

The academic half-day redesigned: A learner centered and systems-based curriculum

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Keywords: Teaching curriculum, learner centered, CanMEDS Roles

McGill University's Pediatrics residency program revamped its academic half-day, in response to concerns from the residents and Curriculum Committee. These concerns included an overemphasis on subspecialty content, exclusive use of didactic lectures and opportunistic topics based on the interests of the "volunteer" instructors.

The "new" curriculum places a greater emphasis on active learning with the explicit goal to ensure all residents achieve the competencies of a general pediatrician. Novel instructional methods include the incorporation of monthly simulation sessions to teach CanMEDS competencies and increased involvement of residents as teachers in case discussions and practical case sessions (electrocardiogram and chest x-ray interpretations). The curriculum is organized as a monthly systems-based schedule (e.g., Cardiology). Division directors are provided with the Royal College-based objectives for their service to cover during their respective 4-week teaching block and are asked to identify the instructors and create the teaching material. General pediatricians are involved as instructors whenever the topic allows, even when content is of a subspecialty nature. Instructors are offered suggestions on how to improve their use of interactive techniques. Residents are encouraged to engage in concurrent self-study to consolidate learning in the academic half-day and formative question sessions are used to assess learning and knowledge gaps.

Preliminary feedback suggests that changes to the curriculum are viewed positively by residents and staff. A formal survey to evaluate the impact of the new curriculum is planned for the end of the academic year. We propose that our comprehensive, systems-based interactive format is practical and easy to implement, while allowing a more learner-centered educational experience.

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Source: 2010 International Conference on Residency Education – What Works Track; abstract 188
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