Workplace Based Faculty Development Approaches

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Due to ongoing globalization and reforms in health professions education, the medical and dental institutions world over has adopted the ‘student centered’ and ‘problem based’ educational strategies. In this regard, developing professional and competent teachers and educators for their new roles and responsibilities in medical education and allied health sciences education is required. This needs effective faculty development programs (Michelle Mclean et al, 2008).

Literature review shows that most of the approaches used to train faculty are formal e.g., ’workshops’ and ‘courses’ (O’Sullivan 2011). These are traditionally conducted away from the educator’s workplace. It is expected from them to take their lesson learned and experiences from ‘faculty development community’ back to their own context (Y. Steinert, 2006). The faculty development approaches, which usually pull the faculty/ participants out of their work environment, rarely leads to transfer of new learned skill at the workplace. Faculty development can occur in a variety of contexts and settings, and often begins with ‘informal learning’ in the workplace. (Y. Steinert, 2010). Hence, it is imperative to create an environment that helps medical educators to see every day experiences as ‘learning experiences’ and encourage them to reflect with colleagues and students. This should be done on the learning that has occurred at workplace (i.e., in classroom or clinical setting) in order to promote the ‘learning transfer’ of teaching skill. There is a need to create contextual models of faculty development for the workplace. In this regard, an effective cognitive apprenticeship model(Dornan T, 2005) which is combination of formal (Peer Coaching) and informal (Learning by Observing-Performing-Reflecting) approaches at workplace was created (Michelle Mclean et al, 2008) and evaluated for its effectiveness at an institution.

According to WFME standards and ASPIRE-to-excellence for faculty development, all faculty development activities at an institution which prepares faculty members for their various academic roles should be evaluated for its impact and should contribute to the scholarship of faculty development (Y. Steinert, 2006). Research in designing of innovative faculty development approaches and testing it out for effectiveness is scarce. The Kirkpatrick model can be used to assess the impact of faculty training. Moreover, to ensure quality in faculty development programs the first step is to do the ‘Training Need Assessment’ and plan accordingly. ‘Training the trainers’ workshops must be part of faculty development program. Faculty Portfolios with reflective critique should be used to promote faculty self-development. The faculty development program must engage in ongoing program evaluation, and examine the impact on individuals, organizations and, where possible, the wider community. The impact of the programs must be measured on faculty career trajectories as well. Continuous improvement of the faculty development program is ensured using reflective critique by the faculty members through regular and frequent retreats and refreshers.

The institution must have faculty recruitment, selection, promotion and retention policies based on the policies/criteria provided universities’ statutory bodies. There should be strong support structure for the faculty to develop at institutional level which will nurture them at national and at institutional level and will help in creating the communities of practice.

REFERENCES


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