

# Teaching Tips

Volume 3 Issue 6 June 2012

## Department of Family & Social Medicine Faculty Development E-Newsletter



### Millennial Learners in Clinic: Challenges and Opportunities

*Millennial, or Generation Y, learners differ from the Silent, Baby Boomer, and Generation X learners of the past. Keeping in mind that these generational differences may be generalizations, recognizing such differences might exist can help preceptors create effective learning environments while introducing students to the profession.*

#### Who are the Millennials?

Millennials are individuals born between 1982 and 2005 who grew up with technology, threats at home and abroad, protective parents, and few heroes.

#### General Qualities and Values of Millennial Learners

They are tech savvy, open to diversity, driven by self-interest, enjoy working in teams, and want immediate gratification, close relationships, and work/life balance.

#### Challenges to Address

Learners are not as self-directed as prior generations, believe they can multitask effectively, sometimes blur lines of authority and often expect faculty to be available 24/7.

#### Strategies to Facilitate Learning

There are teaching methods that address these issues while fostering an environment in which Millennial learners can flourish.

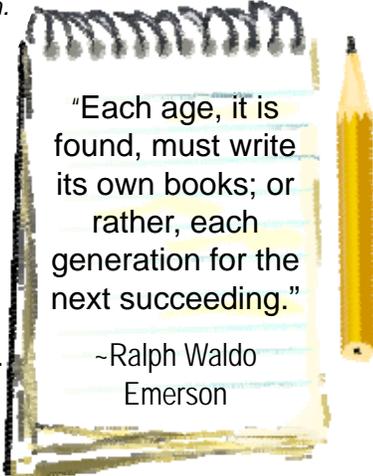
**Create Structured Learning Environments** – Because millennials are less self-directed, it is important to refer to course objectives, set the agenda at the onset of each clinical session, and ask students to play an active role in identifying specific goals (e.g. provide counseling to a patient with XX diagnosis).

**Work in Teams** – Although students are expected to see patients independently, discussions about care can be placed in the context of the health care team. Show students that they are an important part of the clinic or practice.

**Provide Mentoring** – Learners should be told about professional boundaries and expectations, but also receive specific, timely, and meaningful feedback. Sharing personal experiences of patient care can help faculty better connect with students.

**Embrace Technology** – Create challenging cases for students to solve. They can look up content, but it is the preceptor who teaches critical thinking, prioritization, and application of content. Web-based programs cannot yet fill that role.

**Discourage Multitasking** – Literature shows that multi-tasking may be effective only when related to the same content. Viewing calendars, responding to texts, and other non-related activities limit knowledge acquisition and retention. Set ground rules and be a role model by limiting your own Smartphone use during teaching.



“Each age, it is found, must write its own books; or rather, each generation for the next succeeding.”

~Ralph Waldo Emerson

#### References:

- Eckleberry-Hunt, J. & Tucciarone, J. (2011). The challenges and opportunities of teaching Generation Y. *Journal of Graduate Medical Education*, 3(4), 458-461.
- Roberts, D.H., Newman, L.R., & Schwartzstein, R. M. (2012). Twelve tips for facilitating Millennials' learning. *Medical Teacher*, 34, 274-278.