

## LETTER

### We're All In This Together

*To the Editor:* I would like to thank Fjortoft for her commentary in the May 2017 issue of the *American Journal of Pharmaceutical Education* entitled, "The Selfie Generation and Pharmacy Education."<sup>1</sup> As a millennial myself and a recent graduate, I strongly agree with the idea that the generation poses new challenges in education. As written in Fjortoft's article, self-reflection is not only a required educational outcome by the Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education (ACPE), it is also a method to allow learners to discover personal strengths and weaknesses.<sup>1,2</sup> I agree with the author that focusing solely on learners' self-awareness may only perpetuate the "hyper-attentiveness to self" of the millennial generation. The millennial generation has been called the "me me me" generation because they get caught up in the self-importance and instant gratification of technology and social media.<sup>3</sup> However, members of this generation view themselves differently: hard-working, caring, and optimistic.<sup>4</sup> Millennials value mentorship; they want to work with their leaders. Millennials strive to find purpose in their work. They also appreciate teamwork and collaboration. These three facets of the millennial generation can be used in pharmacy education.

Unlike previous generations who have responded to a hierarchy of leadership, millennials seek partnership with authority figures. In the past, leadership has been a "command and take charge" action; now, learners appreciate leaders who show authority through collaboration.<sup>5</sup> Teachers and mentors should aim to be approachable and easy to work with, so learners can gain the satisfaction of working with them, not under them. By being accessible and communicating openly, educators can engage students on a personal level.

Millennials want to be engaged in their work and learning. This can be achieved by providing a purpose and community to their work. Examples include showing students how they are a part of a greater good, giving them a sense of ownership, and helping them understand the "big why" behind what they are doing or learning. Although millennials are the generation of standardized testing, they often question the system and are comfortable challenging the status quo.<sup>4</sup> Giving students a sense of community among themselves and within patient care can not only improve their learning outcomes, but also inherently provide them with the opportunity to learn about themselves in different environments.<sup>5</sup>

The millennial generation is collaborative and team-oriented. Pharmacists play a large role on interprofessional teams and simply focusing on students' self-reflections may miss a crucial part of teamwork training. The ACPE Standards 16 includes interprofessional collaboration, self-reflection, and giving students opportunities to learn about themselves in group settings.<sup>2</sup> In addition, reflection could allow students to grow further. Team-based learning (TBL) activities have been shown to not only improve academic performance, but also improve students' self-management and teamwork skills.<sup>6</sup> Learners enjoy participating in these activities and agree that TBL helps build critical-thinking and problem-solving skills.<sup>6,7</sup> Implementation of self-managed learning teams into pharmacy education would help provide the understanding about how students' work makes a difference and how these skills can be used across many settings.

Understanding yourself is a critical skill in any field, but let's not forget about mentorship, purpose, and teamwork. As pharmacists take more and more leadership roles in health care, we should aim for our students to appreciate community among colleagues and within patient care. We're all in this together.

Erica Wilson, PharmD<sup>a,b</sup>

<sup>a</sup>UPMC St. Margaret PGY-1 pharmacy resident, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

<sup>b</sup>University of Pittsburgh faculty development fellow, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

## REFERENCES

1. Fjortoft N. The selfie generation and pharmacy education. *Am J Pharm Educ.* 2017;81(4):Article 61.
2. Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education. Accreditation standards and key elements for the professional program in pharmacy leading to the doctor of pharmacy degree. Standards 2016. <https://www.acpe-accredit.org/pdf/Standards2016FINAL.pdf>. Accessed August 9, 2017.
3. Stein J. Millennials: the me me me generation. *Time Magazine.* May 20, 2013. <http://time.com/247/millennials-the-me-me-me-generation/>. Accessed August 3, 2017.
4. Pew Research Center. *Millennials, a Portrait of Generation Next: Confident, Connected, Open to Change.* February 2010. <http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/files/2010/10/millennials-confident-connected-open-to-change.pdf>. Accessed August 3, 2017.
5. Williams VN, Medina J, Medina A, Clifton S. Bridging the millennial generation expectation gap: perspectives and strategies for physician and interprofessional faculty. *Am J Med Sci.* 2017;353(2): 109-115.
6. Addo-Atuah J. Performance and perceptions of pharmacy students using team-based learning (TBL) within a global health course. *Innov Pharm.* 2011;2(2):Article 37.
7. Frame TR, Cailor SM, Gryka RJ, Chen AM, Kiersma ME, Sheppard L. Student perceptions of team-based learning vs traditional lecture-based learning. *Am J Pharm Educ.* 2015;79(4):Article 51.