

A simple portfolio to learn reflective practice, CanMEDS roles, and how to meet professional challenges

Author(s): C. Parent, D. Saucier, G. Routhier
Institution(s): Université Laval, Quebec QC
Keywords: portfolio, CanMEDS Roles, professional challenges, Professional

How can residents develop strategies that will help them to meet professional challenges encountered in practice? We present a practical demonstration of the usefulness of the CanMEDS Framework and of a reflective stance that engages residents in learning these tools.

Residents in gastroenterology at Laval University are required to develop a portfolio of critical incidents encountered in their practice. They are asked to describe each situation, analyze it using the CanMEDS Framework, assess their own behaviours and competencies, and reflect on how they could improve their skills to better meet the professional challenges involved in these incidents (reflection on action).

They meet their program director twice a year to discuss this portfolio and discuss the competencies at play, possible solutions to the professional issues highlighted, and related learning needs. Some incidents are then discussed anonymously with peers and faculty members during teaching rounds once or twice a year.

Over the last two years, the effectiveness of this simple and flexible portfolio format has greatly surpassed our expectations. Residents, faculty members and the program director enjoy these activities, which serve many purposes. The reflective portfolio has undeniable relevance to practice by helping residents to recognize professional challenges when they encounter them and to immediately take a reflective stance (reflection in action). It also supports resident self-assessment, which is followed by a formative assessment by the program director, who can follow progress and provide further feedback during teaching rounds. Finally, it supports faculty development in a collaborative mode, as participants in teaching rounds discuss professional challenges rarely addressed otherwise while demonstrating the value of a reflective stance and of the CanMEDS Roles in analyzing everyday practice.

Through the use of reflective portfolios, residents are better prepared to face professional challenges and to understand how these challenges relate to all CanMEDS Roles.

Reference(s):

1. Epstein RM. Reflection, perception and the acquisition of wisdom. *Med. Educ.* 2008; 42: 1048-50.
2. The CanMEDS Assessment Tools Handbook: An introductory guide to assessment methods for the CanMEDS competencies. The Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada.