

The Compass Model to plan faculty development programs

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Abstract

Faculty development is an imperative if institutions are to develop professional and competent teachers, educators, researchers and leaders. Planning of faculty development currently focuses on meeting the perceived needs of staff and their interests. We would like to propose the *Compass Model* as a conceptual framework to plan faculty development, which was inspired by the interplay between intrinsic and extrinsic forces for learning, as outlined in the Self-Determination Theory (SDT). In planning faculty development, the Compass Model acknowledges four agendas (directions) from various stakeholders: Strategies (N), Competencies (E), Resources (S) and Wish lists (W). The model then describes four avenues for faculty development offerings (quadrants): Foundation (NE), Innovation (SE), Response (SW) and Motivation (NW) (*i.e.* outputs, activities). The model was compared theoretically with another approach to faculty development planning. It was then piloted as a quality measure for a current program to check for omissions or missed opportunities. We plan to use it in a multi-center study to compare approaches in faculty development planning in different contexts. We hope our model assists faculty developers to consider all stakeholders' agendas when planning faculty development, beyond the current standard *customer-based approach*.

Introduction

Faculty development refers to the broad range of activities that institutions use to renew or assist faculty in their academic roles.¹ Harden and colleagues² have argued that the teacher is more than a lecturer, listing at least 11 additional roles. The expectations of today's academics now include clinical, college and university service,³ as well as leadership and scholarly activities.⁴ As most academics are ill-prepared for many of their new duties, faculty development is an imperative rather than a luxury if institutions are to develop pro-

fessional and competent teachers, educators, researchers and leaders.⁵ While much has been written about faculty development, the planning stage of this important practice has been somewhat neglected.

We would like to propose the *Compass Model* as a conceptual framework to plan faculty development. The notion of the compass has been used to highlight *directions* in research,⁶ particularly in medical education research,⁷ in marketing^{8,9} and in psychology and spirituality.¹⁰ Williamson and Blackburn¹¹ used the COMPASS acronym for an approach to leadership, while others have used the compass as a mind-tool to set *priorities* (*i.e.* True North), in bioethics¹²⁻¹⁴ and professionalism in social networking.¹⁵ A famous compass in higher education explained the interrelated processes and dynamics of *Process Education* with respect to five areas for developing the individual and the institution.¹⁶

Faculty development represents an investment in human capital, but it is all too frequently planned using a survey of faculty members only, catering for their preferences. We argue that these so-called *needs assessments* are no more than *wish lists*. In this regard, our Compass Model is unique in that it considers the agendas of various stakeholders when planning faculty development. It also provides suggestions in terms of faculty development activities.

Innovation

The theoretical underpinning of our Compass Model was inspired by the Self-Determination Theory (SDT),¹⁷ which describes the interplay between intrinsic and extrinsic factors in learning. According to the SDT, when planning faculty development, two types of input should be considered: autonomous (intrinsic) and controlled (extrinsic). The autonomous input is represented by the horizontal axis of the Compass Model and reflects the individual competencies of academics (East) and their areas of interests (West). The controlled drive lies on the vertical axis and represents the institutional strategies (North) and available resources (South). The Compass Model therefore addresses Bland and Simpson's¹⁸ call for faculty development to link individual and organizational needs and pair organizational development with individual skill development.¹⁹

The Compass Model (Figure 1) comprises the four primary directions (N, E, W, S) and four quadrants in-between (NW, NE, SW, SE). Directions represent the four perspectives (input) of the various stakeholders. Faculty developers are expected to gather NEWS (an acronym for directions) when planning faculty

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development. *N* the strategies, is influenced by the institutional mission and vision as well as the requirements of accreditation bodies. *E* acknowledges the core competencies required for individual academics. *W* denotes the interest areas of individual faculty members, while *S* concedes that resources may be limited. Directions therefore attend to the four basic questions in terms of what faculty developers *should* (N) *vs. could* (S) offer and what faculty members *want* (W) *vs. require* (E).

The Compass also has four quadrants, acknowledging the potential offerings and activities in faculty development programs (output). Some initiatives are necessary to meet standards (*Foundation*). When resources may be limited, innovation is required to meet current and evolving faculty development requirements (*Innovation*). The *Response* quadrant is the most flexible section of the plan, in which *ad hoc* offerings are organized to cater for the expectations of faculty members using available resources. In the *Motivation* quadrant, the institution offers and supports faculty members in terms of scholarships and sabbaticals and long-term career development to empower them to professionalize their practice as educators, researchers and leaders. Activities in this quadrant add considerable value to the institution's teaching and learning, research and administration quality. Further elaboration of each direction and quadrant can be found in Figure 2,²⁰⁻³⁵ which draws on reported trends and best practices in faculty development.

