Ensure Students Are Learning:
Faculty Descriptions of Innovative Teaching Practices

Using Portfolium to Track Student Accomplishments and Milestones

Innovative Teaching Practice Description:

This course is a hybrid format in which half the course time is spent face-to-face in class and the other half is hosted online via asynchronous discussion and online assignments. The instructor posts all course activities online, but select activities are taught in the classroom. For example, students work through the ICD-9 medical coding book in class using practice problems to identify appropriate billing codes. As this is an applied activity for coding, other activities like this are also reserved for in-class meetings.

The online portion of the class is supplemented by an e-portfolio whereby students keep track of their learning and accomplishments to share with future employers. Portfolios are created using Portfolium, a software created specifically for tracking student milestones and success. The instructor asks students to create portfolios because they mirror what is happening in the industry; medical professionals use e-portfolios to communicate their work with each other and to apply for grants. As aspiring medical professionals, students can use this opportunity to begin tracking their own accomplishments and learn how to communicate those accomplishments to others in an industry-appropriate way. Through their portfolios, students must communicate two essential capabilities: that they have the skills to do a specific task and that they can access appropriate information

to keep their skills up-to-date. For example, if students say that they are skilled coders, they should provide samples of their work and list links or resources they use to demonstrate that they know how to access the information required to keep their skills current.

Students update their portfolios throughout the semester, adding new skills and new resources they acquire. A completed portfolio consists of a picture, basic profile, skills page, resources page, and a professional affiliations page. Students also link their portfolios to their LinkedIn profiles if they have one. At the end of the semester, the completed portfolio is 50% of the final grade.

Once they have created their basic portfolio, students can continue to add other elements such as a resume, proof of additional professional development, or any other relevant information. These portfolios serve as a vital framework for the Medical Coding and Billing program as they help students track their development and provide them a means to communicate easily with potential employers. As student employment is a key performance indicator for the department, it is closely tracked. The portfolios provide a way to assess if students are meeting the skill demands of the local workforce.

Notes From The Instructor About This Innovative Teaching Practice:

Since implementing the e-portfolios, faculty from other medical-related disciplines at the college have shown an interest in implementing them in their classes, and the instructor has hosted several professional development sessions to help other faculty learn how to use Portfolium.