

Following Through: Student to teacher to educational leadership

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Introduction

As a student I valued teaching received from near-peers. In my experience in Queen's University, Belfast (QUB) Year 3 students benefitted from well-established small group F0 teaching, with final years themselves often availing of the QUB Honorary Tutor scheme.

I identified a four week period each Spring when Year 4 and F0 placements overlap as an opportunity to extend similar 'extracurricular' learning opportunities to Year 4 students at QUB.

To this end I sought to devise and implement a sustainable near-peer teaching model that could be rolled out throughout Trusts in the Northern Ireland deanery.

Method

In 2017 following the completion of my final year MB examinations I developed, organised and delivered a fourth year teaching programme in the Northern Trust. This encompassed a series of interactive learning sessions culminating in a mock OSCE day.

In the years since I have moved to a leadership and organisational role to ensure the smooth delivery of this programme as we expanded across three trusts (Belfast, South Eastern & Northern).

The programme has evolved with time, moving from a weekly teaching session format to one teaching day closely preceding a mock OSCE day.

Where possible resources have been retained with a view to creating an online wealth of learning material for future years' benefit.

Use of practical equipment & ward based paraphernalia has been encouraged at every turn to deliver an experience as close to both 'real life' and the exam as possible.

Delivery of teaching sessions & mock OSCEs has remained F0 led, with every effort made to quality assure content with senior clinicians.

A pathway has organically developed whereby Year 4 students who have availed of the scheme have often returned the following year to teach. Some have also assumed leadership roles in delivering the programme within specific trusts as either F0's or foundation doctors.

Following a one year hiatus we returned in 2021 with innovative measures adopted in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This included an online Zoom teaching day and logistical optimisation of the mock OSCE to prioritise the safety of all participants.

Feedback

Over
230

• Number of students who have completed the teaching programme since its inception

182

• Students who attended the virtual teaching day in 2021 alone

4.5/5

• Average rating from Year 4 student feedback for the virtual teaching day

99

• Number of students we were able to safely facilitate for mock OSCEs in 2021

97.9%

• Agreed/strongly agreed that they were confident in the teaching ability of F0's & would like more F0 teaching

98%

• Rated their mock OSCE day as excellent, scoring 10/10 (the other 2% scored as 9/10)

"I now know what to focus more on. Everyone was very helpful."

"Thank you so much for giving up your time to teach us, it was a really helpful experience."

"It really reflected a real OSCE. It included all the specialities. Very well organised."

"Amazing and very helpful experience. Wish we had more of this! Wish we had more interactions with F0's to learn from them and get help."

Discussion

This teaching programme has given Year 4 students the opportunity to avail of near-peer teaching, benefitting from a high quality of teaching, well-organised and 'life-like' mock OSCEs and the recency of their F0 colleagues' experiences.

For F0's there has been an opportunity to ignite a passion for medical education in newly qualified doctors, whilst many have gained experience in early educational leadership roles.

We have collected feedback throughout and consistently sought to improve in our structure of delivery, the quality of content and subsequently in our response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Possibilities moving forward include the launch of an online resource bank, further expansion to facilitate even greater numbers of students and closer links with QUB to ensure sustainability & continued growth in the years ahead.