

FEATURED PROJECT : PERSONALIZED LIFELONG LEARNING PLAN (PL³P)

Supported by a grant from the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education, the College of Dental Medicine and the Columbia Center for New Media Teaching and Learning (CCNMTL) have created the Personalized Lifelong Learning Plan (PL³P), a portal for post-graduate dental residents in the Advanced Education and General Dentistry (AEGD) and General Practice Residency (GPR) programs. PL³P provides residents with access to a suite of online tools that promote active learning and reflection, including personal home pages, blogs, and electronic portfolios for their studies and clinical activities.

The PL³P approach requires the post-graduate dental resident to take an active role in his own training by developing personalized learning plans to meet his individual needs. Residents chronicle their experience as they advance through the AEGD and GPR programs, creating action plans based on their own priorities and learning objectives. And perhaps most importantly, the site encourages residents to model lifelong learning strategies that can be continued for professional development beyond their formal studies.

For the AEGD and GPR Personalized Lifelong Learning Plan includes the following components:

Program Competencies: The AEGD and GPR competencies are written statements describing the levels of knowledge and skills residents are required to master in order to perform a particular aspect of dental practice.

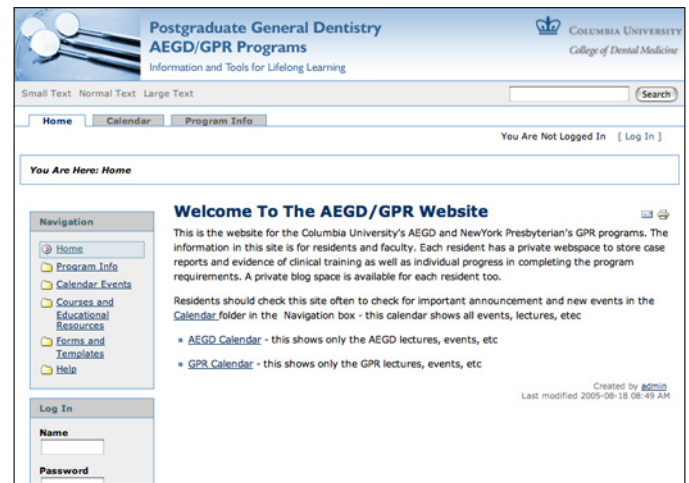
Personal Learning Objectives: Learning objectives are statements of specific tasks or behaviors that residents should be able to perform after participating in a set of educational activities.

Educational Activities: Residents are required to attend lectures, group discussions, and laboratories, and to participate in supervised patient care, workshops, and online tutorials, as well as to develop Best Evidence Topics to support their clinical cases.

Evaluation/Documentation: Evaluation is a focused, time-dependent process, undertaken to assess whether learning objectives have been accomplished. Documentation is the specific data supporting the evaluation.

The PL³P site encourages reflection and self-assessment. Faculty mentors provide ongoing feedback, guiding residents through a thoughtfully constructed process that challenges them to:

Examine critical issues related to their clinical services,



Connect clinical and service experience to course work,
 Enhance the development of professional skills and values,

PL³P was developed using Plone, an open-source content management system that allows multiple users to share different levels of access. The site provides a space that promotes dialogue between residents and faculty mentors, in which discussion and evaluation are supported through a review-based publishing process.

Initially, a resident's assets—clinical cases, Best Evidence Topics, and seminar presentations—are private, but he or she can choose to share them with others at any time. Faculty mentors always have the ability to view and publish any resident's assets. The published work then becomes accessible to all participants, enriching the learning community's online resources.

We are currently monitoring the residents' use of the portfolio in an effort to measure its impact on their attitudes and lifelong learning skills. This data will be used to inform decisions to improve the PL³P approach.

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