Faculty development programs are often challenged by sustaining the motivation of faculty to attend faculty development programs longitudinally. One solution is to create a program where faculty can earn a credential that they can document in their teaching dossier and join a cohort of similarly minded teachers.

BACKGROUND:

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION:
The Stepping Stones Teacher Development Program, a 40-hour certificate course, was established in 2002 by the Centre for Faculty Development. It is designed to assist faculty with their teaching and educational roles. It consists of a series of half-day workshops per academic year. Each workshop is approximately 3-4 hours in duration. It also involves a journal club which meets in the evening once per month for 2 hours during the academic year. The program is primarily targeted to clinical faculty although basic scientists and clinical investigator teachers will find many of the topics relevant. Participants are evaluated through the submission of two assignments, an annotated bibliography with a critical appraisal of articles relating to a specific education topic and a paper examining how the journal club impacted their education and teaching practice.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:
After participating in the Certificate Program, participants should be able to:
- describe several evidence-based strategies for teaching in a variety of clinical contexts
- describe some of the theoretical basis for clinical teaching strategies
- demonstrate new acquired teaching skills
- demonstrate enhanced critical appraisal skills of the medical education literature
- acquire a positive attitude towards implementing & initiating change in clinical teaching
- identify the ways in which scholarship can be introduced into teaching and educational activities
- describe a strategy for implementation of their own career development plan

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS:
Candidates are expected to complete 26 hours of CFD workshops over a two year period. They will also be expected to participate in additional 14 hours (within 1 academic year) of training, by participating in the journal club and the pre- and post workshop teaching/learning theory. Candidates will be expected to review specific articles for each journal club meeting. During the course of the year, candidates will complete two graded assignments: an annotated bibliography and a reflection paper.

JOURNAL CLUB LEARNING OBJECTIVES:
At the end of the year, participants will be able to:
- discuss the terms “teaching, learning and adult education principles”
- critically appraise an article from the health professional education literature
- acquire an appreciation for the breadth and depth of health professional literature.
- apply what they have read to their own professional educational setting
- dialogue with other health professionals and begin an education network with others in the group.
- use an annotated bibliography to learn about one specific educational topic

JOURNAL CLUB FORMAT:
There are 3 journal club locations which run simultaneously. Each week, participants will review 3-4 papers related to a specific topic. The papers/articles have been chosen from journals that are highly respected, high quality, relevant to the academic health professional and readily accessible. Members of the Journal Club are free to suggest additional papers worthy of review. Each paper will have a primary reviewer to present a critique of the paper. On the first session a format for review of the papers is discussed.

JOURNAL CLUB THEMES:
- The Social Context of Learning: How Teachers and Learners Relate to Each Other
- The Academic Health Professional
- Adult Learning Theory
- Professional Education
- Mentoring in Health Professional Education
- Assessment of Teaching and Learning
- Are Face to Face Development Activities Effective?
- Professionalism in Health Professional Education
- Technology, e-Learning and Simulation

RESEARCH/OUTCOMES:
As the end of each academic year, participants who have completed the full program are sent a program evaluation form. The evaluation is an online form which asks questions related to workshops, journal club, journal club facilitators and the overall program.

WORKSHOPS:
The workshops are devoted to the enhancement of teaching skills with a look at career development, scholarship and research in education and leadership and are offered throughout the academic year. There are 5 streams to which each workshop fits (sample of workshops listed below).

1. Instructional Development
- Teaching 101 Part 1 & 2
- Large Group Teaching/Preparation Skills
- Game Based Teaching
- Feedback
- Introduction to Assessment & Advanced Assessment
- Learning Styles
- Dealing with Conflict
- Ambulatory Care Teaching
- Managing Challenging Teaching Situations and “Problem” Learners

2. Career Development
- Teaching Dossiers
- Moving your Career Ahead
- Developing Skills as a Mentor
- Developing Effective Mentoring Initiatives
- Promotion by Creative Professional Activity

3. Leadership
- Interpersonal Effectiveness
- Authentic Leadership
- Leadership Agility

4. Technology in Health Professions Teaching
- Videosconferencing 101
- Technology Enhanced Health Professions Teaching

5. Scholarship in Education
- Recognizing Excellence: Scholarship in Education
- Writing for Publication
- Qualitative and Quantitative Data Collection
- Qualitative and Quantitative Analysis

STUDY OBJECTIVE:
The purpose of the study, in keeping with a Design Research context was to evaluate the Stepping Stones Teaching Certificate Program to inform further program development, and make a scholarly contribution to the Faculty Development Literature.

EVALUATION:
In this project, a novel approach combining quantitative and qualitative methods was used to explore program impact. Participants completed 2 questionnaires (pre- and post – program) to identify skill set knowledge gaps in teaching effectiveness. The qualitative component consists of focus groups. In pre-program groups, voluntary participants were asked:
- a) Their motives for enrollment
- b) Expectations of the program
- c) The type of teaching preparation they have had to date.

Post-program groups will attempt to elicit the impact of the program on:
- a) Perceived gaps
- b) Teaching behaviour change
- c) Influence on their career.

OUTCOMES:
Qualitative and quantitative program effectiveness was demonstrated immediately following completion of the program. Assessing the sustainability of the effects is ongoing.

The Qualitative results were remarkable similar in 2 cohorts (2004-2005 and 2005-2006) and indicated that:
- Improved of Educator Community and Network
- Desire to remain connected with Intergessional Education/Teaching colleagues
- Increased confidence in teaching

A variety of benefits for faculty and their teaching practice were found including: acquisition and affirmation of knowledge and skills, increased teaching skill confidence and enthusiasm for teaching, and a perceived value of a network with teaching colleagues, which exceeded expectations. A desire to continue to remain connected was voiced.

The consideration of Gap Analysis as a learning enabler was an unexpected result.

FUNCTIONALITY:
- Design effectiveness
- Interaction with the environment
- Interaction with the Virtual Learning Environment
- Interaction with the Learning Resources
- Interaction with the Faculty

STUDY OBJECTIVE:
To examine the longitudinal effects of the SS program on participants’ professional identities and their linkages within a wider health professional formation community. Qualitative individual interviews with participants from two recent cohorts approximately one year after their involvement with the program were gathered. Transcripts were coded using both open and axial coding to describe recurrent themes and relationships among themes in the data.

OUTCOMES:
Findings indicated that while participants felt that the program had helped strengthen their respective professional identities, they reported a number of problems making connections to a larger community of educators. What focus group participants said:

Teaching Practice:
- There is a question that the SS had a definite effect...that I approach my teaching differently...
- My perspective has changed, my outlook has changed, my interaction with students has changed...

Teacher Identity:
- ‘I think SS really offers a lot to people who are just entering into the milieu…’ Not that they’re in now at teaching. It’s just now we are acknowledging that they’re teachers or educators...
- ‘I think SS is what taught us…’ What they do come to me and ask me questions. For instance our head of our Edmund will say, well, look I do the SNAP...