

Faculty Development Positively Impacts Student Learning

By Don Sutherland

Middle States Standard III declares:

An accredited institution possesses and demonstrates the following attributes or activities: ...2. Student learning experiences that are designed, delivered, and assessed by faculty (full-time or part-time) and/or other appropriate professionals who are: ...provided with and utilize sufficient opportunities, resources, and support for professional growth and innovation...

However, continued professional faculty development is not solely an accreditation requirement. A new book highlighted by [*Inside Higher Ed*](#) reveals that professional development can enhance faculty instruction of students and promote stronger student learning outcomes. The book, *Faculty Development and Student Learning: Assessing the Connections*, reveals:

- Faculty with a longer history of professional development experience greater changes in their teaching.
- Faculty attitudes matter. Those who participate in faculty development out of a desire to improve are more likely to implement the new approaches they pick up from such training.
- Faculty development has a positive impact on student learning outcomes.

In the larger context of organizational research, these outcomes are neither novel nor surprising. This book confirms the conclusions of a growing body of organizational research that finds a culture of improvement, tolerance of risk taking, flexibility in adopting new approaches, and attention to measurement of outcomes can lead to improved performance.