Using a Free Learning Management System to Create Structured and Collaborative Learning in a Family Medicine Residency Program

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Background & Significance with Relevance to Family Medicine: Creating a structured learning environment in a residency program can be challenging. In the past, static websites or cloud-based drives were used to store information. Over the last few years, however, learning management systems (LMS) have become more robust. Schoology, an easy-to-use and free LMS, can provide a platform to engage residents, organize content, and document resident achievement.

Problem Statement: Today's residents desire access to learning materials on demand and in a convenient format.

Methods: Striving to meet the needs of today's learners, in March 2016 the Aultman Family Medicine Residency Program began using Schoology, a free learning management system (LMS) developed for smartphones. It was initially piloted among the faculty and later expanded to include residents. At first, Schoology was utilized as a discussion forum and repository for journal articles. It has since grown to include quizzes, videos, PowerPoint presentations, and conference schedules. The Curriculum Committee is tasked with making changes to the content within Schoology.

Outcomes: Efficient use of technology can heighten the teaching and learning experience of residents and faculty. Through Schoology, a free and powerful LMS, it is easy to create an engaging digital learning environment. Adopting Schoology has created new possibilities for integrating technology and resident training and assessment.

Conclusions/Recommendations/Implications (How does this inform Family Medicine?): Schoology can be quickly and easily implemented in any learning environment, including other residency programs. The integration of technology, self-empowerment, and collaboration can allow residents to discover and develop their own learning styles and access these resources anywhere and at any time.