Faculty development for a more professional education: Experiences and perspectives from the Ludwig-Maximilian-University Munich

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Lecture

Background: Faculty development (FD) is a key success factor for curricular reform in medical education. The goals and objectives of all FD efforts should reflect the educational needs of the respective faculty and the targeted learners. The medical faculty at the University of Munich has undergone fundamental change processes: In 1996, the Munich Harvard Alliance for medical education was initiated and lead to the introduction of interdisciplinary problem-based learning (PBL) courses. With the new German licensing regulations for doctors in 2002 (Ärztliche Approbationsordnung ÄAppO), a complete reform curriculum (Medizinisches Curriculum München – MeCuM) was developed. These two big steps of reform generated a substantial need for continuous teacher training courses.

Work done: The FD-strategy for MeCuM consists of four layers in a pyramidal shaped framework:

1. The basic layer is a one-day crash-course with focused goals. Typically one teaching method is taught (i.e. facilitating learning in a PBL-group) depending on the actual short-term needs.

2. The core second layer is formed by five-day comprehensive workshops for teachers with a broad set of goals including learning theory, various teaching methods, and techniques for feedback and reflection. These courses are held on Frauenchiemsee island near Munich. This setting leads to a strong interdisciplinary network among participants.

3. Two-day workshops on assessment (written, OSCE, and oral) on the island represent the third layer. More than 1100 LMU-faculty members have taken part in these courses; more than 900 of them in layer 2 (see http://www.lmu-hmai-allanz.de/).

4. The two-year Master of Medical Education (MME, http://www.mme-d.de) program represents the tip of the FD-pyramid. It is a national effort to improve professionalism in medical education through a teach-the-teacher approach. The target population are educators from all German-speaking medical faculties.

Conclusions: A multi-layer FD-program seems to be adequate to the diverse and urgent needs of teachers to improve their teaching skills. FD efforts are indispensable for the successful improvement of medical education. The evaluation of the FD programs has been very positive. To assess the long-term effects we are conducting a survey following ten years of experience at our faculty. Inevitably appropriate incentives – both individual and institutional - are needed, to keep the high momentum of FD and to ensure its future success.

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