

Professor H. Carrie Chen, MD, PhD
Associate Dean
School of Medicine
Georgetown University
Washington DC, USA

A Needs-Based Approach to Supporting Faculty Teachers and Educators

Abstract:

Faculty development plays a critical role in the promotion of academic excellence and innovation. Interest has been growing regarding the academic support, beyond skill development, of faculty teachers and educators. We undertook a project at one university medical center to assess local needs and determine best strategies for supporting faculty teachers/educators.

We reviewed the literature and results from two local studies to determine the needs of faculty teachers/educators. The first study focused on faculty teachers' engagement with and motivation for teaching. The second study examined faculty member experiences with faculty development and with teaching qualification requirements. To work with the resulting volume of data, we developed a novel framework both to organize and assess faculty needs and to structure recommendations and potential solutions.

The 4C Framework considers the needs of faculty teachers/educators from four perspectives or solution domains: *Competence* (knowledge and skills), *Context* (resources), *Community*, and *Career*. It allows mapping of needs and solutions to Kirkpatrick's conditions for change and the different strategies for change (i.e. faculty development to effect personal change versus institutional change). Use of the framework enabled us to attend to existing gaps in all four domains during our needs assessment. More importantly, it emphasized the need for and resulted in the development of solutions beyond faculty skill development during the institution's strategic planning.

Faculty development literature increasingly supports the importance of institutional structure and culture for systemic change. To be effective, faculty teachers/educators need to have the required skills and resources to do their work, a community of practice with support and mentoring, and opportunities for career advancement. The 4C Framework helps shift the focus of change efforts away from individual faculty development toward a more comprehensive approach to faculty support.