than generations before. One should note that a thorough understanding of adult and transformational learning and the millennial generation leads to an understanding of best practices for employee training and development and learning preferences for millennial nurses and healthcare workers.

Adult Learning Theories

Adult learning pioneer (Malcolm Knowles, 1973) illustrates that the idea of adult learning theories has various assumptions. The theory created for the adult learning theory was andragogy. Some of the assumptions of the adult learner include that adult learners move from dependency to increasing self-directedness as he or she matures and can direct his/her own learning (Mangold, 2013). Another assumption is that the theory of andragogy draws on the learner's accumulated reservoir of life experiences to aid learning. The adult learner is assumed to be ready to learn when they assume new social or life roles (Subhan, 2014). The adult learner is also assumed to be problem-centered, and they want to apply their new learning immediately. An assumption of the learner is that they are motivated to learn by internal rather than external factors, meaning that they are willing to learn and the drive to learn comes from them and not from external incentives (Robb, 2014).

Based on the theory, there are implications for practice for educators of the millennial cohort. Mangold (2013) suggests that adult educators need to set a cooperative climate for learning in the classroom, including corporate or clinical settings. This means that the educator needs to create an environment that has all the resources necessary for the millennial student to learn. Robb (2014), in his literary work, shows that an educator assesses the learner's specific needs and interests. Mangold (2013) continues to show that in teaching adult learners, they need to develop learning objectives based on the learner's needs, interests, and skill levels. Johanson et al. (2012) explain that the educator needs to design sequential activities to achieve the objectives. Works (2016), in his research work, shows that adult learners need to work collaboratively with the learner to select methods, materials, and resources for instruction. Johanson et al. (2012) add that educators based on adult learning need to evaluate the quality of the learning experience and make adjustments, as needed while assessing the needs for further learning.

Mangold (2013) concludes in his works that adults learn by doing; effective instruction focuses on tasks that adults can perform, rather than on memorization of content. Because adults are problem-solvers and learn best when the subject is of immediate use, effective instruction involves the learner in solving real-life problems.

Transformational And Adult Learning

Transformative learning is an adult learning theory that challenges the formative learning one experiences throughout their childhood. An individual's perceptions are derived from experiences that occurred throughout their childhood. Formative learning occurs through exposure socially and scholastically. The millennial generation relies on the use of technology in social and scholastic settings. This is true in the workplace and is increasingly true for nurses and other healthcare workers. The presuppositions and assumptions one has as an adult are formulated by informal learning tactics: exposure from parents, friends, mentors, culture, religion, school, and the workforce. Additionally, the millennial generation is influenced by technology, social media, and information communication technology. These learning experiences define an individual's perception of truth. "Transformative theory views memory as an inherent function of perception and cognition, an active process of recognizing again and reinterpreting a previously learned experience in a new context" (Mezirow, 1991, P. 6). Mezirow believes that adult learning occurs in four ways: elaborating existing frames of reference, learning frames of reference, transforming points of views and transforming habits of mind (Brookfield, 2009). Transformative learning causes individuals to challenge their "reality," therefore either validating their assumptions or disproving them. This is especially true in adult learning and development in the workplace.

An adult's conscious ability to rationalize and actively reconstruct their beliefs and behaviors is rooted in learning. Learning is a continuous experience. Learning involves five primary interacting contexts. The interacting contexts include the meaning perspective, condition of communication, action in which learning occurs, self-image and the situation that is encountered (Mezirow, 1991, P. 13-14).

Studies indicate that millennial learners have significantly influenced education in both corporate and higher education settings. Specifically at teaching hospitals there has been an exponential increase in the use of interactive learning. Millennials have caused hospitals, corporations, and educational institutions to both communicate and educate in new and innovative ways (Kriegel, 2013). Some studies suggest millennial learning and transformational learning will create innovative educational initiatives that are impactful throughout society.

Transformational teaching approaches are essential for the millennial learner. According to Boyd (2009), transformational teachers help their students see the larger view of education by practicing idealized influence. The use of intellectual stimulation in the classroom helps students challenge their existing assumptions (2009). This is important when teaching and developing a nurse. Millennial nurses learn and advance their skills best through active learning. Educators who provide their students with opposing views, theories, or methods allow for developmental growth and learning. This is true in professional development or classroom learning. This practice leads to a highly engaged cohort (Boyd, 2009). Similar to other generations, millennial adult learners also have two learning domains that are essential to learning and having the ability to think autonomously; they are instrumental learning and communicative learning. The two learning domains apply specific concepts that affect the process of learning.

