Small Group Facilitator Guidelines
2011-2012

Purpose
The purpose of the small group/large group curriculum delivery format is to encourage more active engagement by students in developing their own clinical thinking skills earlier on. By providing students with case-based questions that they must work through in a small group session, group members must utilize their resources to begin forming differential diagnoses, much as a physician does. Teamwork is also necessarily encouraged. Groups then attend the large group teaching session in order to compare their diagnostic thinking and conclusions with those of our faculty experts, filling in knowledge gaps and gaining further appreciation for “correct” diagnostic thinking and lifelong learning.

Role of the Facilitator
The role of the facilitator in the small group session is to keep the group on track in completing their assigned questions. It is NOT to instruct or hint at any given answer; such instruction occurs during the large group follow-up. Thus content is not shared with group members, rather the facilitator encourages the group members to share their own thought processes and answer their own questions. One does not have to be a content expert to facilitate the small group.

Examples of Facilitator Prompts
Facilitators may use prompts to keep the group moving towards its goals, to bring in members who tend to be non-participatory, and/or to enrich the groups’ process. Below are several examples of what a facilitator might say:

- What is your differential diagnosis?
- How did you arrive there?
- What are the main diagnostic clues in the case guiding your thought process?
- What questions need to be answered in order to arrive at a diagnosis?
- What questions do you have?
- What do you think? (for non-participatory members)
- What resources are you using?
- What do you all think about the question?
- Does anyone have a response for that?
- Does anyone have any ideas about that?
- Does everyone agree? Why or why not?