ABSTRACT: 2013 ELAM Institutional Action Project Poster Symposium

Project Title: The use of ePortfolios for Assessment of Professional Growth and Development of Dental Students

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Background, Challenge or Opportunity: "an ePortfolio is a learner-driven collection of digital objects demonstrating experiences, achievements and evidence of learning."(Helen Barrett, 2009) ePortfolios can be used for learning, branding, self-marketing and assessment. The recently revised accreditation standards for dentistry require that programs include evidence based curricular content and learning experiences. The ability to access and evaluate evidence and apply knowledge requires critical thinking and self directed learning. Besides a place to set goals and gather artefacts, an ePortfolio is an area for self-reflection and self assessment. Thus, an ePortfolio can help instructors to better assess the students knowledge, skills and attributes, while it will help the students to better understand their growth and development. Without clearly defined criteria, grading a student's work is merely subjective. Both students and instructors could benefit from
a more objective grading system that would improve the students' ability to self-assess and the instructors' ability to grade in a more systematic manner. The use of rubrics with clearly defined criteria, teaching and learning expectations and outcomes is a useful method to assess performance, product or procedures.

Purpose/Objectives: The purpose of this project is to develop a mechanism by which we can implement to use of ePortfolios to enhance student learning and assessment, and demonstrate the use of evidence-based dentistry. The students can document their work, collect and store examples of their work, reflect on their assignments, and add evidence-based material in ePortfolios and this can help identify gaps in their knowledge and proficiency. An additional goal would be to calibrate instructors' assessments.

Methods/Approach: After a thorough search of the literature and discussions with people who have implemented ePortfolios in dental schools, I realized it would not be wise to start with implementing a curriculum-wide competency-based ePortfolio, rather start with a small well-defined area. I was advised to keep the reflective assignment to two or three questions, so that students would be more encouraged to reflect on their work and faculty would have time to give valuable formative feedback. I found out there are numerous commercial and free software programs available to create ePortfolios, but none interface with the EHR we use. After discussions with the EHR committee, the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and the Assistant Dean for Clinical Affairs it became clear that improvement of the evaluative process on the clinic floors was most important as a starting point. I established a committee with young and enthusiastic faculty
who determined to start a pilot project with a small group of students, a small group of faculty and one specific procedure to be assessed. The committee is currently establishing rubrics to improve the assessment methods of that specific procedure. More background work needs to be done to decide on the type of ePortfolio to be used. The committee is meeting once a month to make change happen and reports once per quarter to the Dean to ensure timely implementation and progress.

Outcomes and Evaluation:
This is a project in early progress and outcomes are not yet available.

The use of ePortfolios for Assessment of Professional Growth and Development of Dental Students

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Background

"An ePortfolio is a learner-driven collection of digital objects demonstrating experiences, achievements and evidence of learning." (Helen Barrett, 2009)[1]
Recently revised accreditation standards for dentistry require that programs include evidence based curricular content and learning experiences.
The ability to access and evaluate evidence and apply knowledge requires critical thinking, self-directed learning, self-assessment and self-reflection. An ePortfolio can be a platform for the student to tell his/her story of professional growth and development over time.

Purpose

To create an electronic environment aiming to enhance student learning and assessment, and to demonstrate the use of evidence-based dentistry.

Approach

• Literature search
• Discussion with colleagues who use ePortfolios
• Grand Rounds presentation on use of ePortfolios

•Needs assessment of elements to integrate in ePortfolio
•Form team best suited to implement assessed needs
•Formulate assessment tools
•Choose ePortfolio program

Next Steps

•Pilot with select faculty and students
•Student / faculty focus groups feedback
•Assess, reflect, react ……………
•Implement on larger scale

Lessons Learned

Developing and maintaining a valuable ePortfolio:
• is time-consuming
• is done in small increments
• requires extra efforts from both students and faculty.
Highlighting benefits of ePortfolio for students is key to success.

Reference:
1. http://electronicportfolios.org/

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