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The Teaching Consultants' Workshop

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This paper describes the Teaching Consultants' Workshop offered in the Teaching Consultation Program in the University of Kentucky Community College System. Faculty members from different campuses, who have been recognized by their colleagues as outstanding teachers and who have attended a training workshop, serve as consultants. The consultants attend the workshop after completing the information collection phase in work with individual clients. Consultants present their clients to each other through collected data and videotape, and discuss alternative teaching strategies that might be used in each case.

Teaching consultants, like teachers, can benefit by collaborating with their colleagues to identify alternative ways of working with their clients. The Teaching Consultants' Workshop, a key component in the Teaching Consultation Program offered in the University of Kentucky Community College System (UKCCS), provides a structured opportunity for teaching consultants in UKCCS to discuss client cases with their colleagues and enhances their ability to help teachers to make changes in their teaching. This article describes the Teaching Consult-

ants' Workshop and a case study in which a consultant describes her preparation for and participation in the workshop. The article also shows how the workshop could be adapted by other consultation programs.

The UKCCS Teaching Consultation Program

The Teaching Consultation Program offered in UKCCS is modeled after the program developed by the University of Massachusetts in the early 1970s and described by Bergquist and Phillips in Volume 2 of *A Handbook for Faculty Development* (1977). The sixteen-week program provides for client confidentiality, voluntary participation, and independence from performance review. Faculty members, who are recognized by their colleagues as outstanding teachers serve as consultants after attending a workshop to prepare them. Teaching consultants work with two or three faculty each semester and are released from one three-hour class to do so. In the 1992 spring semester, 24 teaching consultants, representing almost every program offered in UKCCS, worked with 40 faculty clients on 14 UKCCS campuses.

Using the University of Massachusetts model, UKCCS teaching consultants follow a procedure designed to help faculty recognize and consciously develop instructional behaviors most appropriate for themselves and their students. The key stages in this process are initial interview, data collection, data review and analysis, planning and implementation of changes, and evaluation.

Data collection, which begins with the initial interview, includes classroom observation, videotaping, and use of the Teaching Analysis By Students (TABS) questionnaire to gather student perceptions of instructional behavior. Data collection leads into data review and analysis, which occurs in the sixth week of the semester. Planning and implementation of changes begins in the seventh week of the semester and continues until evaluation begins in the twelfth week.

Similarities in Consultation Programs

Although the interaction between teaching consultant and faculty member extends throughout a 16-week period in the UKCCS pro-

gram, the phases of this interaction parallel the phases identified by Brinko (1991) as being characteristic of the consultation process. Brinko conceptualized the consultation process as having four phases: initial contact, conference, information collection, and information review and planning session. The initial phase in the UKCCS program corresponds closely to Brinko's initial contact and conference phases; the data collection phase to the information collection phase; and the planning and implementation of changes and evaluation phases to the information review and planning session. The UKCCS program also resembles other consultation programs, such as the Lilly Teaching Fellows Program at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst (Sorcinelli, 1992), The Teaching Analysis Program at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (Povlacs, 1988), and the Teaching Partners Program at Ball State University (Annis, 1989). All these programs follow a similar sequence of phases, though they may use different data collection methods or differ in the time of the interaction between teaching consultant and faculty member.

The Teaching Consultants' Workshop

In the sixth week of each semester, at the end of the information collection phase of the program, teaching consultants in the UKCCS Teaching Consultation Program are invited to participate in a two-day workshop designed to help them consult more effectively. Because participants come from various campuses in the Commonwealth, the workshop begins at 1 pm on Thursday, includes an overnight stay at the workshop site, and concludes at noon on Friday. Thursday morning and Friday afternoon are set aside for travel to the workshop site.

The coordinator of the Teaching Consultation Program schedules the workshop at the conclusion of the data collection phase of the program and at the beginning of the data analysis and review phase. By this time, consultants have observed their clients as they teach, videotaped a classroom session, and administered the TABS to the clients' students. Because most UKCC campuses colleges do not have the computer resources to process student questionnaires, the consultants have sent them to the program coordinator, who has prepared two sets of computer printouts summarizing the results. The coordinator

distributes these printouts to the consultants at the beginning of the workshop.

The major part of The Teaching Consultants' Workshop consists of a series of 25-minute sessions in which consultants present their clients to the other participants. The presentations follow a prescribed pattern: a four or five-minute introduction of the client, a ten-minute videotape of the client teaching in a classroom situation, and a discussion of the client's teaching behavior, including suggested changes to improve teaching behavior.

To enable all consultants to present their clients in a five-hour block of time (three hours on the first afternoon; two hours on the second morning), the workshop coordinator schedules concurrent sessions for each 25-minute session. From 2:30 PM to 2:55 PM, for example, four different teaching consultants may be presenting their clients to four different groups. The workshop coordinator also schedules these sessions so clients being presented are from different teaching areas—nursing, English literature, criminal justice, and biology, for example. This structure enables consultants who have a particular expertise or interest in working with clients from a particular discipline to attend all of the sessions presenting clients from that discipline.

A Case Study

The following case study describes the workshop from the perspective of the teaching consultant. It describes the client she will present at the workshop, explains how she prepared for the workshop session, and concludes with the results of the experience.

Introduction to the Client

Ms. Chi, a college teacher with four years teaching experience, was encouraged by a team teacher in nursing to sign up for the Teaching Consultation Program. The team teacher had been a recent client of the consultant, and as a result, was making changes in her teaching. She felt Ms. Chi might also benefit. Ms. Chi signed up for the program and chose a class of second-year nursing students to be part of the consultation program.

