

New BU program prepares trainees for teaching modern, integrated medical curriculum

July 1 2019

"Integrating the Educators," a pilot internship program at Boston University School of Medicine (BUSM), is successful in training biomedical science trainees (graduate students/Ph.D. and postdocs) in the skills of being a medical educator.

In medical education, there is an ongoing push for greater integration of the basic and clinical sciences content. Current basic science Ph.D. training programs rarely prepare trainees for this new educational environment. "Our program addressed this gap by providing participants with experiences to augment their scientific training," explained corresponding author Ann Zumwalt, Ph.D., associate professor of anatomy & neurobiology at BUSM and co-director of the program.

According to the authors, the novelty of the program is that it provides a combination of experiences. For example, the postdoctoral trainees (a biochemist and a cancer biologist) participated in a course on effective teaching with basic science educators, and also shadowed clinician educators to observe methods of clinical teaching. In addition to the benefits to the trainees, this initiative provided opportunities for clinicians to work together with basic scientists.

Data from this [pilot program](#) showed that trainees had increased knowledge about teaching despite differences in their previous teaching experience as well as modifications to their lesson plans demonstrating

that they gained insights into how to teach basic [science](#) topics to a clinical audience.

The authors believe this internship is important in the context of career exploration because it provides the opportunity for Ph.D. trainees to explore [medical education](#) as a potential career path. "There are many [career opportunities](#) for trainees in the [biomedical sciences](#), but frequently trainees are not aware of all of their options besides the typical paths of either research in academia or working in industry. Our internship highlights other potential career options as well as provides skills to be successful as educators," said co-author Isabel Dominguez, Ph.D., assistant professor of medicine at BUSM and co-director of the program.

More information: Ann C. Zumwalt et al, Integrating the Educators: Outcomes of a Pilot Program to Prime Basic Science Medical Educators for Success in Integrated Curricula, *Medical Science Educator* (2019). [DOI: 10.1007/s40670-019-00742-0](https://doi.org/10.1007/s40670-019-00742-0)

Provided by Boston University School of Medicine

Citation: New BU program prepares trainees for teaching modern, integrated medical curriculum (2019, July 1) retrieved 22 September 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2019-07-bu-trainees-modern-medical-curriculum.html>

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