

RESIDENTS AS TEACHERS

Seven Deadly Sins to Avoid in Teaching Medical Students

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OBJECTIVES

- Become familiar with the seven common mistakes made in teaching medical students
- Describe an innovative method for providing feedback
- Differentiate between good and not so good teaching examples

RESIDENTS AS TEACHERS (RATs)

- Residents do a significant amount of medical student teaching:
 - Students say: 30% teaching
 - Residency directors say: 62%
- Residents perceive that it is their responsibility to teach medical students
- Much more contact with students
- Teaching helps residents learn

RESIDENTS AS TEACHERS INITIATIVE

- Need proficiency to be effective:
 - Teaching skills
 - Giving feedback
 - Attitude to teaching
 - Teaching experience
 - Influence of time (to have and prepare)
- Responsibility to provide tools to make them effective teachers

Busari JO et al. How residents perceive their teaching role in the clinical setting: a qualitative study. *Medical Teacher*. 2002; 24:57-61.

EXERCISE

- Think of teachers you have had that have been influential in your life. Jot down on a piece of paper:
 - Qualities of good teachers
 - Things done well
 - Things to emulate
 - Qualities of bad teachers
 - Things done poorly
 - Things not to do

DEADLY SIN 1: Just ask, “Do you understand?”

- Some residents end a teaching session by asking students, “Do you understand?”
- Most students, no matter how confused, will answer, “Yes.”
- A better way to end a teaching session is to ask the students to demonstrate that they understand.

Who is the better resident? Resident A or resident B?

- **Resident A:** “Is all that clear?” Student: “Yeah.”
- **Resident B:** “Here’s another x-ray. Read it for me.”
Student: “Well, here it looks like...”

ANSWER: RESIDENT B

- Avoid Mistake 1 by asking your student to show you that they know what you have taught.
 - Present a similar case for them to analyze.
 - Ask them to perform the procedure you've just taught them.
 - Ask them to summarize the concept you have just taught them.

DEADLY SIN 2: Give no feedback

- Students sometime say, “I kept asking if I was doing OK and everyone said, ‘Sure, just keep doing what you’re doing.’ Then I got a B in the clerkship. I’m angry as hell.”
- Even if students practice and practice, they will not improve – unless they get feedback about their performance.

DEADLY SIN 2: Give no feedback (continued)

- Feedback needs to emphasize:
 - What was done well
 - What needs improvement
 - How changes will be made in next patient encounter
- The learner needs to be engaged in the process:
 - Ask – how did it go
 - Tell – what was observed
 - Ask – what will be done next time

WHO'S THE BETTER TEACHER?

- Student: How am I doing?

Resident A: Why don't you tell me how you think it is going?... Okay, I agree. I also noticed that you could sharpen your presentations by looking me in the eye and talking louder. What will you do to make this happen?

- Student: How am I doing?

Resident B: Fine. Keep it up.

DEADLY SIN 3:

Criticize personality, not behavior

- It's easier for most students to change their behavior than their personality.
- Therefore, give specific feedback about what students can change.
 - Poor: You're too shy. (Personality)
 - Better: Try to ask one question after the lecture today. (Behavior)

WHO IS THE BETTER TEACHER?

- **Resident A:** You are so disorganized.
- **Resident B:** Your report today didn't follow our standard SOAP format. Try it again using that format.

ANSWER: Resident B

Try to describe the student's behavior rather than his personality traits. Behaviors are easier for students to change.

- Student's Personality Trait:

- Lazy
- Unmotivated
- Incompetent
- Passive aggressive
- Defensive

- Student's Behavior:

- Not here when needed.
- Does not volunteer when asked.
- Does not know subject.
- Does not carry out assigned tasks.
- Does not accept criticism.

REVIEW: The first three mistakes

1. Asking “Do you understand?”
2. Giving no feedback.
3. Giving feedback about personality, not behavior.

Getting it right:

1. Ask students to demonstrate their knowledge.
2. Give feedback focusing on what was done right and what needs improvement.
3. Give feedback about behavior, not personality.

CASE: Which resident is teaching better?

