



Medical and Health Professional Education
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BEME Spotlight 40

A systematic review of faculty development initiatives designed to enhance teaching effectiveness: A 10-year update

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Review website

<http://bemecollaboration.org/Published+Reviews/BEME+Guide+No+40/>

Keywords

Faculty development, staff development, medical education, teaching effectiveness, knowledge synthesis

Headline conclusions

- The field of faculty development has grown substantially over the last 10 years and overall satisfaction with faculty development programs remains high.
- The faculty development interventions in this review focused on the improvement of teaching performance, teaching conceptions and learning approaches, the acquisition of specific teaching skills, learner assessment, instructional design and curriculum development, educational leadership, and educational scholarship.
- Formal, structured activities in group settings (e.g. longitudinal programs and workshops) were the most commonly offered interventions.
- Program participants reported increased confidence, enthusiasm, and awareness of effective educational practices as well as gains in knowledge and skills. Self-reported changes in teaching behaviors were frequently noted. Observed behavior changes included enhanced teaching practices, new educational initiatives, new leadership positions, and increased academic output; organizational changes were infrequently explored.
- Key features of effective faculty development initiatives included evidence-informed educational design, relevant content, experiential learning, feedback and reflection, educational projects, intentional community building, longitudinal program design, and institutional support.
- A number of faculty development interventions (e.g. longitudinal programs) led to the building of communities of practice among program participants and in the workplace.

Background and context

Faculty development programming in medicine has increased significantly in the last decade. In 2006, a review of faculty development activities designed to enhance teaching effectiveness was conducted (Steinert et al., 2006). However, despite significant growth in the field, there has been no comprehensive systematic review of faculty development focused on teaching improvement in medicine since that time. This 10-year update was designed to describe the evolution of faculty development in the last decade, to identify emerging trends and articulate a research and practice agenda to help advance the field, and to contribute towards a better understanding of how faculty development can enhance the building of sustainable communities of practice (O'Sullivan and Irby, 2011).

Review objectives

The goal of this review was to identify and describe: the types of faculty development interventions that have been offered in the last 10 years; the characteristics of the studies that have been conducted; the outcomes of faculty development programs in terms of individual changes in knowledge and attitudes, self-reported and observed behaviours, and the organization at large; key features of effective faculty development programs; and the impact of faculty development on building a faculty development community and a community of practice in the workplace.

Review methodology

Search Strategy: The literature search, which covered the period of 2002 – 2012, included a comprehensive search of Medline, EMBASE, CINAHL and ERIC, using the following key words: faculty development; staff development; in-service training; medical faculty; physicians; teaching; and professional development.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria: Articles focusing on both formal and informal faculty development interventions designed to improve teaching effectiveness, with basic science and clinical faculty members, were selected for review. Interventions designed solely to improve teaching effectiveness of residents-in-training or other health care professionals were excluded. All study designs were included; studies that only reported participant satisfaction were excluded. The literature search resulted in a total of 871 abstracts. After an initial review of these abstracts, 215 articles were pulled for further appraisal. The final review included 111 articles that met the review criteria.

Data Extraction: The data were systematically extracted by all members of the review team using a coding sheet which was based on the 2006 protocol. Two reviewers coded each article and differences were resolved through discussion.

Data Synthesis: Data were synthesized using Kirkpatrick and Kirkpatrick's four levels of educational outcomes (2006). Findings were grouped by intervention type and level of outcome.

Implications for practice

This review suggests implications for research and practice. With regard to practice, faculty developers should build on current success, broaden the focus beyond individual teaching effectiveness, develop programs that extend over time, promote workplace learning, foster community development, and secure institutional support. From a research perspective, faculty developers should embed studies in a theoretical framework, conduct more qualitative and mixed methods studies, assess behavioral and organizational change, evaluate transfer to practice, analyse key features, and explore the role of faculty development within the larger organizational context.

References

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