

**As Complex as a Rubrik Cube: Generation "Y" as Occupational Therapy students in Australia**

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**Introduction:** The focus of this research listens to the voices of the Australian "Generation Y" students who were born between 1977 and 1994 to find out how best they perceive they learn about the profession of occupational therapy. All generations are different but this group is distinguished by their familiarity with technology and their seeming confidence. Described as being highly stimulated, fast with short attention spans, and being constantly connected they are different from the educator who, in most cases, is a "computer immigrant". These special circumstances present an educational challenge.

**Objectives:** There are two objectives. 1) To discover what current educational methods are perceived as effective, and 2) What creative educational ideas would this group recommend?

**Method:** To listen to their voices audio-taped focus groups were held with the four cohorts. They were asked to talk about the academic learning methods they found most useful in understanding occupational therapy practice. They were then asked to suggest different ways they wished to learn about the profession in the future.

**Results:** Preliminary results show a body of students who combine an active social life with heavy work commitments and university study. They are task-focussed strategically concentrating on assignments at the expense of a wider body of understanding. They want to "get things done" and dislike reflective activities. Active learning through case-based inquiry was the preferred mode of study. They wanted visual material.

**Conclusion:** Their energy is channelled into social activities and they only focus on assignments "they have to do". More active learning opportunities are being created, more monitoring of the processes of learning is being used and social activities are being designed with a greater purpose of augmenting graduate attributes.

**Contribution to the practice / evidence base of occupational therapy:** On-going additional research is seeking the voices of practice educators and service managers. This wholistic picture will contribute to educational knowledge of this generation in the countries where these characteristics are evident.