Caught in a ‘RAT’ Race: Lessons Learned through the Development of a Residents as Teachers Rotation

Despite overwhelming evidence on the importance of a Residents as Teachers (RAT) curriculum for medical trainees, few resources exist to guide residency programs on the steps to effectively initiate a formal course of training. As chief residents often do, we took on the lofty – and arguably unobtainable – task of not only creating such a curriculum for our residents, but laying the groundwork for a RAT blueprint for programs across the country to follow. With the support of our program leadership, we created a two-week rotation for our residents with the goal of teaching the skills of effective educators and allowing supervised time to perfect those skills.

With the help of our own institutions’ ‘Who’s Who’ of clinical instructors, we organized dedicated one-on-one sessions in an effort to encourage discussion-based learning, while also placing the learner in real-world inpatient and outpatient settings to observe teaching in its truest form. Along the way, we created opportunities for the resident to teach both at the bedside and in the classroom while under the watchful eye of a skilled instructor providing in the moment feedback.

To date, the rotation has received overwhelmingly positive reviews despite its ever-evolving status, with pre- and post-survey data showing subjective improvements in enthusiasm, confidence, and motivation for continued teaching. In this interactive presentation, we will share the details of our curriculum and its applicability to other pediatric programs, while more importantly, highlighting key lessons learned throughout the process helpful to those embarking on a lifelong career in academic medicine.

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