Mixed Methods Analysis of Pedagogical Needs of Sessional Teachers at a Health Sciences School

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I do not have an affiliation (financial or otherwise) with a pharmaceutical, medical device or communications organization.

Je n’ai aucune affiliation (financière ou autre) avec une entreprise pharmaceutique, un fabricant d’appareils médicaux ou un cabinet de communication.
MIXED METHODS ANALYSIS OF PEDAGOGICAL NEEDS OF SESSIONAL TEACHERS AT A HEALTH SCIENCES SCHOOL

ABIGAIL GROVER SNOOK
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THE RISE OF SESSIONAL STAFF

USA - 2016
30% 70%

School of Health Sciences – University of Iceland
18% 82%

Over 1000 sessional faculty
THE NEED

“… we (academic developers) need to ask for, even demand, data on our sessional staff. Once we know who they are, we can seek their input into professional development needs…”

( Harvey M, 2017)
THE AIM – USE MIXED METHODS TO EXPLORE PEDAGOGICAL NEEDS OF SESSIONAL FACULTY

- Survey (quantitative) of sessional faculty (n = 160):
  - needs for more pedagogy before starting to teach
  - highest rated teaching needs
  - attitudes towards improving their teaching
  - current participation in faculty development
  - interest in digital faculty development

- Focus groups (qualitative) with 15 sessional faculty
  - Needs
    - Classroom
    - Clinical

25% response rate
The aim – use mixed methods to explore pedagogical needs of sessional faculty

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25% response rate
PARTICIPANTS IN SURVEY

- 160 participants in total
- 106 or 66% from medicine (includes physical therapy, biomedical science, and radiological science)
- 35 or 22% from nursing
- 8 or 5% from psychology
- 11 or 7% from odontology, food and nutrition, and pharmacy
71% agreed/strongly agreed that they would have liked more pedagogical training before they started to teach

67% agreed/strongly agreed that it was a teacher’s responsibility to put time and energy into improving their teaching

44% had not attended an activity to enhance their teaching in the last year

67% indicated that they would be likely/very likely to participate in FD if offered in distance format
RESULTS – SURVEY
HIGHEST NEEDS
(N = 160)

- motivating today’s students
- designing effective assessments
- developing a reflective approach to teaching
- providing constructive feedback to learners at regular intervals
Needs, motivations, and identification with teaching: a comparative study of temporary part-time and tenure-track health science faculty in Iceland

Abigail Grover Snook¹,²,³*, Asta B. Schram², Thorarinn Sveinsson¹,²,⁴ and Brett D. Jones⁵
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    - Classroom
    - Clinical
  Thematic analysis

25% response rate
PARTICIPANTS IN FOCUS GROUPS

- 15 participants altogether
- 11 from physical therapy
- 2 from nursing
- 1 from psychology
- 1 from medicine
RESULTS
FOCUS GROUPS
(N = 15)

Need for orientation and support

(they should) include some sort of presentation about what is available, what sort of resources are available to us, or what sort of support is available to us, just some kind of overview.
RESULTS
FOCUS GROUPS
(N = 15)

Lack of feedback and communication causing insecurity

something could be better, that one needs to get more feedback as a teacher. And also, criticism, what one is not doing, (how) one could do it better or differently
RESULTS
FOCUS GROUPS (N = 15)

Convenient, condensed pedagogical courses as welcome tools

{facilitator} Are these teaching methods, that you are interested in hearing about? {participants} Yes, no question. It would completely depend on what time of day. And how extensive it is, if it is several days. And how long it is. But having a course or presentation would be brilliant
RESULTS
FOCUS GROUPS
(N = 15)
Lack of clinical facility support for educator role

lack of time, one cannot attend to the work as one would like. But what is never part of the package (of being a hospital teacher) is what one can expect, what this assignment (of having a student) is like, so and so many hours
RESULTS
FOCUS GROUPS
(N = 15)

FD needs for classroom and clinical adjuncts differ

Clinical sessional
- Orientation to clinical teaching role
- How to provide guidance and constructive criticism

Classroom sessional
- Orientation to department, HI, role as sessional
- Reflective end-of-course meetings, convenient and ‘brilliant’ pedagogy, and effective assessment techniques
“… we (academic developers) need to ask for, even demand, data on our sessional staff. Once we know who they are, …”

(Harvey M, 2017)

651 valid emails but over 1000 sessional faculty
THE NEED - FIND OUT WHAT THEY NEED

- “… we can seek their input into professional development needs…”
  (Harvey M, 2017)

- Orientations (and welcome)
- Communication and feedback on teaching
- Convenient, context-dependent pedagogy
  - motivating students, writing assessments, constructive feedback, reflective practice
- Support as educator from workplace
- Digital formats
QUESTIONS?
THE EFFECT OF CONNECTEDNESS AND APPRECIATION ON MEDICAL EDUCATOR IDENTITY IN SESSIONAL FACULTY AT A HEALTH SCIENCES SCHOOL

ABIGAIL GROVER SNOOK
ASTA B. SCHRAM
SCHOOL OF HEALTH SCIENCES, UNIVERSITY OF ICELAND
THE NEED

“... we (academic developers) need to ask for, even demand, data on our sessional staff. Once we know who they are, we can seek their input into professional development needs...”

