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Innovations in Health Sciences Education
Journal

Volume 1
Issue 3 *Spotlight on Scholarship 2023*

Article 8

3-29-2023

Building Confidence and Competence: The Effects of Early Career Coaching and Research Training on Student Research Perspectives

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Recommended Citation

Kleinsmith, Joseph; Dowdall, Jayme; Howell Smith, Michelle; and Carlson, Kristy (2023) "Building Confidence and Competence: The Effects of Early Career Coaching and Research Training on Student Research Perspectives," *Innovations in Health Sciences Education Journal*: Vol. 1 : Iss. 3 , Article 8. Available at: <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.32873/unmc.dc.ihsej.0025>

This original report is available in Innovations in Health Sciences Education Research Journal: <https://digitalcommons.unmc.edu/ihsej/vol1/iss3/8>

Building Confidence and Competence: The Effects of Early Career Coaching and Research Training on Student Research Perspectives

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<https://doi.org/10.32873/unmc.dc.ihsej.0025><https://digitalcommons.unmc.edu/ihsej/>

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Poster presented at the 2023 Spotlight on Scholarship at the University of Nebraska Medical Center, Omaha, Nebraska.

Outstanding Emerging Scholar Presentation Winner

Abstract

Proposal: As medical education and residency application are in a state of change (i.e., Step 1 scoring), it is essential for medical students to engage in unique experiences that help to differentiate themselves. In order to provide opportunities for development, a novel, wholistic summer program was developed to provide students research experiences and career exploration opportunities. Approach: Five first or second year medical students participating in this program were asked to complete a survey evaluating their confidence in completing 15 research tasks on a 10-point scale. As part of the program, students were required to: a) complete a case study manuscript and presentation; b) serve as lead investigator on a research project; c) shadow multiple providers; d) attend regular meetings with the research director; and e) attend a one-on-one session with a certified physician coach. The survey was repeated upon completion of the program to reassess confidence on the same 15 research tasks along with a focus group assessing student experiences in the program. Outcomes: Student comfort across all research metrics increased by an average of 3 points. The largest areas of growth centered around early steps in the research process including developing a research project or a case report. In addition to these notable areas of growth, improvements in student confidence in research and career selection were observed across all 15 measured metrics. Discussion: Through programs that improve student research confidence, students can be empowered to engage in academic activities that set students apart in a changing educational environment. Additionally, by reaching students early in their education, vital skills developed over a summer can facilitate future academic production. Finally, by coupling research skill development with career exploration, students can develop skills within the context of their future careers, better preparing themselves for their roles as physicians and scientists.

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