

EDITORIAL

Educating Educators

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Hardly a day goes by that we as optometric educators aren't reminded in some way just how much our roles and the students we serve have changed over the years. Historically, optometric education was provided in large group lectures with laboratories and clinical experiences. Students were content to listen to lectures, memorize information,

regurgitate the information on multiple-choice tests and slowly learn to provide clinical care without the concerns of productivity quotas. Current optometric students, however, part of the Millennial Generation born between 1982 and 2002, prefer to learn through collaboration, use of technology, instant feedback, structure and active learning experiences.¹ The delivery of optometric education has therefore evolved to reflect these student characteristics as well as to address advances in technology and expanded scope of practice. Blended learning, active learning and new technology are now components of the educational process.

Given these accelerating changes, it is incumbent upon us to determine how faculty should be trained in order to provide optimal education. In "Directions in Optometric Education," the Think Tank feature in this issue of the journal, Drs. Ken Seger and Michael Giese explore this important issue. Their commentary is meant to open a national dialogue among faculty members and administrators. I would like to open a similar dialogue via the journal on a closely related question: how optometric faculty grow and develop subsequent to their initial training in regard to teaching, learning and assessment. To start the discussion, I am providing the following reviews of educational conferences I have attended, all of which opened my eyes to new and creative ideas and

potential solutions to the challenges faced by all educators.

• ***The Foundation for Critical Thinking: The International Conference on Critical Thinking and Education Reform.***

The Foundation for Critical Thinking provides a wealth of information, including books, teaching guides, articles, workshops and professional development programs. Its International Conference on Critical Thinking and Education Reform is held in Berkeley, Calif. This conference is a valuable resource for those who wish to increase their knowledge on critical thinking. The foundation's Web site declares it the longest running annual conference on critical thinking. Drs. Richard Paul, Linda Elder and Gerald Nosich and Mr. Rush Cosgrove are the main lecturers and facilitators. The annual conference is attended by educators involved in elementary education through graduate and professional programs as well as military personnel and business people. I have attended the conference multiple times and felt it provided a framework of knowledge on critical thinking to incorporate into my teaching activities. [www.criticalthinking.org]

• ***National Center for Teaching Thinking: The Summer Institute.***

The NCTT is an educational service organization that provides workshops, professional development, lessons and other resources for those who are interested in infusing critical thinking into a curriculum. The center, directed by Dr. Robert Swartz, has been in operation since 1992. The Summer Institute is held annually in the Boston area. It focuses on how to incorporate critical thinking into curricula, lessons and assessment. The conference is appropriate for administrators and faculty. I have attended and felt that although the majority of participants were involved in elementary and secondary education, the concepts were very useful to me in a professional health program. [www.nctt.net]

• ***Magna Publications: The Teaching Professor.*** Magna Publications provides extensive resources relevant to all aspects of teaching. It produces publications, online courses,

a blog and workshops in addition to other professional development products. It hosts two annual conferences, The Teaching Professor Annual Conference and The Teaching Professor Technology Conference. The organization's Web site describes its purpose as "The Teaching Professor helps you: overcome obstacles to effective teaching, stay on top of the latest pedagogical research, hear what's working for colleagues 'in the trenches,' hone your skills and stay on top of teaching innovations, and truly connect with your students."

I attended this conference last year and am planning to attend again this year. The majority of the presentations are from faculty members who want to share their teaching ideas and experiences. Although the conference provides plenty of useful pedagogy-related ideas, it does not seem to emphasize outcomes assessment for the information presented. [www.teachingprofessor.com]

• ***Lilly Conferences on College & University Teaching.***

These symposia are held at various locations across the country at various times throughout the year. The international conference is held in November at Miami University in Ohio. It has been ongoing for 30 years and is considered one of the most prestigious conferences on the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL). I attended several years ago. It is a combination of informative keynote speakers,

faculty presentations and discussions. I felt it provided a terrific learning experience in creative pedagogy and insights into teaching and learning. The conference participants were diverse and eager to discuss and share information. [www.lillyconferences.com]

• ***International Society for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning.***

This organization has been presenting both national and international conferences since 2004. The national conferences are held multiple times at various locations throughout the country. The emphasis is on SoTL. I attended my first SoTL conference in 2009. The keynote speeches were stimulating, and the faculty presentations contained an assessment piece. [www.issotl.org]

Optometric educators must be receiving continual professional development in clinical specialties as well as optometric education. Share with us your thoughts, information or experiences in achieving professional optometric educational development.

Reference

1. Howe N, Strauss W. *Millennials Go to College* (2nd edition). Great Falls, Virginia: Life Course Associates, 2007.



SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT



2013 EDUCATIONAL STARTER GRANTS

The Association of Schools and Colleges of Optometry (ASCO) and The Vision Care Institute, LLC, an affiliate of Johnson & Johnson Vision Care Inc., are pleased to announce the availability of the 2013 Educational Starter Grants. The grants have been offered over the past two years and are dedicated to supporting educational research. This is a great opportunity for faculty to get involved in educational research, which can impact teaching, student learning and the profession.

Complete details about the grant program, including a current application, deadlines for proposal submission, selection criteria, and past successful grant proposals, can be found at the ASCO Web site, www.opted.org, under Special Programs and Awards.