The Role of Collaboration and Reflection in Developing Physicians' Identity as Small Group Teachers

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Professional Identity Formation (PIF)

What is it?

Identity[1]	Professional Identity Formation
How individuals… • Understand themselves • Interpret experiences • Present themselves • Wish to be perceived	• A process individuals go through to transform into a certain type of professional • Described as a complex structure that an individual uses to link motivations and competencies to a career role[2]

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Professional Identity Formation (PIF)

Why is it important?

- CEs need to transition from doing the work of a teacher to BEING a teacher.

  Teaching is part of who I am, not just what I do

- Differences in teacher identity conceptions influence how clinician-educators (CEs) define and enact their roles,[3,4] how they invest in their development,[5,6] and whether they find enjoyment and confidence in their teaching.[6]

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Research Question

In what ways do colleagues influence clinician-educator professional identity formation?

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> Methods

Participants:

45-minute semi-structured interviews with 20 clinician-educators

- 12 male and 8 female

- 2 retired and 18 practicing (at least 8 years)

- Various clinical specialties

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> Methods

Setting:

Clinician-educators (CEs)

- Teaching 7-8 UME pre-clerkship students interactive small groups integrating clinical, social, and basic science

CEs interacted with colleagues during

- Weekly Monday morning "Academy" meetings

- Peer observations

- Lead and Team Fellow pairs

- MEET – small group faculty development program called "Medical Educator – Excellence in Teaching"

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> **Methods**

Analysis:

- Conventional content analysis

- Two researchers independently coded the data and reached an inter-rater reliability of 80%

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> **Findings – Factors Influencing Educator Identity Development**

Demands of curriculum

Experiences teaching

Interaction with colleagues

Experiences as a learner

Educator Identity Development

Reflection
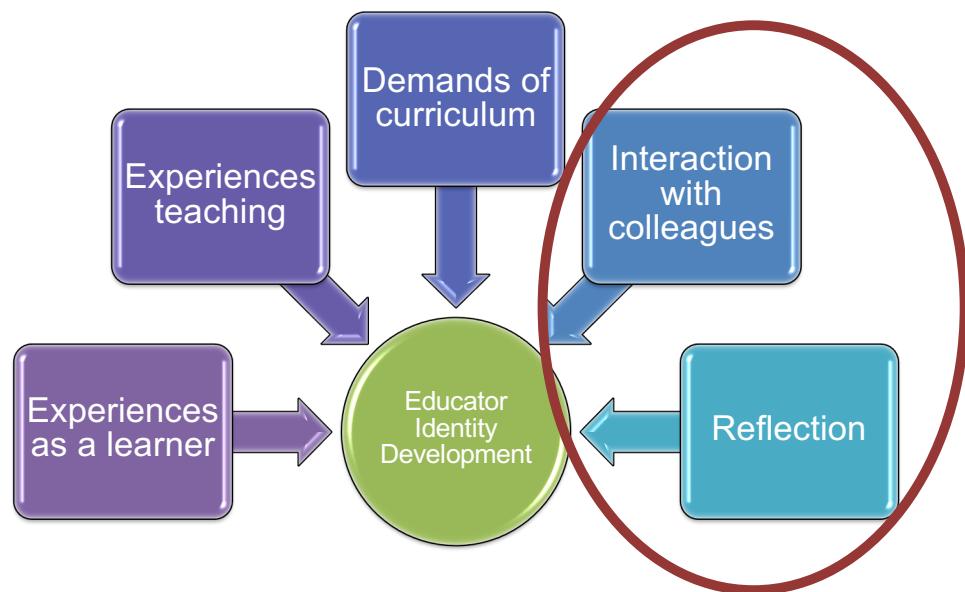
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Findings – Educator identity development

