Making an educator: Pilot evaluation of a PA student-led academic medicine elective rotation

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BACKGROUND

- There is a growing need to ensure adequate PA educator workforce, but limited preceptor availability and recruitment and retention of qualified faculty remain a challenge.
- Many PA students express interest in a future preceptor or faculty role, but most receive no formal training on how to teach.
- This study sought to evaluate the efficacy and feasibility of a PA student-led academic medicine elective rotation regarding the development of core teaching competencies in the absence of formal educational training.

METHODOLOGY

- A 4-week academic medicine elective rotation was piloted in a PA program by a clinical-year PA student (PA-S3) and a faculty mentor with the goal to help the PA-S3 develop core teaching competencies.
- The components of the rotation included (1) library of learning (LoL) for building foundational knowledge; (2) adjunctive teaching in Clinical Skills for first-year students; (3) independent teaching in Clinical Medicine for first-year students; and (4) supervised clinical practice experience (SCPE) with the faculty mentor as clinical preceptor.
- The rotation was evaluated via weekly verbal debrief sessions with the faculty mentor, verbal debriefing with a faculty member following each teaching session, and verbal feedback from first-year PA students.
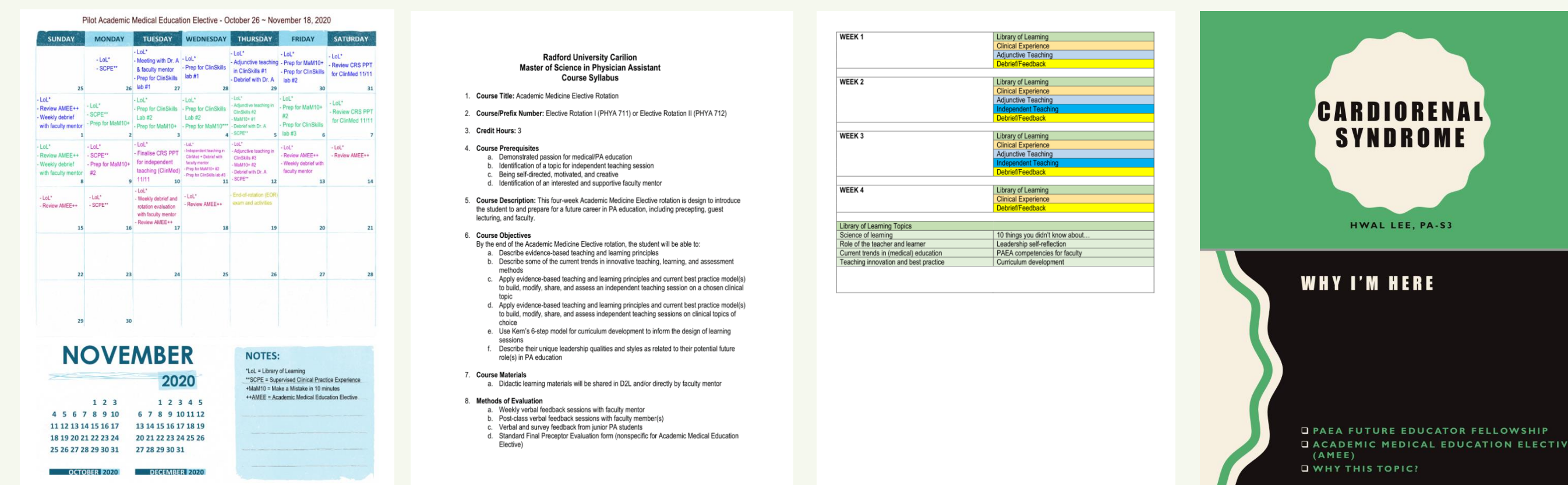
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RESULTS – POINTS OF INNOVATION

ROTATION SYLLABUS & ACTIVITIES CREATED BY PA-S3
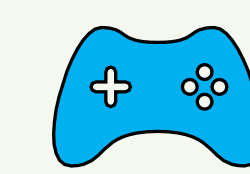**ACTIVE LEARNING + COMPETENCY-BASED EVALUATION**

From L to R: rotation calendar; syllabus pages 1 & 2; original lecture for independent teaching session
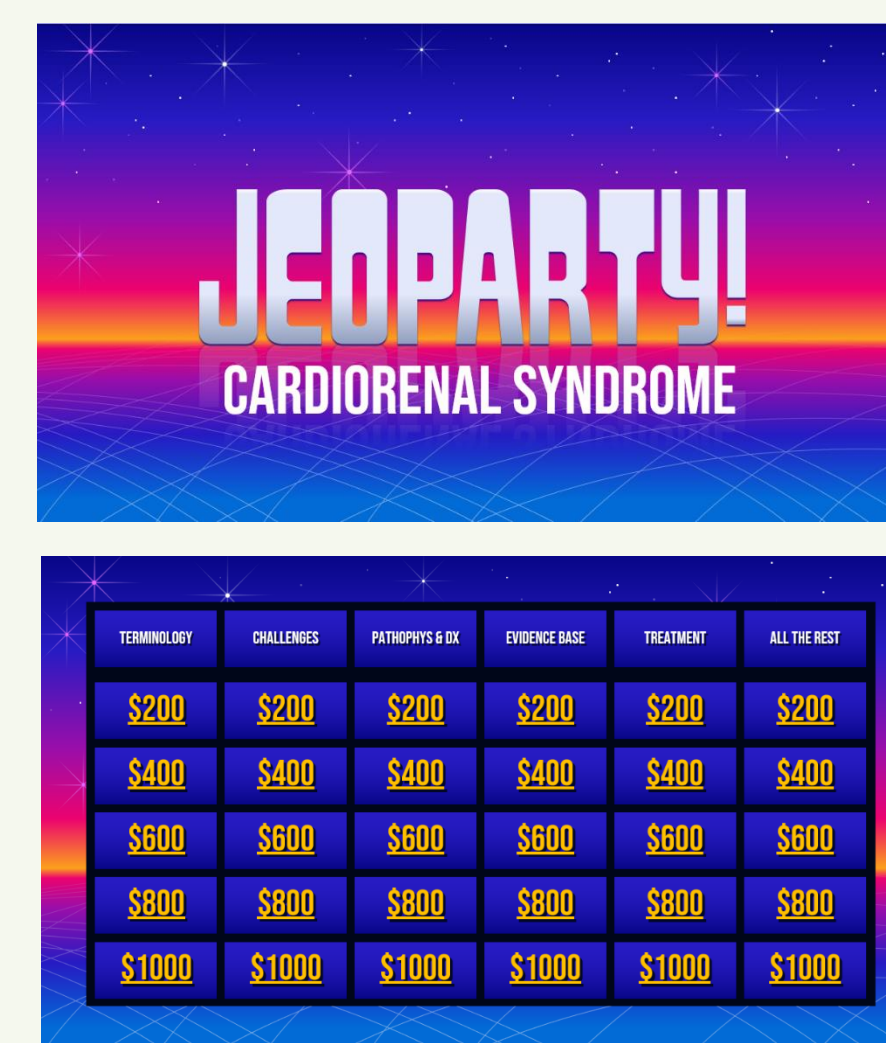
COLLABORATIVE STUDENT-FACULTY PARTNERSHIP & MENTORSHIP