Theories suggest this is increasingly important for the millennial worker because there is ongoing learning and education in the workplace. To understand the manner in which the two domains impact learning for millennials, you must first have a clear definition of learning. Learning can be defined as "the process of using a prior interpretation to construe a new or revised interpretation of the meaning of one's experience in order to guide future action" (Mezirow, 1991, P. 12). This is an important factor as you examine the two domains of learning because they both impact the adult learners' ability to understand the meaning of experiences and formulate new frames of reference. In healthcare and the practice of nursing, it is suggested that the instructor develop relationships with their students (Boyd, 2009). This is a critical component of the manner in which millennials learn and the importance of the two domains of learning.

Instrumental learning is the development of determining the cause-and-effect relationship. Dannar (2013) suggests the theory that millennials thrive best in a mentoring environment. "Millennials have an inherent trust in organizations and a strong preference for the structures and systems that support them" (Dannar, p. 6, 2013). This aligns with many theories that indicate an adult learner is engaged through task-oriented problem-solving and relationships. Through the exercise of engaging in instrumental learning, the adult is able to fundamentally determine meaning. This is of critical importance to millennials, and commonly those in the field of nursing. Studies suggest that this aligns with millennial needs for personal growth, development, and relationships (Dannar, 2013).

Instrumental learning begins with the simplest task of developing a prediction. This commonly pertains to how to make something better by doing something different. Once you have determined your prediction or hypothesis, you, as the learner, begin to test the hypothesis by using different

variables that may affect the outcome. This is important to millennial nurses and healthcare workers because they want to impact the patient's experience and expand their knowledge base and practices. According to Mezirow, instrumental learning always involves a prediction. "A proposition can be established as "valid"-that is, justified or supportable-by demonstrating its empirical "truth," that is, it's being in accord with what is, and correctness of the analyses involved" (Mezirow, 1991, P. 74). This experimentation develops critical thinking skills and is a hands-on learning experience, both critical elements of being a nurse.

Critical thinking in instrumental learning is what makes learning task-oriented. When engaging in instrumental learning, the learner is questioning procedures, experimenting with variables and collecting data. This process accomplishes the task of finding alternative ways of completing the same task or generating an improved way of doing something, which is often an important variable to the millennial worker. Millennials place a high value on communication. The second learning domain that is essential to learning is communication. Communicative learning is centered on learning to understand what others mean and how to make ourselves understood and the ideas we share (Mezirow, 1991, P.75). Theories suggest that many millennials learn more in the second domain.

This is especially true in nursing. According to many transformational learning theorists, this is the most significant learning for an adult. This is because it involves understanding, describing and explaining a range of elements that impact one's ability to communicate effectively (Mezirow, 1991, P. 75). The elements that impact our ability to communicate are driven by cultural, linguistic and social norms. Communicative learning is the act of at least two people trying to reach an understanding of the meaning of an interpretation or belief (Mezirow, 1997). Millennials thrive on constant communication.

This is a large contributor to retaining the millennial healthcare worker. Their level of engagement, relationships, communication, and active learning impact their level of satisfaction. Through transformational learning, an adult can formulate their own individual concepts, values, feelings and frames of reference, which create the ability for one to think autonomously, a critical skill in nursing. Transformative learning assists adults in creating an understanding of meaning, generating their own ideas and the ability to make decisions. Millennial nurses have an increased level of responsibility and decision-making in teaching hospitals; they are essential members of the care team. Studies suggest that the evolution of nursing as a practice has experienced the most significant change with the millennial cohort. Studies suggest the key to developing and retaining millennials is understanding their learning preferences.

Adult Learning Theories

In the creation of learning theories, Knowles, who was a pioneer of the phenomenon, showed that the idea of adult learning theories has various assumptions. The theory created for the adult learning theory was andragogy. Some of the assumptions of the adult learner are that adult learners move

from dependency to increasing self-directedness as he or she matures and can direct his/her own learning (Mangold, 2013). Another assumption is that the theory of andragogy draws on his or her accumulated reservoir of life experiences to aid learning. The adult learner is assumed to be ready to learn when they assume new social or life roles (Subhan, 2014). The adult learner is also assumed to be problem-centered and wants to apply new learning immediately, and an assumption of the learner is that they are motivated to learn by internal rather than external factors (Robb, 2014), meaning that they are willing to learn and the drive to learn comes from them and not from external incentives.

Based on the theory, there are implications for practice for educators of the millennial cohort. Mangold (2013) suggests that adult educators need to set a cooperative climate for learning in the classroom. This means that the educator needs to create an environment that has all the resources necessary for the student to learn. Robb (2014), in his literary work, shows that an educator assesses the learner's specific needs and interests. Mangold (2013) continues to show that in teaching adult learners, they need to develop learning objectives based on the learner's needs, interests, and skill levels. Johanson (2012) explains that the educator needs to design sequential activities to achieve the objectives. Works (2016), in his research work, shows that adult learners need to work collaboratively with the learner to select methods, materials, and resources for instruction. Johanson et al. (2012) add that educators, based on adult learning, need to evaluate the quality of the learning experience and make adjustments, as needed while assessing the needs for further learning. Mangold (2013) concludes in his works that adults learn by doing; effective instruction focuses on tasks that adults can perform, rather than on memorization of content. Because adults are problem-solvers and learn best when the subject is of immediate use, effective instruction involves the learner in solving real-life problems.