SETTINGS	KEY ACTIVITIES	QUOTES
Peer observation & debriefing	• Reflection • Problem solving about student or curricular issues • Strategy sharing (pedagogy)	"One of the other more experienced [CEs] took me aside and said, 'Well you might want to think about doing it a little differently,' and I had to check myself because I was like, 'Well, I'm fine. I don't need help.' But I really thought about it and I realized, 'Well, actually that makes a lot of sense because not everybody needs that [type of teaching].'"
Co-teaching (teams)	• Knowledge sharing around content • Strategy sharing (pedagogy)	"One of the [CE]s had mentioned that they like to establish a set of ground rules that the group is going to use as it moves forward and I like that idea… so I'm probably going to do something along that line."
Academy meetings	• Reflection • Problem solving about student or curricular issues • Strategy sharing (pedagogy)	"In Academy we can share ideas with each other… There are few other settings I have seen with such a rich collaboration."
MEET certificate program	• Reflection • Knowledge sharing around educational theories • Strategy sharing (pedagogy)	"I'm really looking for more training and tools about how to teach differently because I know I'm not perfect and I really am only going on what I have experienced and not what else is out there."

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Key Drivers of Professional Identity Formation

Resilience

Professional Identity Development Formation

Relationships

Reflection

(Wald, 2015)[2]
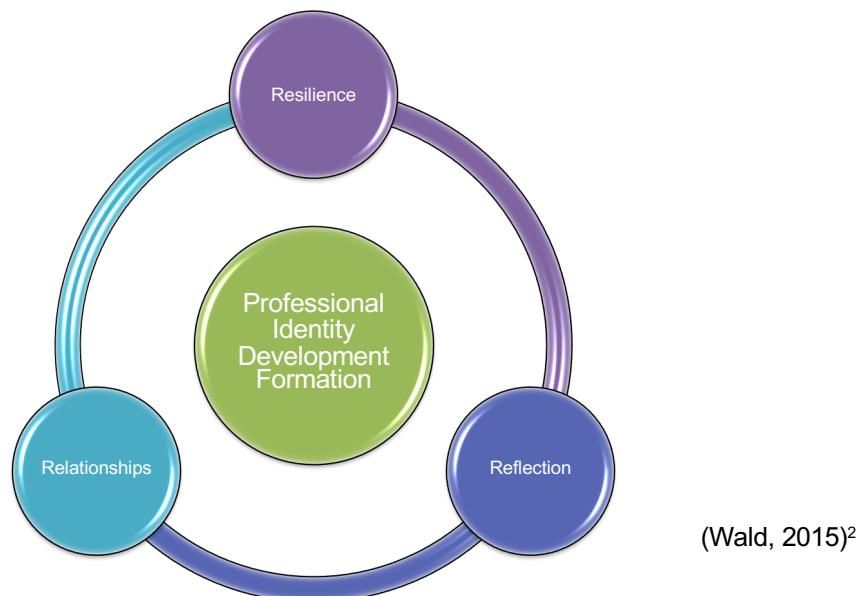
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> **Findings**

How did these interactions influence their educator identity? 3 ways their identity grew

Reflective Practitioner

"I've learned so many things about myself as far as how I can be a better teacher that I didn't realize before."

Teacher as Learner

"It's very humbling being a teacher… because you're never doing it as good as it can be done."

Teacher in Community

"I actually obtained a teaching strategy from a colleague – observing him teaching... I modified it and the colleague asked what I did and when I shared it with him he said, 'That's a brilliant idea. I'm going to do that too!'"

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> **Discussion**

Break the Isolation!

Bring clinician-educators together for conversation[7,8]

"Who are we? What should we be doing?"

- Peer observation and debriefing
- Longitudinal small/large group educator development
- Book clubs (around teaching)

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> **Discussion**

Simply bringing CEs together is not enough.

In order to foster PIF as small group teacher:
- Create experiences where together we learn about and analyze teaching
- Role play, video analysis, practicing skills together

We do not learn from experience… we learn from reflecting on experience.

– John Dewey

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> **Discussion**

Teaching is part of who I am, not just what I do

- CEs need targeted faculty development to develop a mindset of being reflective, always learning, and learning from each other.

- Create collaborative opportunities – even in the clinical setting[8]

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Break the Isolation

In what ways does your medical school encourage/support clinician-educators to learn and talk collaboratively about **teaching?**

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> References

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Questions? Comments?

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