The faculty of a medical school ensure that the medical curriculum includes self-directed learning experiences and time for independent study to allow medical students to develop the skills of lifelong learning. Self-directed learning involves medical students’ self-assessment of learning needs; independent identification, analysis, and synthesis of relevant information; and appraisal of the credibility of information sources.

Key points

SMPH is deeply committed to students being active learners throughout their medical career. One way to accomplish this is to help them develop the skills needed to pursue self-directed, lifelong learning.

SMPH students must be able to independently identify knowledge gaps and to seek and synthesize relevant, credible information to close the gaps. Identifying and supplementing knowledge gaps helps students grow as learners, a skill that will foster responsibility and professionalism in their future careers.

Examples of Self-Directed Learning

- Within the Legacy clinical curriculum, clerkship mid-rotation feedback is one way students can identify and close their knowledge gaps. Students self-assess their performance and then meet with a faculty member to identify and discuss gaps in knowledge or skills.

- In the ForWard curriculum, students participate in Patient Centered Education, or PaCE, cases. These small-group experiences allow students to present PaCE case topics to their peers. Longitudinal teacher coaches facilitate discussions following the presentations. In this way, students have an opportunity to direct and regulate their learning as well as develop lifelong learning skills.

Learn more at med.wisc.edu/lcme