
Faculty Development Through Workshops/Seminars

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Transcript from session.

Of all the models presented in at this conference, the workshop or seminar models are the most familiar. Because this is the most familiar model, the focus of this discussion will be on concepts and ideas rather than on descriptions and details. To get the most out of this paper, think in terms of your own experiences and your own expertise to create a framework for understanding how these ideas might be helpful in giving the workshops and seminars that you will do in your faculty development program.

Table 1 gives definitions for both workshops and seminars.

Table 1. Definition of Terms

Workshop: an educational seminar or series of meetings emphasizing interaction and exchange of ideas

Seminar: a meeting for an exchange of ideas

What is striking about these definitions, particularly in thinking about your own workshop and seminar experiences? First, these concepts are not new. They have been around for a long time. Next, they really capture the essence of adult education. The most important and common aspect is that of active learning.

One of the best references for workshops and seminars was written by Dr. Carole Bland: *Faculty Development through Workshops*. This short book was published by Charles C. Thomas in 1980. The aspect of faculty development through workshops and seminars that she and I both emphasize is the need for interaction and for exchange of ideas. In that light, one of the most important as-

pects of the workshop/seminar form of faculty development is the very active process between those who are organizing and presenting the workshop and the learners who are participating. Even the word “seminar” comes from a Latin root that reflects this: *seminarium*, a seed plot. The seminar is where you plant a seed or an idea and then work with that seed to develop it over a period of time through a dynamic and interactive process.

Before we discuss the workshop/seminar model much more, we must also ask a crucial question that is central to the theme of this conference: Does this model work? Although there is not a lot of critical evaluation of faculty development in general, there are some good studies on this model that indicate effectiveness.

Table 2. Evidence of Effectiveness of the Workshop/Seminar Model of Faculty Development

- Skeff (1986) showed a positive effect on videotape assessments, self assessments, and learner’s assessments.¹
- Moss (1990) showed improved OSCE scores in seminar-trained family medicine residents compared to controls.²
- Skeff (1998) showed improved teaching in basic science faculty through training in a series of seminars.³

These authors had the foresight to include control groups and looked at the effects of their seminars and workshops. Each demonstrated a positive change, whether measured by changes in behavior or by the learners’ perceptions of the teacher’s skills.

Next, we are going to discuss three elements or aspects of workshops and seminars that are critical for effectiveness: 1) curriculum and teaching methods; 2) logistics, and 3) consultation for help and support.

The curriculum and how it is presented is the meat on the bone of the workshop/seminar model. In order for a workshop to be successful, the curriculum must be well considered and the methods of teaching that curriculum must be effective. In our faculty development workshops, we have actually revisited the educational planning process every single time. One of my colleagues, Ken Roberts, developed a five-step gnomonic, the GNOME, to remind us of the process. We visualize this with one of the delightful pictures of gnomes that we are all familiar with, but cannot use in this text for copyright purposes. Another aspect to this that is wonderful, is that the “G” is silent. Unfortunately, when you think about this, after participating in a workshop, all too often we are not exactly sure what the goal was for the educational experience that we had. And think about what is usually left out. It is the “E”, the evaluation. So here is the gnomonic that we would hope that you will think about in developing a workshop or seminar program for faculty development.

GNOME or the Educational Planning Process: Goals Needs Assessment Objectives Methods Evaluation

The needs assessment is the key. It will drive the curriculum, which is the meat on the bones of your workshop/seminar faculty development program. Carole Bland and Connie Schmitz discussed how to conduct your needs assessment in the videoconference presented in the fall. Based on the needs assessment, you can then develop practical, meaningful objectives upon which your curriculum will be based.

The methods of presenting the curriculum must follow social learning theory, which is, in essence, the basic science of education. Just as medicine has its basic biomedical science, education has its basic social learning theory and social sciences that explain why things work the way they do.

Bandura expresses four concepts that he believes are essential for people to learn: 1) They need to attend to the behavior that is being modeled; 2) They need to remember the behavior; 3) They need to imitate the behavior; and 4) They need to be rewarded for it. In a similar manner, Bruner has described a spiral curriculum that is illustrated in Table 3.

Table 3. Example of Bruner’s Spiral Curriculum <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Build on what is known or taught• Communication Skills• Clinical Precepting• Feedback
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You need to carefully structure your workshops and your seminars in a way that matches your learners’ skills at a very basic level. Build on what is already known or what has already been taught. For example, consider feedback skills. The first step is to consider how you facilitate interaction between two people. Once you have mastered that, the next step is how do you facilitate conversation between a teacher and a learner that takes hierarchical interaction into consideration. And finally, when you have mastered that, the next step is to go to feedback. Many of you already know that feedback is just an extenuation of this hierarchical interaction. It would be a mistake to begin with feedback if your seminar participants are novice teachers. What you need to do is talk about communication skills and build up from that. This is just one example of how to build a spiral curriculum into a workshop.

Knowles' work in adult learning theory is also crucial strategy in teaching seminars and workshops. The first principle, that adult learning must be interactive, is inherent in workshops and seminars. The second principle, that for adults to learn the information must be practical and then applied, can be illustrated in thinking about conducting a workshop for clinical preceptors on teaching. What they are most interested in is how to be effective and efficient clinical teachers using very brief presentations, just like the type of interactions that they have with their patients. Workshop exercises that are practical and that they can apply through role plays are three to four minute presentations, such as the "one minute preceptor" that will be taught in one of the following workshops. Finally, consider the fact that adult learners have attention spans of 15 to 20 minutes. Break the workshop into segments that are not longer than 20 minutes. We are trying to model that behavior by having each of the speakers for this conference only talk for 20 minutes.

