Promoting Evidence-Based Teaching Through Evidence-Based Faculty Development

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Session Goals

- Identify contexts for promoting evidence-based teaching;
- Examine the link between effective pedagogical practices and faculty professional development;
- Explore faculty development approaches that make investment in evidence-based teaching approaches more likely;
- Share best practices for supporting use of evidence-based teaching approaches.
The Context

- Changing External Environment
  - Global challenges and interdependence
  - Problems requiring interdisciplinarity and collaboration
  - Knowledge expansion and information-based economies
  - **Implications**: Students must be ready as critical thinkers, problem solvers, innovators, and team players.
The Context

- The Changing Landscape for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education
  - Diversity of learners with a range of expectations
  - Changing nature of the professoriate
  - Information Age and technology developments
  - Societal pressures for value, productivity, cost-effectiveness, efficiency, effectiveness, and accountability.
  - Implications: Teaching and learning activities are situated within the crossroads of myriad changes and expectations.
The Context

- Increased Attention to the Quality of Teaching and Learning
  - National calls for increasing the quality and quantity of college graduates, especially in the STEM fields.
    - National Research Council (2010). *Rising Above the gathering Storm, Revisited.*
    - President’s Council of Advisors on Science and Technology (2012). *Engage to Excel.*
  - Much research on learning and on learner-centered and evidence-based teaching.
Research on How Students Learn
Learner-Centered Teaching Practices
Key Ingredients of Evidence-Based Teaching

It is teaching focused on learning—what students are doing is the central concern of the teacher.

- **Engages** students in the work of learning; more active, collaborative, and problem-focused
- **Motivates** students by giving them some control over learning process
- Encourages **community**; the classroom (virtual or real) is one in which everyone shares the learning agenda
- Promotes students’ **reflection** about what they are learning and how they are learning it

(Weimer, 2013)
What Are Some Approaches?

- Active learning: cooperative, collaborative, small group
- Discipline-based: problem-based (PBL), team-based (TBL), peer-led team learning (PLTL)
- Reflective writing/writing-to-learn
- Experiential, real-world learning
- Technology-facilitated learning (e.g., clickers)

What else would you add to the list?
What We Now Know

- A good deal about how students learn
- With effective teaching, students learn more
- What works pedagogically to support learning

But evidence-based approaches are only useful if faculty know about them and use them
Paired Discussion

Turn to one or two individuals. On your campus:

- What motivates faculty to learn about and adopt evidence-based pedagogies—and who supports them in doing so?

- What are the roadblocks and challenges to faculty learning?
Change is Hard

“...for teachers and students

- Role of the teacher
- Balance of authority in the classroom
- Demands of content
- Responsibility of students for learning
Change is Not Just About the Pedagogy

“
At the core is pedagogy. But to successfully institutionalize the use of evidence-based teaching practices, what is necessary is scaffolding, or support for faculty and students, and larger cultural change (AAU, 2014)."
Fortunately, More Scaffolding

- Teaching and Learning Centers
- Assessment Offices
- Instructional Technology Units
- Community Service Learning Programs

Where else do faculty go on your campus?
Fortunately, More Evidence

- Rapid growth in studies of the impact of various faculty development interventions

- Notable increase in discipline-specific areas, especially medicine and STEM

- Some studies can assess outcomes beyond satisfaction—changes in knowledge, teacher behavior, student learning

- Although studies vary in quality, they provide guidance for effective faculty development practice

(Chism, Holly & Harris, 2012)
Quiz on Evidence-Based Faculty Professional Development

**In pairs, take the quiz:** “Evidence-based Faculty Professional Development”

**Discuss:** How do your responses reflect your own experiences? Which approaches have had the most positive effect on teaching development on your campus?
Correct Answers to Quiz

1. False (faculty learning communities)
2. False (student ratings/consultation)
3. True (department-based)
4. False (workshops, institutes)
5. False (SoTL)
6. True (teaching grants)
7. True (teaching awards)
8. False (types of feedback)
A Faculty Development Portfolio

- Join/nurture **faculty learning communities**—disciplinary, interdisciplinary, themed—they develop reflective teachers and build “sales force” for teaching innovation.

- **Extend change efforts** to reinforce best practices (e.g., multi-day institute or teaching academy, semester-long teaching circle).

- **Listen to learners** (e.g. midterm student feedback) and **teachers** (e.g., consultation with peer or teaching consultant).

- Promote teaching innovation through incentives like **grants**, **paired with assistance**.

- **Incorporate faculty development** into regular faculty work (e.g. SoTL, course design institute, department-based).
Diffusion is essentially a social process through which people talking to people spread an innovation.” - (Rogers, 2003)

Mass media can introduce a new idea to people. But people follow the lead of other people they know and trust when they decide whether to take it up. Human interaction is the key force in overcoming resistance, moving an idea, and speeding change.” - (Guande, 2013)
Take-Aways

What did you learn?

What questions about evidence-based faculty development or the promotion of it remain unanswered?