Active Learning And Educating Millennial

Teaching millennials has been an increasingly popular subject for research. Researchers have theorized about customizable learning, interactive learning, and learning through gaming, flipped classrooms, and e-learning as methods that best address the needs of millennial learners. Millennials are non-traditional students. This is true in both higher education and corporate settings. The use of online learning really began to significantly increase in 1993 when Jones International University became the first fully online university accredited by the Higher Learning Commission. Over the next decade, higher education would see smaller colleges and universities, as well as for-profit institutions, create more innovative and student-focused learning opportunities that can be delivered online.

Corporations and hospitals soon followed the example and began offering required continuing education classes online, classes that lead to career growth such as introduction to project management or miscellaneous healthcare-related classes applicable to clinical settings and a multitude of other subjects. This practice was appealing to nontraditional students, as it provided a pathway to continued development. From a higher education perspective, the curriculum for the 21st-century student needs to be deliverable online to create optimal persistence and retention rates and

be engaging and project-based, addressing real-world problems and issues important to their field of study (Marx, 2006). This extended to millennial nurses; as of 2014, 55% of the nurses held a Bachelor of Science in Nursing. This is expected to increase to approximately 80% by 2020 (American Nurses Association, 2014). Today, registered nurses can complete the Bachelor of Science in Nursing through distance education. This translates into how they wish to learn, train and develop as a nurse.

Today's students expect digital access to their courses, just as they can email a professor. They expect to have their lecture notes online and books available digitally, and many expect their courses and degrees to be offered completely online. A recent study surveyed 57 millennial student nurses and indicated they were reliant on technology, and they learn and retain information through active learning and technology (Montenery et al. 2013). The study was indicative of the need for nursing education to use technology and modernize their method of delivery. A similar survey indicated similar results for a cohort of nurse residents at a teaching hospital. Millennial learners see little value in group work and prefer technology to be integrated into teaching methodologies. Classes with active learning will have higher learning outcomes; this is true at academic institutions and hospitals (Barnes and Jacobson, 2015).

"Many distance-based courses allow students to use several learning modules, such as online message boards, chat rooms, video conferences and recordings of lectures, making distance learning a highly customizable educational option" (Thompson, 4p, n.d.). In 2010, a study was conducted with individuals who coined themselves digital natives, and it revealed that millennial students need a different type of faculty approach. By this, we refer to the type of faculty in an academic or corporate education setting. Specifically, the findings are indicative of the need to select faculty that can incorporate technology, guide their students and be empathetic to the different ways millennials learn (Black, 2010). Nursing education at teaching hospitals utilizes faculty to orient nurses. Orienting millennial nurses can prove to be challenging. A structured orientation can facilitate the transition from a new graduate to a professional nurse and assist in the retention of qualified nurses and, ultimately, safe patient care (Riegel, 2013). The nurses in this study were born between the years 1980 and 1989 and graduated from a nursing program within three years of the study. They were employed in acute care and had started or had recently finished their orientation process within the clinical setting. The results of this study are indicative of the need to modernize nursing orientation and continuing education classes.

Millennials are used to living in a multi-media culture. A study conducted in 2008 examined 19 different instructional designs and the increase in millennial nurse retention in nurse residency programs. The success was more common in magnet-status hospitals, commonly referred to as teaching hospitals. Increased use of instructional technology integration strategies in nursing orientation programs resulted in an increased retention of new nurses. The results stem from a survey of 161 nurse residents (Hancharik, 2008). Another recent trend is the emergence of social media support groups. This is important for interaction and professional growth for millennial nurses. This has a high probability of a positive impact on learning outcomes and retention. There is an ability to connect in real time and build professional communities and networks. This is advantageous for

professional development and employment opportunities, something millennials place a high value on and is critical to nurses and other millennial healthcare workers (Skiba, 2008). Millennial nurses rely heavily on digital communication for education, development, and growth.

Summary

The chapter discusses how to retain the millennial workforce and how important it is for organizations and institutes. I will also be discussing adult theory and its relationship with teaching methodologies and development. The purpose of this study is to develop an understanding of millennial nurse retention trends and recommend best practices and changes that have a high probability of increasing retention. Critical thinking plays a role in instrumental learning, which is preferred by millennials as it is task-oriented. Millennials tend to communicate differently as they are bred in a digital and multimedia world and therefore don’t prefer leaders who manage them. The use of active learning and the ability to connect in real time and make professional communities are important. Another recent trend is the emergence of social media support groups. This is important for interaction and professional growth for millennial nurses. This has a high probability of a positive impact on learning outcomes and retention.