Background: It has become increasingly important for educators to address student interaction with medical education-focused social media, and to enable students to critically appraise and contribute in this domain. Faced with students with varied learning styles and a finite amount of classroom time, we replaced a required sub-internship oral presentation with the “EM Design Challenge” in which students create an online learning tool for their peers.

Educational Objectives: The exercise aims to introduce students to the creation of appealing, informative and accurate online teaching tools. An additional goal is to reinforce learning on a topic of the student’s choosing.

Curricular Design: Sub-interns are first exposed to a didactic presentation and hands-on workshop introducing them to online, social media-based medical education. They then create an online teaching tool at the MS4 level, for inclusion on the course’s private Google Plus social network site. Posts ideally include links, videos, photos, and the capacity for commentary and feedback. Students are encouraged to utilize formats best suited to their topic: video, slide decks, infographics, podcasts, etc. Platforms include (but are not limited to) YouTube, Haiku Deck, Vine, Piktochart, and Instagram. The posts are archived on the social media site, and available to past, present and future course participants. Formative feedback is provided via online comments from peers, senior residents, and faculty. Summative feedback and a scored evaluation are obtained via an online evaluation process which assesses EM relevance, accuracy, creativity and engagement, use of references and links, and potential to serve as an innovative educational tool.

Impact/Effectiveness: Contemporary medical students learn in the online space. Our format enables them to create content for their peers, fostering a deeper learning of both EM core content and the educational process. To date, nearly 100 students have submitted Design Challenge posts, all of which are accessible to the course community. Preliminary feedback indicates that students prefer the assignment to a traditional presentation, and have found the approach unique and educational, cultivating skills which will be essential to them as they become resident-educators.

Impact/Effectiveness: 28 students participated. Median post PPOS score were statistical more patient-centered overall (74.5 pre vs. 72.5 post) as well as for the caring subscale (34 pre vs. 32.5 post) but not for the sharing subscale (40.5 pre vs. 40.0 post). There were no statistical differences in the PPOS or its subscales between students by gender. During debriefing, students recommended continuing the module and expressed that the experience was valuable in showing them the perspective of the patient during care and impacted how they would personally communicate with patients.