

TOP 10 TIPS to Launch Resident Learning Portfolios



An educational resource
brought to you by
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"Resident learning portfolios" – everyone in GME is talking about them. Have you effectively integrated them into your program yet?

Here are ten tips to help you launch (or course-correct) the use of resident learning portfolios by your residents and faculty.

Tip 1: Do not wait for an expensive electronic system. Resident learning can be achieved effectively using old-fashioned paper and file folders. The educational concepts, not the packaging of those concepts, are what counts.

Tip 2: Explore inherent issues before you begin. Consider confidentiality, ownership of contents, and disclosure – just to name a few. The individual portfolios and your application of them in the curriculum will expand over time. Think through the basic process at the outset.

Tip 3: Recognize the dual nature of learning portfolios, as both a learning activity and an evaluation system. This tool has many applications!

Tip 4: Educate your faculty! The format and the paper do not generate learning – the way in which your faculty and residents use the papers in the portfolio does! Faculty development workshops provide the background information and "how-to techniques" that will be needed for success.

Tip 5: Remember the primary objective of the learning portfolio: to instill in the residents the skills, behaviors, and motivation needed for lifelong learning.

Tip 6: Portfolios should be competency-based. Anything you want the resident to know or that you want your faculty to assess will fit within one of the six general competencies.

Tip 7: A portfolio is not a "to-be-filed" folder! Assign specific learning activities in each of the competency domains. The portfolio becomes the system to organize the resident's individual learning plan.

Tip 8: Make the individual resident responsible! No matter how you define ownership (see #2, left), the resident needs to be responsible for compiling the portfolio and using it in his/her learning process. Your Program Coordinator cannot do it for them!

Tip 9: Resident self-reflection and faculty feedback are the keys. True learning takes place in the resident's thought process about various events, his/her self-assessment of strengths and remaining learning deficits, and the faculty members' feedback about those conclusions.

Tip 10: Why should you implement resident learning portfolios? Even if your RRC is not one that requires resident learning portfolios as an assessment tool (yet!), this technique is here to stay. There IS an initial learning curve ("OK, so how do they work??!"). But once you have mastered it, the benefits to your residency program's effectiveness in providing GME to meet the individual needs of each resident grow exponentially.

Want to learn more about implementation of resident learning portfolios? Apparently, the Partners™ Passport Clients do – they selected this topic for our "You Asked for It!" Fall 2008 Telecourse. Join us to find out why!



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