Unlike Kolb's experiential learning model,³⁶ there is no sequential relationship between directions or quadrants in our model and should therefore not be viewed as a cycle. Directions and quadrants of our Compass

Model are not measures or scales. Each direction represents a standalone resource for data (input) to plan faculty development, while each quadrant suggests a separate avenue for implementation (output), taking cognizance of the input from two directions.

Evaluation of the Model

The Compass Model can be evaluated in two ways: theoretically, by comparing the model with other approaches for planning faculty development and practically, by using the model to scrutinize a faculty development program as a case study.

Theoretical comparative analysis

Table 1 compares the Compass Model with the Kern's six-step approach to curriculum development.³⁷

Step (1) can be compared with the True North of the Compass, either internally by the institution's leadership or by an external accrediting, certifying or professional entity,

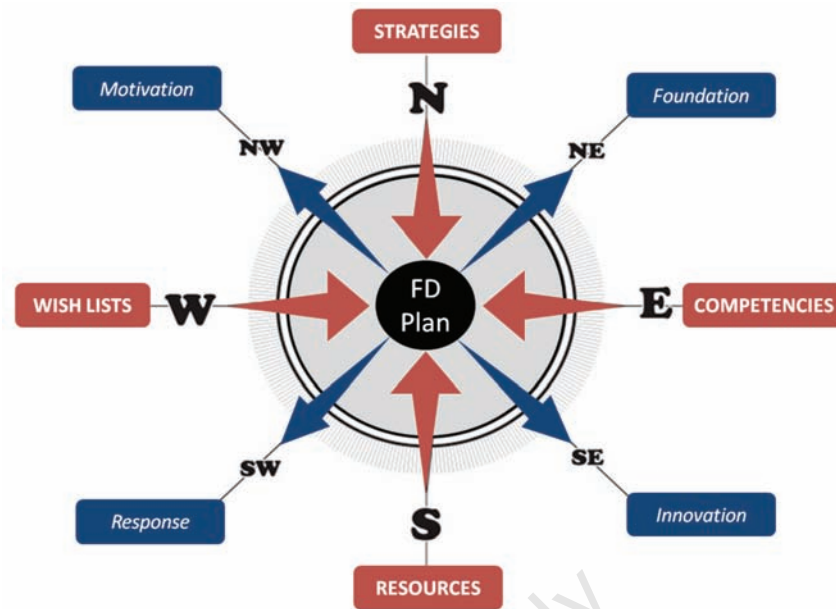


Figure 1. The Compass Model for planning faculty development. Four directions (N, E, W, S) represent the major input from different stakeholders (input for planning) and four quadrants (NE, SE, SW, NW) represent areas for activities or faculty development initiatives, approaches and programs (output or offerings).

<p>NW: Motivation</p> <p>This quadrant reflects career path aspirations of individual faculty members which are supported by the institution, because they eventually add value to the overall organizational performance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professionalization of practice as educators, researchers and leaders²⁰ • Scholarships, sabbaticals, fellowships, degrees • Professional awards²¹ • FD as an Instrument of change²² 	<p>N: STRATEGIES</p> <p>Standards policies dictate FD*. They are decided by the institutional leadership or by accrediting/certifying/professional bodies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educational strategies²³ • Institutional environment²⁴ • Certifying and professional bodies • Social accountability²⁵ • Global standards²⁶ 	<p>NE: Foundation</p> <p>This is the MUST section of FD. It fulfills institutional needs in terms of FD²⁷.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Orientation for new faculty²⁸ • Minimum requirements²⁹ • Essential AMEE courses, e.g. ESME, RESME, ESCEL (www.amee.org) • Current and future anticipated core competencies
<p>W: WISH LISTS</p> <p>This is the standard customer-based approach to plan FD program, based on faculty's perceived needs (areas of interests).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Needs assessment³⁰ • Self-identified FD*²⁴ • Questionnaires, interviews, focus groups, brain storming sessions, idea boxes, informal meetings 		<p>E: COMPETENCIES</p> <p>The actual needs, which may be unperceived by academics, include essential skills to enable them to carry out their roles or gaps in their performance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roles of the teacher² • Educators' responsibilities²⁷ • Job descriptions, performance gaps, self-assessment, reflection, 360° evaluation, teaching portfolio, research track record
<p>SW: Response</p> <p>This is the most flexible part of the plan that includes <i>ad hoc</i> offerings to capitalize on resources available (S) to satisfy faculty wishes (W).</p> <p>e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshop by a visiting expert • Experiential and interactive activities³⁰ • Training on a new e-learning platform • Communities of practice⁴ 	<p>S: RESOURCES</p> <p>These resources include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget • Number and expertise of educators • Protected time for professional development • Venues available for training • Context of practice; outpatient, inpatient or ambulatory. • Infrastructure, including technology • Distribution of campuses • Networks and collaborations 	<p>SE: Innovation</p> <p>When faculty developers are challenged with limited resources, innovative approaches should be sought.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Web-based FD*³¹ • Objective Structured Teaching Evaluation (OSTE)³² • Train-the-trainer³³ • Project-based FD*³⁴ • Decentralized activities¹⁹ • Peer coaching FD*³⁵

