

Expanding Educational Horizons In 3D

By Terry Myers, DDS

With all of the innovations available to dentists today, educating ourselves on how technology works and fits in with our goals keeps our practices vital. American scientist Marvin Minsky once said, “You don’t understand anything until you learn it more than one way.”

As a general dentist, I don’t always need the same information as a specialist, but I still want to be able to make the best diagnostic decisions. For example, when I discovered Cone Beam imaging was an option for my office, I researched the technology--how it works; the fields of view available, and the safety issues related to radiation exposure.

To expand the horizons of my treatment options, I decided on a Gendex GXCB-500™. Since I was totally comfortable with reading 2D digital imaging, I was glad that the “500” had a 2D pan built in, and this model also gave me the opportunity to capture 3D scans. I marveled that I now had the capability to obtain a 360 degree view that could be sliced, rotated, enlarged, and zoomed in on. But, to put that information to its best use, I wanted to learn more about Cone Beam, how to properly read scans, and compatibility with other applications.

Opportunities abound for learning about 3D imaging. For example, the [3D Imaging Institute](#) offers an array of classes. One extensive course given by Dr. W. Bruce Howerton, Jr., a noted oral and maxillofacial radiologist, and a team of experienced professionals, is on the uses of 3-D Cone Beam volume data and its manipulation, other 3D planning programs, safety, and how Cone Beam fits the needs of various dental specialties. Also, each year, there are symposiums such as the International Congress on 3-D Dental Imaging where experts showcase and discuss their imaging triumphs, latest techniques, software, and related products.

For those who prefer to stay closer, webinars bring distinguished dental professionals to the comfort of your home or office computer. Local seminars let you meet colleagues from your area and trade experiences. Magazines, dental journals, buyers guides, and Association publications offer specific case studies and clinical situations. And, of course, the Internet brings an incredible amount of information to your fingertips such as www.conebeam.com, and www.imaios.com, an online clinical database featuring an atlas of the human body in 3D images.

All of these educational experiences help us to grow intellectually, to educate our patients, add more treatment options, and most importantly, to be responsible users of all of the wonderful, innovative techniques available. Learning is growing—learn things more than one way, and open up a whole new world of possibilities for your practice.

Dr. Terry Myers completed his residency in advanced general dentistry and served as an instructor in the Advanced Education in General Dentistry Residency Program and director of the faculty practice at the University of Missouri-Kansas City School of Dentistry. He is a fellow in the Academy of General Dentistry, and a member of the Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry as well as the Dental Sleep Disorder Society. Dr. Myers is on the board of directors at Research Belton Foundation and is a participating provider for the dental care program to improve children’s dental care. His private practice is in Belton, Mo. Dr. Myers is a featured speaker at the 4th International Congress on 3-D Dental Imaging this year. He can be reached by e-mail at office@keystone-dentistry.com.