

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Resident as Educator: The Preclinical Years

To the editor:

Although peer education has been a pivotal part of residency education, there has been a recent emphasis on residents acting as educators. This includes near-peer instruction between residents and students; however, residents are also engaged in teaching patients, their families, and even attendings at times. As we progress through our postgraduate years, it is easy to forget where we started in our medical careers and how much we have learned.

I recently had the opportunity to spend one of my elective months at my alma mater, the Arizona College of Osteopathic Medicine. I designed a rotation in faculty development to further my training in the discipline of education. While I am fortunate to be able to teach in our residency clinic, I wanted the opportunity to expand my academic horizons and to instruct medical students who had not yet started their clinical rotations.

During my rotation, with the assistance of our chair of osteopathic, family, and clinical medicine, I was allowed to participate in many distinct aspects of the preclinical curriculum. I was able to debrief second-year students (just beginning their pharmacology and pathology courses) after their standardized patients about what was occurring during their simulation, instruct first year students in normal and pathological heart and lung sounds, and prepare third-year students for their surgical rotations. Interacting with these students reminded me of many things. First and foremost, never forget where you started: the amount of knowledge you have obtained is astronomical. Second, the best way to understand pathology is to understand normal. And, finally, have faith that you will learn it in your own time.

My rotation time was not only a profound learning experience but also humbling. I urge any resident or attending wanting to pursue academia to become engaged with students who have yet to see patients. The learning experiences are reciprocal and will make you appreciate your practice so much more.

Jay Olson, PGY-1
Family Medicine Resident
Comanche County Memorial Hospital Family Medicine Program
Lawton, OK

Mercedes Bernard, DO
Program Director
Comanche County Memorial Hospital Family Medicine Program
Lawton, OK

Tracy Middleton, DO, FACOP
Chair and Clinical Professor of the Department of Osteopathic Family and Community Medicine
Arizona College of Osteopathic Medicine of Midwestern University
Glendale, AZ