* FD: Faculty Development

Figure 2. Best practices and trends in faculty development from the literature are plotted in different directions (input from N, E, W, S) and quadrants (output in NE, SE, SW, NW) of the Compass Model. Red boxes are input to the plan and while the blue one are its output.

i.e. the problem is identified against standards. Step (2) equates with the horizontal axis of our Compass Model, *i.e.* the wishes of the faculty members (West) and their actual needs to perform their duties (East). Any plan is evaluated by its effectiveness to achieve its objectives. Steps (3) and (4) are defined in light of strategies (North) and resources (South). Kern's steps 1-4 can be viewed as inputs (directions) in the Compass Model. Step (5) corresponds with the offerings of the program, which is elaborated and addressed in the four quadrants of the Compass. We believe that our model can be used as a quality check to specifically to address a neglected area of FD planning and implementation. It is therefore a tool for evaluation and feedback, *i.e.* Kern's last step.

Faculty developers may use other models or frameworks to ensure appropriate implementation and for measuring the *impact* of faculty development. To this end, Bland and colleagues³⁸ consider the impact of faculty development at three levels: individual, institution and leadership, while Kirkpatrick's³⁹ model considers four levels of impact, which escalate from participant reaction to a change in institutional culture.

Practical testing

The Compass Model was piloted at two colleges to check for neglected agendas (directions) or missed opportunities (quadrants) during the planning stage of faculty development. Interviews were conducted with faculty development program coordinators to learn about their approaches in planning and execution of faculty development workshops or courses. We used two open-ended questions; (1) *Describe how do you plan for your faculty development event or program?* (2) *Describe how you then decide to deliver the event or course?* Both coordinators reported relying mainly on undertaking a faculty needs assessment survey to set priorities for themes and topics for the next semester. They did not report evaluating actual competencies or performance gaps, as they are not involved in the process of appraisal or promotion. We interpret this as an emphasis on the perceived needs (wish lists) of candidates (West), without attending to their actual or unperceived needs (East). Thus, in terms of the Compass Model, the input for these coordinators is largely in a West direction, *i.e.* surveys of and feedback from academics, which is more easily obtained and openly communicated, compared with input from the East (competencies and possible deficiencies). This finding was not surprising as this is the current standard practice in faculty development planning. Evaluating competencies and performance gaps is a far more daunting task as it relies on clear expectations of the roles of academics and requires tools to measure performance against expectations,

Table 1. Kern's (2009) six-step approach to curriculum development³⁷ mapped against the Compass Model.

Kern's (2009) six-step approach	Compass model
Step 1: Problem identification and general needs assessment	North direction
Step 2: Targeted needs assessment	East and West directions
Step 3: Goals and objectives	North and South directions
Step 4: Educational strategies	North direction
Step 5: Implementation	All four quadrants
Step 6: Evaluation and feedback	All directions and quadrants

e.g. 360 degree evaluation, research record-tracking in terms of scholarly activities, peer assessment, reflection and assessment of teaching portfolios.

The program coordinators also expressed concern over the absence of a documented institutional strategy for faculty development, *i.e.* the Northern input was not recognized in both institutions. Likewise, input from the South was generally not considered due to ambiguity of resource availability, particularly in the absence of protected time for development and the vague criteria for applying for scholarships and sabbaticals. From the interviews, it emerged that faculty development offerings from the two faculty developers canvassed were mainly in the *Response* quadrants, *i.e.* workshops on topics recommended by faculty members, within the available budget, time frame and expertise of local and visiting educators. In both instances, their programs were a collection of *ad hoc* activities, with little attention afforded to the N and E directions. The Foundation, Motivation and Innovation quadrants were thus neglected.

Future plans

We plan to determine empirically whether the Compass Model can inform faculty developers to review and improve their practice when planning faculty development programs. A survey has been drafted (Supplementary Table 1) to be used in a multi-center survey with two main objectives: i) to test the Model as a quality measure and evaluate its effectiveness in improving faculty development planning, and, ii) to compare approaches to faculty development planning in different contexts.

Conclusions

The Compass Model takes into account input from four directions, all of which can impact on planning, and offers suggestions for implementation in four quadrants. A well planned faculty development program should offer activities in all quadrants. Faculty developers can use our Compass Model to plan their faculty development, to check for omissions

and neglected input areas (directions) in order not to miss out on opportunities as they arise (quadrants). We hope our Model will help faculty developers to acknowledge other inputs beyond the standard *customer-based approach* to planning, which services the personal self-perceived needs of individual faculty members only. The Compass Model can be used to improve faculty development practice and make an informed decision in terms of meeting the institutional mission and vision, *i.e.* *true North*.

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