PA-S3 with faculty mentor and first-year PA students (L); weekly debrief (Middle); PA-S3 with Clinical Skills faculty member

GAMIFICATION　**INDEPENDENT & ADJUNCTIVE TEACHING IN WEEKS 1-3**　**SCPE INTEGRATION**
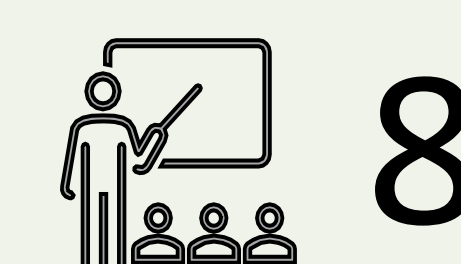

PA-S1 STUDENTS SAID

First-year students appreciated the PA-S3 instructor's insights and relatability and felt encouraged and reassured by learning from them, and many cited missing out on hands-on clinical training as a likely barrier to choosing an academic medicine rotation.

ACADEMIC MEDICINE ELECTIVE ROTATION – BY THE NUMBERS

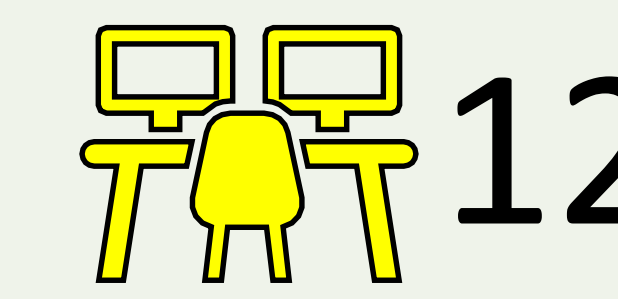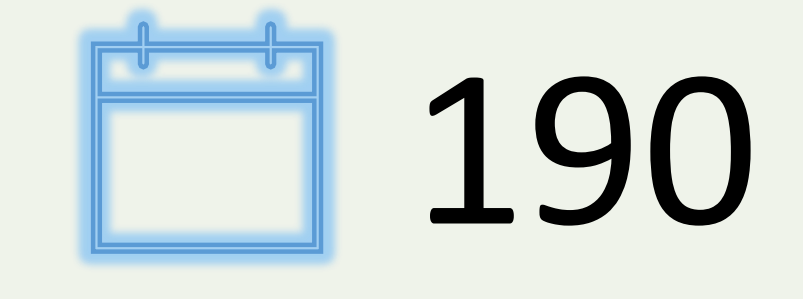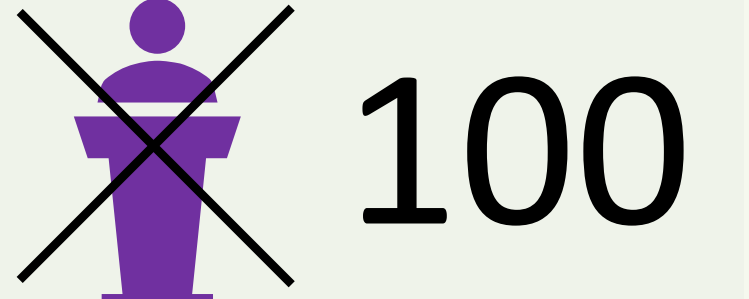| 4	8	50	12	3	190	100
Total weeks on rotation	Hours of in-person teaching time	Hours of clinic-based SCPE	Self-paced LoL activities	Original lectures & learning sessions	Total hours logged on rotation	% lecture-free didactic learning

CONCLUSION

- A PA student-led academic medicine elective rotation presents an effective model for clinical-year PA students to develop core teaching competencies (e.g., curriculum development, evaluation, assessment, coaching, leadership) in the absence of formal educational training.
- Early, weekly curricular incorporation of teaching sessions allows for maximal teaching experience.
- Inclusion of SCPE in an academic medicine rotation may allay student concerns regarding missing out on hands-on clinical training.
- A student-led academic medicine elective rotation may foster innovation and help develop the PA educator workforce of the future.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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* Hwal was a clinical-year PA student at the time of this project implementation.