(Harvey M, 2017)
THE AIM – USE MIXED METHODS TO EXPLORE NEEDS FOR CONNECTEDNESS AND APPRECIATION IN SESSIONAL FACULTY

Survey (quantitative) of sessional faculty (n = 148):
- Scales measuring:
  - Connectedness
  - Appreciation
  - Identity as a medical educator
  - Openness to improve
- Structural Equation Modeling

Focus groups (qualitative) with 15 sessional faculty
- Needs
  - Connectedness
  - Appreciation
## SCALES – RELIABILITIES/EXAMPLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale name</th>
<th>$\alpha$</th>
<th>#</th>
<th>Item example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identification with teaching (ID)</td>
<td>.80</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>It matters to me how well I do in my teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connectedness (CO)</td>
<td>.78</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Members of my HI department frequently share teaching practices they have found to be successful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appreciation (AP)</td>
<td>.76</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>I would be motivated to try a new teaching method if I was shown appreciation for enhancing my teaching methods (Also included compensation, feedback from supervisor, student evaluations)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Openness to improve (OP)</td>
<td>.69</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>It is part of my responsibilities as a teacher to reflect on my teaching skills and how I can improve my teaching</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
STRUCTURAL EQUATION MODELING (SEM)
Appreciation

Connectedness

Identity as a medical educator

Openness to improve

van Lankveld et al. (2017) systematic review of the psychological processes required to develop a teacher identity
RESULTS - SURVEY

Appreciation

Identity as a medical educator

Open to improve

Connectedness

Sessional faculty (n=146)

Identification with teaching as a mediator

$X^2_{(71)} = 97.80$

RMSEA = .05

CFI = .95

SRMR = .05

** p < .0001
Factors predicting identity as educators and openness to improve: an exploratory study.

Snook AG¹, Schram AB¹, Jones BD², Sveinsson T¹.

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2 Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, Virginia, USA.

Abstract
CONTEXT: Researchers suggest that teachers' work environment affects their sense of connectedness and appreciation, which affects their educator identity. However, sessional (also called flexi) educators often balance a variety of roles, which may influence their educational identity development. This exploratory study sought to describe and compare the educator identity and openness to improve among sessional and non-sessional educators.

METHODS: Using a mixed-methods approach, researchers administered a survey to 90 educators at four medical schools. The survey included the Educator Identity Questionnaire (EIQ) and open-ended questions about educators' experiences.

RESULTS: The results indicated that sessional educators reported lower levels of educator identity and openness to improve compared to non-sessional educators. Sessional educators also described challenges in balancing their various roles and responsibilities, which may affect their educational identity development.

CONCLUSION: The findings suggest that sessional educators may need additional support to develop their educator identity and openness to improve. Further research is needed to explore the impact of work environment on educators' identity development.

Keywords: Educator identity, Openness to improve, Sessional educators.
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- Focus groups (qualitative) with 15 sessional faculty
  - Needs
    - Connectedness
    - Appreciation
    - Thematic analysis
CONTRASTING NEEDS FOR CONNECTEDNESS

Appropriate (mainly clinical teachers)

- I work at the hospital full-time and (hesitates) I don’t exactly view the (PT department) as my own group
- I think the relationship with the PT department is fine
- the more you participate as part of the community, the stronger the connection is

Want more (mainly classroom)

- I don’t perceive that I belong to the group
- One is very much alone as a sessional teacher
- I have to ask what is going on
No appreciation in pay

Yes

[facilitator] Do you think the University thinks that what you are doing is important? (Silence)

{participant} I don’t know

No

I don’t think they have any idea if I am a good teacher

No appreciation in pay

No

I don’t think they have any idea if I am a good teacher

No

because I think I learn so much

No

I enjoy teaching

No

to not lose any of our experience and knowledge, we want to pass it on

No

I don’t think they have any idea if I am a good teacher

No

because I think I learn so much

No

I enjoy teaching
RESULTS - SURVEY

Sessional faculty (n=146)
Identification with teaching as a mediator

Appreciation

Connectedness

Identity as a medical educator

Open to improve

$\chi^2_{(71)} = 97.80$
RMSEA = .05
CFI = .95
SRMR = .05
** p < .0001

$R^2 = .64**$
$p = .03$

17
$p = .08$
CONCLUSIONS

Heterogeneous group

Address context-specific needs of sessional teachers

Classroom teachers who teach more – invest in sense of connectedness and appreciation

Feedback on teaching as form of appreciation, connectedness, and communication

Improving educator identity predicts openness to improve teaching
QUESTIONS?

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