

Bringing the CanMEDS Communicator Role to “life” through web based e- learning

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This paper describes the process of curriculum development in the CanMEDS Communicator Role for two web-based e-learning modules. The modules assist postgraduate trainees at the University of Toronto to understand what it means to be effective communicators.

Curriculum development included a needs assessment, extensive literature review and examination of existing communication websites. The selection and development of curriculum was done by faculty from across medical disciplines with an interest in health communication. They met to identify and prioritize the communication knowledge and skills needed by postgraduate year one residents.

Curriculum choices were guided by the commonly observed communication challenges seen by faculty such as poor history taking and by problems reported to the Board of Examiners such as inefficient case presentations. Identified themes include: communication skills, interview organization for knowledge integration, written communication, challenging topics and situations and sharing of information.

During development it became apparent that given the breadth and depth of the content related to the Communicator Role, eight hours of instruction time was needed to adequately cover the identified curricular content. Rather than one module, it was decided to create two modules with four units each taking approximately four hours to complete. Video time was dedicated to challenging communication scenarios such as sexual history taking where it was imperative to role model phrasing, tone and timing. Case presentations are another example where it was important to demonstrate nuanced communication skills such as organization and transitional statements. Examples of learning activities include assembling consult notes and reflective exercises.

The content of these two modules is now assembled. This paper will outline the next steps, which involve evaluating the module through pilot testing by faculty and residents. The subsequent feedback will be used to make refinements.