Table 4. Use of Adult Learning Theory in Conducting Workshops and Seminars

- Adult learning requires interaction – use role plays, discussion
- Adult learning must be practical and applied use examples from clinical precepting, ask for brief presentations using the material taught in the workshop
- Adult learning should be varied with short didactics – break workshop into 15-20 minute segments

Another aspect to consider in terms of the teaching methods for workshops and seminars is reinforced learning. It is clear that giving a single workshop on a topic and then never reinforcing the learning is ineffective. Participants need to have concepts reinforced in a longitudinal manner. Again, revisit the educational planning process or GNOME. Consider that workshops need to be given at different levels, basic, advanced, and master levels, with the ability of the learners to

advance through the series. In our program, the faculty is grouped according to their needs and skills. Each cohort then advances as a group through ongoing faculty development workshops and seminars. Each level builds on the previous one and reinforces the concepts that were previously presented.

Now let's consider the second essential element for successful workshops and seminars: logistics. Say you have already done a wonderful job with your curriculum. It is exciting and meets the needs of your participants...but the devil is in the detail. We have already seen problems here with the audio/visual system, which really detracts from what we are trying to accomplish. What if the room is too hot or too cold? How well will your participants learn?

The first logistical consideration is getting people to participate. Consider the spectrum of workshop experiences that you can use. There is the model of four to six one-day workshops presented longitudinally over a year. You can use isolated workshops, half a day to two days in length, associated with other meetings that your target audience will attend. You might also chose brief one to three hour sessions. You must consider, from your own experience, which format will work best for your needs. Location is an equally important issue and can be categorized in three areas. The first is either adjacent to or at the academic health center, the second is at a distant site, or the third is on the premises of the target audience, such as at the practice site of your preceptors. Each choice of location will have advantages and disadvantages. Again, consider which will work best for those who will be participating in your program.

Over the past 15 or 20 years of doing workshops, I have come up with some "logistical truths" that I would like to share with you:

- **Truth #1:** A planning team, including participant and educator representation, is critical. It is

simply a mistake to plan workshops or seminars without getting the input from the people you are going to do the workshop or seminar for or without the educators who will be presenting the materials. A planning group is a tremendous resource.

- **Truth #2:** Have a long lead time from the time of deciding to conduct your workshop until it is to be given. It seems obvious, but in the world of preceptors in particular, many of them schedule their patients six or seven months in advance. If you want them to come, you must give them time to adjust their schedules. This also allows you to avoid conflicts with other meetings.

- **Truth #3:** It seems that long blocks of time, at least a half day or greater, work better than one to one and a half hour sessions, particularly if you are working with practitioners who see the workshops and seminars not only in terms of learning to be better preceptors, but also as a continuing medical education (CME) endeavor. They are more inclined to attend a day-long conference or a half-day conference if it's CME accredited than trying to pack in an extra hour before they go to their hospital rounds or at the end of the day after office hours.

- **Truth #4:** The farther removed from distractions the better. Being here in Orlando for this conference is a good example of that. Turn off the beepers, get away from the practice or from the pressures of the academic institution so that they can concentrate and focus on the educational process at hand.

- **Truth #5:** Personal contact facilitates participation. It isn't enough just to send out a notice. Particularly for local and regional workshops, if you personally can contact people and encourage them, you will get much better participation. This is even more important if you are going to develop a whole series of workshops over several years. It is crucial to get people to enroll for the first workshop and then continue. And finally,

- **Truth #6:** Good food and good location encourages participation. Again, we have tried to

model that for you with this conference. Certainly Orlando in December is a wonderful place to meet, and the food has been pretty good!

Lastly, I will speak to the third principle for conducting successful workshops: Consultation. We are not alone. There is a body of knowledge outside medical education and academic health centers about training and about workshops and seminars. This information is not only helpful, it can truly inform you what to do. When you look at what we are all trying to accomplish, which is training, and when you consider training as a transfer of knowledge, attitudes, and skills from one person to another, you will realize that this is something that industry and people outside of education or medical education have been doing for centuries. As a result, there are many resources that we can use outside of our own institutions.

Table 5 lists some resources that are readily available to most of us if we but look. The organizations that I have listed are prominent in training. They publish brochures and information, as well as conduct meetings. They have great resources for the nuts and bolts of how to actually conduct workshops.

Table 5. Resources for Faculty Development

- University departments of education and business
- Industry training programs
- National training organizations
- American Society for Training Development (ASTD)
- National Society for Performance and Instruction (NSPI)

One of the books that has helped us the most in developing our workshop model is Robert W. Pike's *Creative Training Techniques Handbook: Tips, Tactics, and How-to's for Delivering Effective Training* published by Lakewood Books in 1990.

I would like to conclude with Pike's Laws. They are simple, but contain a lot of truths that have helped us be effective in our program.

- Adults are babies with big bodies
- People don't argue with their own data
- Learning is directly proportional to the amount of fun that you have
- Learning has not taken place until behavior has changed

This last change is particularly crucial. Learning has not occurred until behavior has changed. In keeping with adult learning theory and the concept of workshops and seminars as fitting adult learning because it is interactive, I would like to conclude with comments made by Confucius more than two thousand years ago:

What I hear, I forget

What I see, I remember

What I do, I understand

Confucius, 451 BC