

Title: The Incorporation of E-Learning into the Didactic Portion of the Dental Student Curriculum

Name: Leila H. Liberman, RDH, BS, MDE

University of Maryland, School of Dentistry, Baltimore, MD 21201, USA

Digital technology is continually changing subsequently being incorporated into the educational arena. In order for higher educational institutions to be successful, they need to be able to market themselves to generation “X” by offering online courses. Presently, faculty members presume they are addressing digital learning by posting a PowerPoint lecture in a learning management system and offering no form of active engagement to the learner. There are many didactic courses offered to first and second year dental students where online learning could be used and the development of an active learner facilitated. The development of online courses will promote the expansion of the dental profession by enabling students in more remote areas to have access to educational programs which may not have been available to them previously. Learner support for students and faculty are needed for online learning and for the expansion of dental educational programs. Online educators need to have an understanding/knowledge of the following concepts: empathy, self-directed learners, fluency with technology, instructional design and learner support for student and educator. Dental educators will need specialized training to develop retentive and productive programs. Doing so will enable them to achieve a major goal of their profession by increasing Access to Care and contribute to the growth of dental professionals.