

Feedforward interview: enhancing reflection for successful teachers

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What problems were addressed? Train-the-trainer courses are important for high quality faculty development. Teaching methods are usually shared in a

simulated learning environment; however, the actual transfer of these methods to daily teaching practice seems to be difficult for many participants. Intrinsic motivation generated during the didactic course often quickly diminishes as soon as the clinical teacher becomes confronted with workplace reality. Group discussions about this problem revealed organisational obstacles and doubts about the concrete changeability of teaching behaviours. Reflection as an individual or within a peer group may improve this transfer.

What was tried? Instead of small-group feedback sessions, a feedforward interview protocol¹ was introduced. The idea is that reflection on the conditions of successful teaching situations will help participants to replicate these conditions in the future. A short presentation included basic ideas of feedforward and the assignment of a group exercise. In the latter, each participant played the role of an interviewer and an interviewee. A 10-minute time-frame was allowed for each interview. The interview protocol contained four steps and was followed in pairs. All 26 participants were asked to *remember a positive teaching situation* in which the participant had felt energised, alive and satisfied. Then they were asked to *identify the peak moment of this teaching situation* and how they had felt during that moment. The next step was to *analyse conditions that made that situation possible*, including conditions in themselves, in others, and conditions facilitated by the organisation. The final step was to *think about what needs to happen to re-establish teaching sessions similar to the personal success story* in terms of the participant's own resources, support by others, and environmental prerequisites. This step was solidified by identifying two actions that participants intended to realise within the next 6 months. The two actions were noted on a postcard addressed to the participant to be posted 6 months later.

What lessons were learned? The feedforward interview protocol is a short intervention that can be carried out in large groups of teachers, which focuses on each individual's professional context, needs and capacities. Participants had no problems in identifying positive teaching success stories. The postcards were a good motivator to explicitly think about and write down two concrete actions for future activities. In the formal evaluation, all participants confirmed that they were now aware of their personal criteria for positive teaching situations and how to establish a teaching situation they would personally enjoy. Two-thirds of participants attested that they could imagine using the interview protocol in their professional lives. Whether

the interview protocol can also be used with less experienced teachers requires further investigation. The trainers reported an apparent and strong improvement in participants' sense of responsibility for their own teaching success. The prospective evaluation of the postcards revealed that more than two-thirds of statements referred to self-regulation and only 28% referred to support by others or environmental factors.

REFERENCE

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