Building a Community of Practice: Instructional Design in Medical Education

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Background

Most health professions educators are subject matter experts and are likely not formally trained in the art of teaching or creating curricular content. Instructional designers fill this gap. Instructional designers work closely with subject matter experts to establish instructional methods that are rooted in decades of research and evidence. With an eye to the future of education, these professionals help guide instructors to apply emerging teaching methods and educational technologies when appropriate.

Instructional design in medical education is a rapidly growing field. Evidence supports the effectiveness of using instructional design principles in simulation-based education and in other medical education fields. Designers in this field are faced with unique challenges including curriculum oversight, educational technology implementation, and clinical and basic science integration. A multi-institutional group of instructional designers recognized a growing need for collaboration related to instructional design between institutions.

100 Survey respondents

78 Schools across the US and Canada

After an email was sent out to the Dr. Ed listserv in the spring of 2016, an enormous response was received expressing interest in the topic of instructional design in medical education. A survey on instructional design in medical education was sent to interested individuals.

Respondents were asked to provide their job title. The word cloud above represents responses. Instructional designer was the most frequent answer while individuals identifying themselves as professors, technologists, and coordinators also responded.

Methods and Results

A 19 question survey consisting of open and closed-ended questions was created in REDCap. The survey was sent to all individuals expressing interest in the topic. One hundred individuals responded.
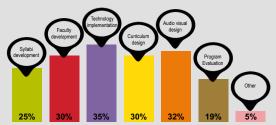
36% of respondents reported that their institutions have 0.5 or more FTE devoted to instructional design.

Mean 4.10 FTE
Range 0.5 to 25

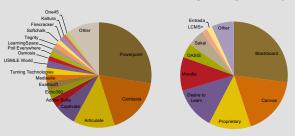**56%** of respondents reported that their curriculum is undergoing a major redesign.

Services offered

Syllabi development **25%**
Faculty development **30%**
Technology implementation **35%**
Curriculum design **30%**
Audio visual design **32%**
Program Evaluation **19%**
Other **5%**

Respondents were asked "What kind of services are offered by the instructional design team?"

Software used

One45, Kaltura, Firecracker, Softchalk, Tegrity, LearningSpace, Poll Everywhere, Osmosis, USMLE World, Turning Technologies, Mediasite, Examsoft, Echo360, Adobe Suite, Captivate, Articulate, Camtasia, Powerpoint, Other

Learning management systems

Entrada LCMS+, Sakai, OASIS, Moodle, Desire to Learn, Proprietary, Canvas, Blackboard, Other

Respondents were asked what software and learning management systems are used at their institution.

Conclusions

The survey showed a demand for the establishment of a community of practice for instructional designers in medical education. A majority of respondents were interested in joining a special interest group on instructional design.

96% of respondents were interested in joining a special interest group on instructional design

Respondents are interested in learning more about technologies used at other institutions, curriculum redesign strategies, and ideas for collaboration.

What resources would be most helpful for your current role in instructional design?

software tutorials, professional development, advocacy, best practices, curriculum change, faculty education, instructional methods, sharing of products, design approaches, storyboard templates, project management, learning theory

Future Plans

An instructional design in medical education working group has been established under the AAMC Group on Information Resources to facilitate collaboration and information sharing. This community is piloting a listserv for communication and is exploring other options for collaboration.