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Original Research

"FED-Ex" (Faculty Education and Development - Express): Optimizing faculty meetings to overcome barriers to faculty development

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The ACGME requires faculty to pursue faculty development at least annually, however many barriers to faculty development exist. A longitudinal faculty development program was implemented building upon prior published research regarding teaching with "snippets." Our program involved the use of snippets for faculty development during faculty meetings and has continued for over four years. The faculty gave the program high scores for satisfaction and increasing knowledge. In addition, the majority (64.3%) of the faculty reported already using the material learned and 100% reported they planned to use the material. A snippets program with this longitudinal duration and utilizing this extensive variety of faculty development topics is feasible and effective and has not yet been described.

INTRODUCTION

The ACGME requires faculty to pursue faculty development at least annually as educators, promoters of well-being, providers of patient care and contributors to an inclusive work environment.[1] Faculty development, also known as professional development, can be defined by activities designed to improve knowledge and skills in areas considered essential to the performance of a faculty member.[2] In addition to disciplinary expertise, training is necessary to optimize teaching effectiveness. Faculty development can provide personal, instructional, professional, and organizational benefits.[3] Many barriers limit faculty development curricula, including lack of time, lack of resources, lack of connection with the institution, lack of recognition for teaching, and difficulties with scheduling.[4,5]

METHODS

A new faculty development series was created for the department of pediatrics at our institution and taught by the director of pediatric faculty development. To counteract some of the barriers to faculty development, a 10–15-minute presentation was created and given at each monthly faculty meeting. This program was named Faculty Education and Development- Express ("F.E.D.-Ex"). From May 2019 through -December 2023 (aside from a 3-month hiatus due to the COVID-19 pandemic and 3 omitted sessions due to educator absence from faculty meetings), a unique topic was introduced monthly. Resources and references were provided for self-directed deeper review of the subjects. The sessions primarily focused on faculty as educators and leaders, and included topics listed in Table 1. The faculty were surveyed to determine the impact of this new program. The link to the survey was emailed and the surveys were completed electronically and results kept anonymous. The questions included in the survey are depicted in table 2. A Likert scale of 1-5 was utilized in the survey for most of the questions to determine satisfaction with the program, relevance and effectiveness of the program, as well as to determine the use of the material by participants in professional practice.

RESULTS

Approximately 60% (14/25) of faculty members completed the electronic anonymous survey. Fifty percent of survey participants reported over 20 years of clinical experience post-training, while 20% reported less than 5 years of experience post-training. The remaining 30% of survey participants reported 5-20 years of professional experience after completion of training. 100% of faculty reported that the series was very or extremely effective in increasing knowledge, very or extremely relevant to their roles, and very or extremely satisfied with the program. 100% of respondents reported that the sessions were the right length to be effective. 100% of faculty reported that the engaging speaker and topics chosen were very or extremely important factors in the effectiveness of the program. 85% of the respondents reported that scheduling the session during monthly faculty meetings was very or extremely important to the effectiveness of the program. 64.3% of the faculty reported already using the material learned from the program either often or very often and 100% reported that they probably or

Table 1. Faculty development topics for the Fed-Ex series.

Faculty Development Topics	
Adult learning principles	Professionalism – what is it and how to teach it?
Educating millennial learners	Problem based learning
Feedback	Flipped classroom
Art of lecture	Growth mindset
Clinical precepting	One-minute preceptor
Learning and teaching styles	Elevator pitch
Clinical reasoning	Starting pause
Teaching to different level learners	Educational scholarship
Distance learning technology tools	Leadership styles
Teaching with games	Art of negotiation
Mentorship	Artificial intelligence in healthcare
Social media in medical education	Imposter syndrome
Writing a letter of recommendation	Teaching with telemedicine
Optimizing remote presentations and meetings	Microskills
Conflict management styles	Emotional intelligence
Character strengths	Using technology in teaching- several part series
Reducing diagnostic errors	Tactical decision games
Teaching challenging learners	Emotional needs of parents of children with chronic illness

Table 2. Survey questions

Questions	Response options
Duration of experience in the medical field post-training?	Number of years
How effective is the FED-Ex series in increasing knowledge?	Likert scale (1-5)
How relevant is the FED-Ex series to your professional role?	Likert scale (1-5)
How satisfied are you with the FED-Ex program?	Likert scale (1-5)
How effective is the short duration of each session in meeting your learning needs?	Likert scale (1-5)
How important is the selection of topics in determining the effectiveness of the program?	Likert scale (1-5)
How important is an engaging speaker in determining the effectiveness of the program?	Likert scale (1-5)
How important is scheduling the sessions during monthly faculty meetings in determining the effectiveness of the program?	Likert scale (1-5)
Have you used material learned from the FED-Ex program in your teaching/professional role?	Likert scale (1-5)
Do you plan to use the material learned from the FED-Ex program in the future?	Likert scale (1-5)
Comments	Free text

definitely would use the material learned in the sessions in the future.

DISCUSSION

Faculty development programming is a requirement of the ACGME but various obstacles continue to exist to providing effective programs.[1,4] Participation in these types of train-

ing requires time which is a main barrier to faculty attendance at faculty development programming sessions. Other barriers to participating in faculty development include competing priorities, lack of resources, lack of rewards or recognition for the teaching role and the real or perceived lack of institutional support for teaching, with institutions frequently appearing to place a higher value on clinical and research-related activities than they do on teaching.[4,5]

Adult learning theory emphasizes the importance of applicability of content to a learner's individual goals and objectives as adult learners more readily engage with material when they can identify relevance to their own goals and objectives. Successful teaching of adult learners also requires identifying learners' existing knowledge and skills and applying this expertise to a new topic.[6] Learners prefer faculty development interventions that incorporate adult learning principles.[7] Adult learning data also suggest that typical learner attention span wanes after approximately 15 to 20 minutes and faculty report preferences for shorter faculty development segments.[4,8] Snippets have been described as well-structured, short ''bites'' of faculty development for busy faculty educators and can help overcome traditional barriers to faculty development. They are an efficient method to deliver information and skills in brief sessions that are sensitive to the identified key constraints in faculty development. Snippets meet accreditation requirements by engaging a department's teaching faculty when the faculty is attending another required session.[5]

Many factors play an important role in determining success of faculty development programming, including flexibility and relevance. Even within a single department or division, faculty have heterogenous interests, including medical education, administration, quality improvement, clinical research, leadership, operations and health policy. Many of these interests do not align with existing faculty development programs.[9] Clark et al. found that only 14% of faculty development programs offered more than 10 topics, lasted more than 2 days and used several experiential teaching methods.[10] Interestingly, the majority of faculty development programs are voluntary, which leads to a degree of self-selection and may include more motivated learners.[7]

A longitudinal faculty development program made of "snippets" was created at our institution to meet the criteria of the ACGME and overcome some of the barriers to faculty development programming. This program spanned over the course of 4 years and provided a variety of relevant topics for faculty. The program was presented for all pediatric faculty and avoided self-selection. The faculty were satisfied with the program, the series was effective in increasing self-perceived knowledge, and most-importantly, the majority of the faculty reported changing their behavior and putting the material learned into practice. Utilizing this setting for faculty development offers a unique opportunity for a longitudinal program that does not disrupt a busy physician schedule, offers a short burst of knowledge to maximize retention, and does not require abundant additional resources. Next steps include determining the impact this program has had on the learners and patients, as well as expanding this program to additional departments throughout the hospital. A program of faculty development snippets spanning this duration and with this variety of topics has not yet been described. This model of faculty development is feasible and can be reproduced in other programs and departments to meet the needs and requirements of faculty development programming.

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