

Innovations in Medical Education Sample from 2006

INCREASING FEEDBACK TO FACULTY REGARDING TEACHING THROUGH A PEER OBSERVATION AND

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STATEMENT OF PROBLEM OR QUESTION:

Although faculty members receive feedback from learners regarding their teaching, this feedback is often delayed and may relate more to a teacher's charisma or communication style rather than actual teaching skills. There are insufficient opportunities for faculty to discuss their teaching in a rigorous supportive way. In addition, while peer review of scholarly activities is routine, peer review of teaching activities is not a part of the culture of medicine.

OBJECTIVES OF PROGRAM/ INTERVENTION:

- 1) Enrich the teaching skills of medical school educators
- 2) Foster dialogue and to build community among educators from different departments and different levels of experience
- 3) Promote a culture of peer review among the teaching faculty

DESCRIPTION OF PROGRAM/ INTERVENTION:

We created a program called TOP (Teaching Observation Program) through the UCSF Academy of Medical Educators. TOP allows any faculty member to request observation and feedback from a trained peer observer. Trained peer observers are available for one-on-one, small group and large group teaching. All peer observers are experienced teachers and undergo a minimum 1.5-hour training utilizing videotapes and feedback role-plays. Faculty participation in TOP is voluntary. We emphasize that the purpose of the program is to provide feedback, not to evaluate the teacher.

FINDINGS TO DATE:

Initial faculty participation in TOP was slow despite widespread advertising of the program. We subsequently encouraged TOP participation in several key courses through course director notification of faculty that they would be paired with a TOP mentor unless they declined participation. Since its inception in Spring 2005, 35 faculty mentees have participated in TOP. Feedback from faculty mentees has been very positive (overall rating mean = 4.79, 1 = poor, 5 = excellent). Mentees feel that TOP is collaborative (mean = 4.71, 1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree), that TOP provided valuable feedback (mean = 4.72) and that they were likely to change their teaching based on TOP feedback (mean = 4.67). Trained peer observers (mentors) also rated the program highly (overall rating mean = 4.76), felt that TOP was a collaborative process (mean = 4.55), and that the experience was valuable to the mentee (mean = 4.62).

KEY LESSONS LEARNED:

Faculty may be initially reluctant to seek out peer observation and feedback. However, when faculty are scheduled to participate, with opt-out available, satisfaction with the program of peer observation and feedback is high. There are perceived benefits to both the observer and the observee in TOP. Making observation and discussion of teaching routine involves a change in culture.