Resident A

- You're doing a fine job, but you should be a little more aggressive in getting the work done. Are you clear about how to do this procedure?

Resident B

- Thanks for bringing that recent article this morning. It was right on target. Remember the procedure we practiced yesterday? Show me how you would do it again this morning?

DEADLY SIN 4: No objective

- If you don't know where you want to go, it's hard to get there.
- Begin a teaching session by telling the students what they are going to learn.
- Do this for every teaching session, whether it's a brief teaching moment or for a one-hour lesson.

NO OBJECTIVE



WHICH RESIDENT IS TEACHING BETTER?

- **Resident A:** Fever is often caused by different factors and different actions are indicated...
- **Resident B:** I'd like you to learn what causes fever and when it needs to be treated...

ANSWER: Resident B

- Remember, we learn better when we know what we are expected to learn.
- There's no reason to keep objectives secret.
- Just tell them:
 - Today, you will learn how to distinguish a normal lung x-ray from an abnormal one showing serous infection.
 - I'd like you to learn the steps to prepare a site for out-patient surgery.

DEADLY SIN 5: Just talk to the student when you teach

- Most students prefer active learning over passive listening.
- You can teach and test in the same lesson.
- Follow the 3 minute rule: “Don’t talk for more than 3 minutes without asking the student to do something.”

WHICH RESIDENT IS BETTER AT TEACHING?

- **Resident A:** (After teaching a few minutes.) Let me erase the diagram on the board and have you draw the diagram showing blood flow and explain it to me as you go.
- **Resident B:** (After teaching a few minutes.) That's one diagram that illustrates the physiology. Now let me show you another one.

ANSWER: Resident A

- A good way to keep students motivated is to keep them actively involved in learning.
- Ask them a question, ask them to show you a few steps in a procedure, or ask them to teach you or another student.
- Observe how much you talk and how much the student talks. Try to have the student talk 10%-50% of the time.

DEADLY SIN 6: Don't find time to teach

- Some students complain that some residents never have time to teach them.
- Some student praise residents who are always teaching while they work.
- Try to make sure that every contact you have with a student includes a teaching moment.

WHICH RESIDENT IS THE BETTER TEACHER?

- **Resident A:** We're too busy today to get any teaching done. Why don't you just go read this afternoon.
- **Resident B:** We're really busy in clinic today. At 5:00 pm, I'd like you to chose one patient you've seen and present the patient to me.

DEADLY SIN 7: Be bored with teaching

- If a resident is unenthusiastic about teaching, the student will know it.
- Boredom is catching. So is enthusiasm.
- The good teacher is often a good actor. Fake enthusiasm if you don't feel it. It may even help you feel enthusiasm.
- Which would you prefer? An instructor who talks in a monotone or one who is animated?

WHICH RESIDENT IS BETTER?

- **Resident A:** I know you've probably heard this several times, but it's really important. I've given this lecture many times, but students seem to forget it.
- **Resident B:** Here's a case of an interesting patient that came in yesterday. Let me present her and you ask me questions. I'll learn some new things too.

ANSWER: Resident B

- Resident:
 - Is enthusiastic
 - Engages the learner
 - Admits he/she doesn't know everything and models learning new things

REVIEW: Seven deadly sins to avoid

1. After a lesson just ask, “Do you understand?”
2. Don’t give feedback to students.
3. Tell students to change their personality traits rather than their behavior.
4. Don’t tell students what you want them to learn.
5. Do all the talking; make the students do all the listening.
6. Be too busy to teach students.
7. Be boring when you teach.

On the other hand, here are 7 things to do:

1. Ask students to demonstrate what they have learned.
2. Give students feedback. Use “Ask, Tell, Ask” method
3. Ask students to change their behavior, rather than their personality traits.
4. Tell students what you want them to learn: the objectives.
5. Talk and demonstrate for short periods; have students do the same.
6. Never be too busy to teach students.
7. Teach enthusiastically.

YOUR APPROACH TO TEACHING

- Participation in the RATs initiative will make you a better teacher. Accumulation of completed units will lead to a RAT certificate.
- Thank you for working this unit. Give us feedback about it at gme@medicine.unlv.edu