Developing Student-Directed Learning Plans in Medical School

Daniel Richards, M.D.
Jennifer Currin-McCulloch, M.S.W.
April 6, 2017
• Introduce Individualized Learning Plans (ILP)
• Discuss how ILP have been implemented at Dell Medical School
• Review the qualitative approach to analyzing the students' ILP data
• Share preliminary findings from student ILP
“Rather than assimilating a store of largely irrelevant information, doctors now need to develop learning skills which enable them to sift out and acquire information as and when the need arises.”

“In the practice-learning environment, a physician will begin an educational activity not by entering a conference room but by reflecting on his or her practice performance.”

Adult learning theory

Reflection

Self-directed learning

Self-assessment

Learning contracts

Goal-setting

Feedback

Mentorship

Coaching

Competence

Learning Communities

Professionalism

MOC

Continuous Professional Development

ILP

PBLI

I-SMART
What is an ILP?

An **ILP** is a tool designed to help develop self-directed, lifelong learning skills.
In its simplest form, a learning contract is a guide to learning, collaboratively developed by the teacher and learner at the beginning of a learning experience.

Contracts specify goals for learning, resources and strategies for achieving goals, and evidence to be gathered to demonstrate achievement.

After establishing an initial contract, teacher and learner meet periodically to review the learner’s progress toward goals and to revise the contract, if necessary.
The case for ILPs

• Self-directed, Lifelong Learning
• Medical Professionalism & Competency
• LCME, ACGME, & ABMS-MOC
• Required by the ACGME’s Pediatric RC
• The Literature
  – Ericsson: Expertise & “Deliberate Practice”
  – Medical Education Literature
MedEd Literature

• ILP in Pediatric Residency
• Self-assessment Literature
• MK & PC >> SBL & Prof
• LEARNERS have difficulty with
  – developing & attaining personal learning goals
  – confidence in their learning goals
  – CAN BENEFIT FROM L.G. Education & Experience
• Group Discussion & Frequent Meetings are most valued by learners
“Although the theoretical power of the ILP approach lies with its emphasis on self-direction and individualization of learning, both residents and faculty in our program wanted more guidance, standardization, and structure.”

Elements of an ILP

- Reflection & Self-assessment
- Goal Generation and Documentation
- Develop Plans/Strategies to Achieve Goal
- Assess Progress on Goal(s)
- Revise Goal/Plan
- Generate new Goal(s)

** ITERATIVE PROCESS **
Guiding a Student ILP

• Self-assessment
• Mentor Guidance
• External Evaluation
• Peer-feedback
• Mindful Practice (Reflection)
Creating I-SMART Objectives

- **IMPORTANT** to the learner
- **SPECIFIC** steps & plans
- **MEASURABLE** outcome
- **ACCOUNTABILITY** tracking & sharing
- **REALISTIC** modify based on context/resources
- **TIMELINE** for completion
Managing an ILP

- Dedicating Time
- Encouraging Reflection – structured opportunities
- Helping with Goal Generation
- Creating Accountability
ILP at Dell Medical School

• DOCS (Developing Outstanding Clinical Skills)
  – A mentored, longitudinal course; meets weekly
  – 50 MS1 and 10 faculty mentors
  – Feedback, ILPs & I-SMART Goals

• Incorporating review & Tracking processes
  – E-Portfolios (Canvas)
  – 6 ILP iterations per student
Methods

• Received informed consent from 38/50 first year students
• Journaling their ILPs in CANVAS
• Downloaded ILPs into AtlasTi
• Utilizing Template Analysis
  – Becoming familiar with ILP content by reading the first 14 students’ ILPs
  – Initiating preliminary coding of the data
    • Goal statements
  – Next steps will be to perform initial codes for the remainder of the ILPs
  – Organize the initial themes into meaning clusters
  – Create a template (codebook) for use with remaining ILPs
Themes within Goal Statements

• History taking
  • Understanding
  • Fluidity/comfort
  • Accuracy
• Physical exams
• Exploring medicine
• Time management
Interpersonal Skills

- Improving patient comfort
- Building rapport
- Enhancing listening skills
- Improve reading of nonverbal cues
Identity Formation

• Empathy
• Compassion
• Patient-centeredness
• Service/giving back/helping others
  – Community
  – Impact
  – Healthcare transformation
• Uncertainty vs. confidence
• Competence
• Professionalism
• Emotional intelligence
  – Connecting with patient while protecting against burnout
Self-Care

• Playing the piano
• Learning the violin
• Creating routine exercise habits
• Eating better
• Creating work-life balance
• Focusing on personal wellness
Actions

• Practice
  – Clinical, peers, standardized patients
• Formative Feedback
  – Faculty, peers
• Performance/Evaluation
  – OSCE, exams
• Reflection/Self-evaluation
• Study
• Advice
  – Peers, older students

• Observation
  – Role models
  – Other professions
• Participation
  – Seeking-out opportunities outside of clinical
  – Schwartz Rounds
  – Community health dialogue
  – Interest Groups
• Projects
  – Population health/Value-based care projects
Discussion

• Novel use of ILP with first-year medical students in the DOCS Course at Dell Med

• Challenges to ILP implementation

• Future direction and opportunities for the successful use of ILP in medical education
Thank You!

Daniel.Richards@austin.utexas.edu

Thank You!