

3-9-2017

## Five Key Elements to Self-Monitor and/or Coach Clinician Educators To Career Success

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### Recommended Citation

Simpson D, Marcdante K, Knox K. Five Key Elements to Self-Monitor and/or Coach Clinician Educators To Career Success. ACGME Annual Education Conference. Orlando, FL. March 9-12, 2017.

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# FIVE KEY ELEMENTS TO SELF-MONITOR AND/OR COACH CLINICIAN EDUCATORS TO CAREER SUCCESS

Deborah Simpson, PhD, Karen Marcdante, MD, Kjersti Knox, MD - Milwaukee, Wisconsin

## BACKGROUND

- **CONTEXT: Clinician Educators (CEs)** face multiple and often competing accountabilities and performance metrics<sup>1-3</sup>
  - CLINICAL SERVICE, CLINICAL TEACHER, CLINICAL EDUCATOR, SCHOLAR
- **NEED:** Developing and sustaining CEs expertise as resilient educators is vital to Graduate Medical Education [GME]<sup>1,4</sup>
  - Early CE career development support through formal programs
  - Limited programs to sustain CE career development
  - Paucity of local **Senior Educators** who can advise on key CE career success elements
- **CHALLENGE:** Limited U.S. specific literature on CE career success keys beyond research, scholarship, academic promotion
  - 2001 – Understanding the Careers of Physician Educators... [U.S.]<sup>5</sup>
  - 2004 – Outcomes Results from... Faculty Scholars Program [U.S.]<sup>1</sup>
  - 2015 – ‘It was serendipity’... [Australian / New Zealand]<sup>6</sup>
  - 2016 – Twelve tips for early career medical educators [Canada]<sup>7</sup>

## OBJECTIVE

To identify the key elements to having a successful career as a clinician educator in the U.S.

## METHODS

- **CROWDSOURCING DISTINGUISHED MEDICAL EDUCATORS (MES)**

Authors e-mailed 42 senior U.S. based ME

  - AOA and specialty society teaching award recipients
  - Medical education journal editors/board members
  - Clinical department chairs, deans/associate deans for education, faculty development leaders, Society of Directors of Research in Medical Education, CGEA Medical Education Laureates
  - Gender: About evenly distributed
  - Geography: Representative of regions across U.S.
- **THE ASK:** List your top 5 “keys to having a successful career as a CE” that provide as guidance to your colleagues
- **ANALYSIS:**
  - Results were independently reviewed by authors
  - Cross-cutting themes identified and linked to existing literature
  - Findings presented to clinical educators in longitudinal faculty development programs
  - Themes were condensed, reframed and refined to be “action” oriented

## RESULTS: 5 KEYS TO HAVING A SUCCESSFUL CAREER AS A CLINICIAN EDUCATOR IN U.S.



#1  
LEARN @  
YOURSELF

### IT BEGINS WITH YOU!

- What brings you meaning? When are you most absorbed?
- What kind of a career do you want to have?
- Define what “success” means to you. Dream!
- What are your “drivers”? Your risk tolerances? Aversions?

**AOA Robert J. Glaser Distinguished Teacher Award Recipient**

- *Keep your priorities straight. When balancing family and work-life issues, family comes first – you can always find another job*

**AOA Robert J. Glaser Distinguished Teacher Award Recipient & Past President National Physician Society**

- *When I talk to residents or jr faculty members, I regularly disclose that I have never had a 5 year plan – the visible and audible relief when I say this never ceases to impress me...*
- *Of course, this is not a strategic approach to a career in AM... times when it has been unclear where my salary would be coming from 4 months hence but it has allowed me to over & over again engage with work that has felt meaningful to me and that has been worth a lot.*



#2  
FIND YOUR  
“FIT”

### HOW DO YOU “FIT” WITHIN YOUR SETTING

- What were you hired to do?
- What do your bosses need/expect?
  - ✓ What are *they* “driven” to do?
  - ✓ What are *their* “deliverables”?
- “Follow the money” – what types of things get funded?

**AOA Robert J. Glaser Distinguished Teacher Award Recipient**

- *Understand your purpose – your boss, chairman, division chief hired you to do a specific job*
- *Figure out a way to put your own stamp on the things you are asked to do every day*
- *Try to identify program gaps and opportunities for improvement*

**Renowned Author/AoME Fellow & NBME Hubbard Award Recipient**

- *Be sure the work and institutional environment is a good “fit.” [Read] “First Break All the Rules”*



#3  
SET GOALS  
→ACT NOW

### SET YOUR GOALS AND THEN DO SOMETHING!

- Find the Convergence between
  - #1: “What you’ve learned about yourself” and
  - #2: “How you ‘fit’ within your setting/organization”
- Set Your Goals & Do something - Aim HIGH but start small

**Focus? E Mail Dialogue Amongst Senior ME’s**

- *If you become overly focused you are more likely to develop blind spots...stunt your own professional growth*
- **SHORT TERM:** *Focus is critical – don’t be distracted by “bright, shiny opportunities... it must synergize with what you’re already doing*
- **LONG TERM:** *the world changes... new challenges and opportunities... must be able to shift with changing times*



#4  
TAKE CHARGE  
SELF MANAGE

### ITS YOUR CAREER – TAKE CHARGE & COLLABORATE

- ✓ **HAVE THE COURAGE TO “SAY NO NICELY”**
  - Create a Strategic Plan for Yourself (“soft” or formal 5 yr)
  - Cultivate relationships – peers, mentors - be a team player
  - Join/form a community of educators → relationships → friends

**AOA Robert J. Glaser Distinguished Teacher Award Recipient  
Department Chair**

- *Clinicians too quickly agree to help others out and sacrifice their own time and goals.*



#5  
GROW AS A  
MED EDUCATOR

### TEACHING, LEARNING, GROWING AS CE

- ✓ **MEDICAL EDUCATION IS NOT A HOBBY – GET SERIOUS NOW!**
  - Read widely in and outside of medical education – tell a few others what you’ve read
  - Be active - Go to conferences to learn, met colleagues volunteer  
Take risks -- Stretch yourself -- Volunteer
  - Engage learners in your questions

## SIGNIFICANCE/IMPLICATIONS

- **NURTURING CE SUCCESS IS VITAL TO:**
  - Continuously improving quality of our GME programs
  - Proactively preparing our graduates for the 2035 practice scenarios emerging from the ACGME’s work
  - Nurturing and sustaining their vitality and well-being
- **The 5 Keys to CE success** can be used to frame development efforts - be it from the lens of an individual faculty, a coach/chair, and/or program perspective

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