

# EFFECTIVE PRECEPTOR SERIES

## Faculty Development for the Community-Based Preceptor: Enhancement of Teaching Skills

### WHAT IS FACULTY DEVELOPMENT?

Faculty development encompasses a broad range of resources and activities provided by academic institutions and professional organizations that assist faculty in their roles as educators, researchers and administrators. These programs may be provided by academic institutions and professional organizations and may include fellowships, longitudinal local programs, workshops, seminars and individual activities, such as utilization of organized Web-based resources. Faculty development is considered key to faculty vitality.

### Can Faculty Development Improve Faculty Teaching Skills?

Being a preceptor is a very rewarding experience. However, being responsible for the education of future doctors can be a formidable task. Most preceptors begin their teaching careers using the skills they have developed for patient care – effective communication skills and a strong clinical knowledge base. Although these skills are good, few preceptors have received any formal training in teaching skills and may benefit from new ideas and methods. A systematic review of faculty development initiatives designed to improve teaching effectiveness in medical education showed that these programs can result in positive changes among practicing clinicians serving as teaching faculty (BEME guide No. 8, Medical Teacher, 2006). *To the point: medical education reviews—ongoing call for faculty development* (AJOG 2011) is a current education review and best practices regarding best practices of faculty development programs within the field of obstetrics and gynecology.

Outcomes found in the review were summarized as follows:

- *High satisfaction with faculty development programs.* Participants found the programs consistently

worthwhile, useful, and relevant.

- *Changes in attitudes towards teaching and further faculty development.* Participants reported a more positive attitude toward teaching, increased motivation, and a greater awareness of personal strengths and weaknesses.
- *Improved knowledge and skills.* Participants reported improved understanding of educational concepts and principles as well as learning new specific teaching strategies, more use of a learner-centered approach in education, and improved ability to assess learners' needs and to provide feedback.
- *Changes in teaching behavior.* Self-perceived as well as observed improvements in teaching performance were noted.
- *Changes in organizational practice.* Participants were more likely to become involved in new educational activities and establish improved networks of colleagues.

As health care delivery becomes increasingly complex and time demands on faculty continue to rise, effective and efficient strategies are more critical than ever for successful integration of teaching into the busy clinician's schedule.

### Challenges To Providing Faculty Development For The Community-Based Preceptor

Providing faculty development opportunities for community-based preceptors has some unique challenges as compared to faculty in traditional academic university settings. Preceptors are often geographically dispersed, making it difficult for programs to reach them or for them to travel to programs. Moreover, for many community-based preceptors, teaching responsibilities are only a small fraction of what they must accomplish each day. Fortunately,

the need for improved access to faculty development programs or resources specifically targeting community-based preceptors has been recognized, and increasing opportunities are becoming available for the unique challenges these educators face. A list of several good resources is provided in this document.

### Key Features Of Faculty Development Programs Designed To Improve Teaching Skills

In the BEME publication referenced above, reviewers noted several key features of successful faculty development programs, and important factors and observations regarding program development were discussed. When considering faculty development resources and activities, the following key features and other factors should be taken into account:

- *Look for experiential learning activities.* Evaluate the immediate relevance of material, the ability to practice what is being learned (i.e., role play, simulation, feedback on performance, etc.) and practicality of information provided.
- *The importance of peers.* Appreciate the value of peers as role models, for mutual exchange of ideas and knowledge and for collegial support.
- *Use of multiple instructional strategies.* Diverse activities accommodate different learning styles and can address different objectives (look for instructional methods beyond the traditional lecture such as experiential learning described above).
- *Needs assessment.* Consider reflecting on your practice environment, your personal learning and teaching style, your strengths and limitations to assess your faculty development needs.
- *Follow-up or "booster" sessions.* Look for opportunities to refresh your knowledge and skills, one-time sessions will have less impact over

the longer term.

- *The value of extended programs.* Longer programs extended over time (such as a seminar series) appear to have greater impact than more limited short courses or workshops.
- *Use of alternative practices.* Until recently, most of the literature described traditional face-to-face methods of instruction (i.e., workshops or seminars). Newer Web-based resources and activities may augment or replace some of these traditional activities (need to be further studied to confirm) and may be particularly appealing to the community-based preceptor.

When possible, select programs that also provide CME credit so that your time will be doubly well-spent.

## RESOURCES FOR FACULTY DEVELOPMENT IN TEACHING SKILLS FOR COMMUNITY-BASED PRECEPTORS

Where to search for local programs:

1. Contact your affiliated department of ob-gyn clerkship director or residency program director or search the department's Web site.
2. Contact your affiliated medical school's Office of Faculty Development or search the school's Web site.
3. Contact the Department of Family Medicine at your affiliated medical school or search for Family Medicine residency programs in your area. Contact the education office of the program and ask about resources for community-based preceptors.
4. Go to the U.S. Department of

Health and Human Services Area Health Education Centers (AHEC) Web site at <http://bhpr.hrsa.gov/grants/areahealtheducationcenters/index.htm> (accessed January 11, 2013) and review "model AHECs" for a regional center near you.

APGO Resources:

1. Visit the APGO Web site at [www.apgo.org](http://www.apgo.org) and click on "Faculty Development" or call the APGO office at (410) 451-9560.
2. The Effective Preceptor Series is a ten-pamphlet series offering practical teaching and evaluation tools for community-based preceptors.

Other National Resources:

1. The Mountain Area Health Education Center (MAHEC) in North Carolina's Office of Regional Primary Care Education: the Preceptor Development Program (PDP) contains seven sessions for preceptors available online, including the one minute preceptor. See <http://www.mahec.net/default.aspx> then search "PDP" (accessed January 11, 2013).
2. The Office of Community-Based Education and Research (OCER) at Dartmouth Medical School has online access to simple precepting tools. See <http://geiselmed.dartmouth.edu/ocer/resources/tools/> (accessed January 11, 2013).
3. The Society of Teachers of Family Medicine (STFM) is a national organization for family medicine educators with annual meetings and Web-based resources for preceptors. Visit [www.stfm.org](http://www.stfm.org) and go to "Conferences & Educa-

tion" for resources (accessed July 19, 2013).

4. The Expert Preceptor Interactive Curriculum (EPIC) is an online curriculum for community preceptors offered by the Office of Educational Development at the University of North Carolina School of Medicine. See [www.med.unc.edu/epic/](http://www.med.unc.edu/epic/) (accessed July 19, 2013).
5. The Medical College of Wisconsin Center for Ambulatory Teaching Excellence (CATE) lists resources such as publications and video/DVD in clinical teaching skills. See [www.mcw.edu](http://www.mcw.edu) and search for "CATE" (accessed January 11, 2013).
6. Faculty Vitae is a Web-based publication provided by the AAMC's Faculty Development and Leadership section offering professional development resources for medical faculty. See <https://www.aamc.org/> and search "faculty vitae" (accessed January 11, 2013).

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This publication is part of the APGO Effective Preceptor Series – a group of pamphlets intended to educate practitioners and learners about the apprentice system or preceptorship. The quality of learning that occurs in an established relationship between the teacher and the student often meets the challenge of educating physicians in today's chaotic health care environment. It allows doctors in training to practice as much like doctors as good medical practice will allow, and it provides a setting in which some of the best medical education in our nation takes place.

To learn more about APGO and The Preceptorship Series publications, contact:  
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