Applying the Model Supported and Empowered to Support Faculty's Growth and Competence in Curriculum

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Session Title:  
Cultural Change: Providing Necessary Tools for Improvement

Keywords:  
academia, curriculum and faculty

References:  

Abstract Summary:  
Faculty perceptions from four colleges regarding their preparedness for evaluating, developing, and revising curriculum were compared. From findings, the theory Challenged and Overwhelmed developed. From faculty recommendations, Supported and Empowered: a Model of Understanding to Support Faculty’s Growth and Competence was created. The session describes how to utilize the model

Learning Activity:

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<th>LEARNING OBJECTIVES</th>
<th>EXPANDED CONTENT OUTLINE</th>
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<td>Differentiate effective versus ineffective ways to respond to curriculum challenges that can lead to educators becoming overwhelmed or feeling supported and empowered</td>
<td>Discussion and presentation of Model of Understanding to Support Faculty’s Growth and Competence in Curriculum Development, Evaluation, and Revision.</td>
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<td>Determine three strategies that will assist educators to develop, evaluate, or revise curriculum</td>
<td>Presentation of strategies shared by educators in original research, and explanation of how to apply the model</td>
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Abstract Text:  
Nurse faculty may be unprepared to develop or evaluate curriculum, as this is not a part of usual practice (Anderson, 2009). Educators may be recruited from non-education roles, where they have excellent practice skills, but little or no experience developing curriculum or new courses. Education regarding curriculum received may be inconsistent.

Faculty are often hired for expertise, rather than their educational preparation (Anderson, 2009; Hewitt, & Lewallen, 2010). Faculty entering academia can be practice experts, but novices at education. It is difficult to learn the role of curriculum evaluator without guidance, and new instructors often must learn
the new skill in addition to new teaching roles, scholarship and other college service obligations. This can lead to stress (Weidman, 2013).

Original constructivist grounded theory research was conducted on 15 nurse faculty members in Vermont from four colleges resulting in seven themes. These themes were used to develop a middle range descriptive theory *Challenged and Overwhelmed*. The concepts: lack of confidence, overload and inadequate time, lack of knowledge and development, poor support and communication, and the need for mentorship experienced by the educator becoming challenged were examined. Understanding was clarified regarding what educators are facing in academia and the resulting sense of an onslaught of overwhelming challenges.

Each of these five areas where critical needs are lacking, separately are difficult and can cause distress, but the combination of five factors leads to an educator becoming more likely to be overwhelmed by the multitude of challenges. Together the understanding gained from faculty descriptors and the recommended strategies of faculty were used to develop a model of understanding: *Supported and Empowered*. The model depicts how the five strategy areas: education, mentoring, practice, time, and collaboration and feedback act to fortify the challenges affecting the educator. Experienced educators shared strategies that enabled them to learn their role, and provided tips for other educators and leaders. Overload and inadequate time, low confidence, the need for mentoring, and lack of knowledge related to curriculum, and poor support and communication can become collaborative support and communication, knowledge related to curriculum, paired mentoring, designated time, and increasing confidence when recommended strategies are applied.

This session will discuss how to apply the model in academia. It can be used to reduce the feelings of faculty feeling like they are drowning without support, by providing useful strategies regarding curriculum. It will provide strategies for administrators to provide a bridge between practice and academia. It will also provide help for faculty in the trenches.