

Stakeholder Summary

New faculty who participate in required development program more confident in their teaching

Durham College's Certificate in College Teaching, a required faculty development program, helped new faculty develop the skills they need to be better teachers, according to a new report from the Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario (HEQCO). Faculty gained confidence in their teaching, learned how to develop effective courses and improved their overall professionalism.

Program description

The Effects of a Required Faculty Development Program on Novice Faculty Self-Efficacy and Teaching examined the effectiveness of a newly implemented required faculty development program at Durham College. In 2010, Durham College experienced unprecedented growth in its student and faculty populations, prompting the college to implement a pilot program called the Durham College Certificate in College Teaching. The college's 13 new faculty were required to take three courses within the first 18 months of probation and could take an additional two courses at the teacher's discretion. The courses aimed to improve teacher's confidence with teaching methodologies, curriculum design and development, assessment and evaluation, teaching and learning, and professionalism. Teachers who successfully complete all five courses were awarded the certificate.

The study explored whether the program had an effect on teacher confidence and whether teachers reported a philosophy of active, engaged, student-centered learning at the end of the program. Participants were asked to complete five surveys at three points during the study, as well as participate in interviews and focus groups.

Findings and further research

Upon completion of the program, teachers were more confident in their ability to teach at the college level, as well as in their ability to participate fully in program teams, departmental activities and college committees.

Teachers were more likely to support a student-centered approach to teaching and learning. The program provided faculty with the theories, models and strategies to improve student learning and engagement.

Participants found the program intense and although they were given a reduced teaching load, some felt there was not enough time to complete the work. Asking participants to complete five surveys at three different times during the study was too demanding for probationary faculty members. If a similar study on future cohorts is done, the authors recommend only using three surveys to lessen the burden on new faculty.

Further research should also examine the longitudinal impact of the program on student learning outcomes.

*Authors of **The Effects of a Required Faculty Development Program on Novice Faculty Self-Efficacy and Teaching** are Ruth Rodgers and Jordanne Christie, Durham College, and Maureen Wideman from the University of Ontario Institute of Technology.*