

What Is Educational Development?



Educational development is a sub-discipline of higher education research and practice. Specifically, it is about:

- supporting and enhancing the design and development of high-quality student learning experiences
- facilitating positive change in teaching and learning in post-secondary institutions at the individual, program/department and institutional levels
- enhancing teaching and learning practices, curriculum design and learning support including the appropriate use of learning technologies
- helping institutions function as robust, evidence-based, student-centered learning communities
- promoting the scholarship of teaching, learning and research into higher education goals and practices

Educational development is about the continuous professional and personal growth of faculty members, and the ongoing evolution of teaching and learning across the entire university. It is both theory and practice, both a discipline and a profession and both with clarity and uncertainty.

It is an area of work that transcends institutional ‘boundaries’ and often is described as the “third space” situated between administration and faculty, yet not in either.

It is an invisible job that many faculty members, deans, associate deans and chairs do daily – most times without knowing it labelled as such.

Educational development is a way to initiate and respond to change. It is an enhancement to the roles we already play by taking risks with new practices and communicating our discoveries to colleagues. Educational development allows us to take a proactive responsibility for onboarding and mentoring new faculty, engaging in curriculum redesign or renewal and driving forward new changes at the department and Faculty levels.

[Educational development] is described as: "systematic and scholarly support for improving both educational processes and the practices and capabilities of educators." (Stefani, 2003, p. 9).