

Teaming basic scientists with clinicians may improve medical education retention

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There is a trend in modern medical school curriculum design to integrate the basic sciences and clinical sciences. Integrating basic science education with its clinical application from the initial stages of learning is thought to improve retention of information and facilitate the transfer of knowledge to the clinical setting.

Basic science educators are not clinicians, yet to accommodate

integration they must adjust their content to mesh appropriately with its [clinical application](#). While achievable, this is a challenge that requires intentional effort on the part of the basic science educators.

Researchers from Boston University School of Medicine (BUSM) believe a practical way to facilitate curricular integration is to create opportunities for basic science educators to learn about the clinical application of their area of expertise through shadowing and collaborations with clinician educators and to pair these initiatives with training in effective medical education practices.

"By shadowing clinician educators during [patient care](#) or clinical teaching, basic scientists can observe how clinicians apply basic science concepts. Such opportunities help basic science educators better understand how to prioritize and communicate information that has long-term relevance for their learners," explains corresponding author M. Isabel Dominguez, Ph.D., assistant professor of medicine at BUSM.

Most medical schools are wrestling with the challenge of integration in medical education. Dominguez along with co-author Ann Zumwalt, Ph.D., BUSM associate professor of anatomy & neurobiology, discuss practical strategies to develop these opportunities and how they benefit educators.

They believe there are numerous ways that both individuals and institutions can create and facilitate such faculty development opportunities, both for basic science faculty who are full-time educators and those who engage in medical education part time. "Ultimately, these interventions and initiatives will benefit both the institution's curriculum and the student learners impacted by the curriculum," adds Zumwalt.

More information: Isabel Dominguez et al, Integrating the basic sciences in medical curricula: focus on the basic scientists, *Advances in*

Physiology Education (2020). [DOI: 10.1152/advan.00172.2019](https://doi.org/10.1152/advan.00172.2019)

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