EDITORIAL

Examining faculty development through a global lens: current trends and innovations

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As simulation-based education continues to serve as a pillar in health professions education, the demand for qualified faculty to facilitate experiential and performance-based interprofessional simulation-based learning sessions is becoming increasingly important [1]. This need is reflected in the exponential increase in simulation fellowship programs designed to equip educators with the relevant skills and knowledge to be highly effective simulation educators [2–4]. While some authors have created provocative arguments for creating standards for entry into the simulation educator role [5], there remains substantial variability in the experiences, entry requirements and formal training of simulation educators.

This edition of the Short Reports on Simulation Innovations Supplement (SRSIS) highlights how educators across the globe are tackling this complex challenge in novel and creative ways. Using an array of techniques and interventions, these authors make it clear that faculty development for simulation educators is indeed a universal need, and a one-size-fits-all approach may not be suitable. We identified four themes in the successful reports comprising the SRSIS.

Embedding faculty development within larger initiatives

One of the clever approaches many authors used was to take advantage of the proximity to other larger organizations or initiatives and embed faculty development within them. For example, Vaughn et al. partnered with the Institute for Educational Excellence to offer the Cultivating Simulation Champions Course [6]. Similarly, Oliver and Mellanby took advantage of other existing education venues, such as the Association for Simulated Practice in Healthcare (ASPiH), to bolster the scope of the faculty development program [7]. Vadla et al. embedded their simplified simulation facilitator course within a larger SimBegin program aimed at increasing birthing safety worldwide [8]. Somerville similarly incorporated faculty development aimed at simulation educators within an already-established postgraduate program [9]. These 'piggyback' approaches likely helped catalyse the success and expansion of these endeavours by placing them in close proximity to another established entity or course.

Interprofessional learners

Another pattern that emerged from these innovative approaches to faculty development lies in the interprofessional nature of the participants. From just the author groups featured in this supplement, it is clear that the need for faculty development in simulation is an international phenomenon. From these reports,

it is also clear that the need is specialty agnostic. These reports demonstrate that bringing together individuals from diverse backgrounds, specialties and practice types is critical in ensuring an optimal learning experience.

Teaching by doing

One of the most appreciated features of these innovative reports is the trend that developers of these programs are practising what they preach and facilitating experiential learning sessions for the faculty they are training. The modalities included hands-on workshops and longitudinal experiential learning sessions so faculty can learn by doing [6,7,9,10]. Oliver and Mellanby elevated this approach to an even higher level with their meta-debrief club, in which faculty pre-recorded a debriefing session and then had to debrief that debrief. Meta indeed [7]!

Embracing a hybrid approach

Embracing the benefits of technology runs in the blood of any simulation educator. As such, offering faculty development programs that acknowledge and capitalize upon the benefits of technology will always be well received. In these featured articles, program developers wisely adopted online formats to complement the hands-on training experiences to accommodate dynamic faculty schedules and time zones. From offering courses multiple times a day [6] to creating a cascading structure [8], program developers have generated creative solutions for ensuring accessibility for global attendees.

Conclusion

A recent scoping review of faculty development programs aimed at enhancing simulation educator skills revealed a number of trends in programs leading up to 2022. This edition highlights more recent work on how the community has demonstrated creativity, agility and progress on several recommendations provided in that review [11]. This rapid evolution speaks to the ever-present adaptability and desire for improvement that exists among the simulation community. Fortunately, outlets such as the SRSIS provide an outlet for featuring these works in progress so we can all continue to learn from one another and improve our practice.

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