

National HVACR Educators and Trainers Conference

Strategies for Connecting with Today's Student in the Age of Electronics



Presented by Professor David Skaves
Co Author of Fundamentals of HVACR

SESSION DESCRIPTION:

Today's students have grown up with the internet, cell phones, and every type of imaginable video device. Because of these many technological advancements, the current period has been referred to as the computer age, the age of the internet, and sometimes the information age. No matter the title, it cannot be challenged that all of this came about because of the advances in electronics. From a teacher's standpoint, the resulting change in society brought on by these evolving technologies brings a new and different type of student to the classroom. Many come to us unprepared, with little or no hands on ability, and interestingly enough, afraid to take on and understand the basic concepts of the same electronic devices which are so much a part of their own world.

The lack of technical ability for incoming students goes even further. Nick Zieminski wrote in the August 25 edition of Reuters "that workers with specialized skills are in critically short supply. Older, experienced workers are retiring and their younger replacements often do not have the right training because their schools are out of touch with modern business needs. A poll of 15-year-olds by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development found only one in 10 American teenagers see themselves in a blue collar job at the age of 30".

This is a disturbing trend. Technical colleges across the country are morphing into 2 + 2 community colleges. More emphasis is placed on the liberal arts and high schools are removing shop programs and hands on training. As this continues there will be an increased

shortage of specialized skilled workers in this country. As instructors, there may be little we can do in the short term to reverse this trend however we must deal with the ramifications of this educational philosophy on a daily basis.

Because today's students are different, there become many fundamental questions that we ask ourselves such as; How can I teach this student about wiring sequences when he/she doesn't even know how to hold a screwdriver? What can I do to explain this concept that is so easy for me but means nothing to them? How can I make a connection to these students and help them to gain an understanding of a field that I know so well?

There is no one single best solution. However there are methods and approaches that can be used which will help you in the classroom. Some are simple. Others are more involved. This presentation will provide strategies for dealing with today's student in some ways that can be implemented immediately and others that can be brought into your program over time.

This session will cover:

- I. Getting to know your students
- II. Understanding that students have different learning styles
- III. Exploring different teaching styles and methods
- IV. Making the material relevant to the student
- V. Managing large groups
- VI. Using your own strengths for success

BIO:

Professor David Skaves:

- Has taught at Maine Maritime Academy since 1986
- Is the co-author with Carter Stanfield for the Pearson Education Fundamentals of HVAC/R text which has been recently introduced in 2009
- Is a registered Professional Engineer, First Class Stationary Engineer, and licensed marine Chief Engineer.
- Is a member of ASHRAE, AFE, and the Maine State Board of Boiler and Pressure Vessels.