By interviewing Ms. Chi, the consultant learned about her background, values, and philosophy of learning. Ms. Chi saw her job as creating within the student the desire to learn and helping students solve problems. This perception coincided with the behaviors of her model teacher from Purdue, who was considerate, caring, and respectful of people as individuals. This teacher made her students want to do well. Although Ms. Chi felt great concern for students and learning, she felt trapped with a lecture model. She revealed an underlying desire to become a facilitator of learning and was somewhat open to take risks with new methods. She hated the "spitback routine," but when she tried other methods, she was unable to "cover the content" and students were not always receptive.

Ms. Chi's self-perception of her effectiveness and how others saw her did not match. She stated that she felt like an impostor when others complimented her on her class lectures and her work with students. She felt others viewed her teaching as being more effective than it was. She did agree with them that she was able to explain complex material to weaker students. She found working with the "student who needs you," the one who struggles to succeed in the nursing program, to be personally rewarding.

Data Collection

After six weeks of gathering data and meeting weekly with Ms. Chi, the consultant detected a fairly coherent pattern of teaching strengths. The observation and video session revealed a strong expertise in nursing. Although she didn't interact directly with students during the classes, her communication skills were strong. Students listened to her well-modulated and enthusiastic voice as she laughed and smiled and made direct eye contact with individuals or groups of students.

After observing a class and watching a videotape of Ms. Chi as she taught, the consultant also noted areas that might be improved. The opening of each session was approximately 40 seconds to two minutes long with no visible cognitive map for students to follow. Ms. Chi expected the students to rely on the extensive syllabus developed by the nursing program faculty. The lecture was very logical, but major

and minor points were not easily identified by the consultant or the students. Visual aids were not used, other than once in each session when she recorded two major topics on the board. In the 56-minute lecture, students answered or asked questions only twice. Ms. Chi frequently answered her own questions. Underpinning the whole process was the idea that all content must be covered in the lecture and student interaction simply slowed down the process. This philosophy, held by many in the nursing program, had been adopted by Ms. Chi. The data in the student questionnaire, which was completed by students, reinforced the other data. The students indicated that Ms. Chi (1) showed respect for them, (2) was enthusiastic, (3) spoke clearly, and (4) related the course to everyday life.

On the other hand, students indicated that Ms. Chi could improve in the following areas: (1) identifying major and minor points, (2) involving students in learning, (3) arousing enthusiasm in students when introducing a new topic, (4) using a variety of methods and materials, and (5) opening and closing the class session.

The background information section on the student questionnaire provided a frame of reference for analyzing all data. It revealed that the fifty-six class participants were second-year, mainly female, nursing students, 57 % of whom had a grade point average of 3.0 or above. Ninety-three percent of the students indicated a positive attitude toward the instructor, and 81% had a positive attitude toward the subject matter.

Students indicated that they were learning a great deal in the class, and over half said they were putting much more or somewhat more time and effort into this course as compared to other courses of equal credit. Students also indicated they liked the present level of structure. The students' perceptions of the goals of the instructor (emphasis on applying principles and theories, on critical thinking, and on the development of knowledge of self and others) were the same as the instructor's.

Openness to Change

In assessing Ms. Chi's openness to change, the consultant considered several factors. First were the many reinforcements for Ms. Chi

to continue the same teaching behaviors. These included the compliments that Ms. Chi received on her teaching from students as well as other nursing instructors at the college. In making changes in her teaching, she would run the risk of initially not living up to the expectations of others. On the other hand, she had a strong desire to become a facilitator of learning (student oriented) and was willing to take some degree of risk to become a more effective teacher. One sign indicating readiness for change occurred during the video session when she told the consultant to turn it off because it was boring. Ms. Chi was open to learning more about teaching strategies and implementing them in her classroom, but at the same time, somewhat fragile about herself as a teacher and a nursing instructor.

Preparing for the Workshop

Preparing to present her client at the workshop, the teaching consultant consolidated the data from the interview, video tapes, observation, course material and notes from weekly sessions with Ms. Chi. In the last session, the consultant helped Ms. Chi analyze her own data and identify her strengths and weaknesses. After consolidating all data, the consultant chose a ten-minute section of the videotape for the presentation. The final step of preparation was completed at the beginning of the teaching consultation workshop when the consultant incorporated the data from the TABS.

Workshop Session

At the workshop session, the seven consultants who listened to the presentation (introduction and video) brainstormed individually with note pads and pencils to record ideas and strategies that the consultant could use in helping Ms. Chi change her teaching behavior. Session participants then shared ideas with the consultant.

The suggested strategies ranged from the use of specific questions to the use of overheads and videos to writing a three-column lesson plan. All comments emphasized the need for student participation and involvement through active learning strategies at certain junctures in the lecture such as dyad groups, the one-minute paper, case studies and role plays.

The consultants also felt that Ms. Chi should move around more while lecturing, further enhance her communication skills, and set the stage for student involvement. They felt the active learning techniques would be successful if Ms. Chi assigned and expected student preparation (homework) outside the classroom. Many felt built-in success for Ms. Chi would mean starting with small blocks of time for intervention and making sure the strategies had enough structure.

Benefit to the Consultant

The Teaching Consultants' Workshop benefited the consultant in at least four ways. First, the seven session participants confirmed and reinforced the consultant's analysis of Ms. Chi's teaching strengths and her approach to helping Ms. Chi change her teaching behavior. Second, they suggested new ways in which the consultant might work with Ms. Chi to develop a plan for changing her teaching. When they met, the consultant could suggest many ways in which Ms. Chi could incorporate active learning techniques in her classes (strategies, by the way, that Ms. Chi did chose to implement). By presenting sessions and attending other sessions, the consultant also strengthened her ties with other consultants and expanded this network for future collaboration. Finally, the consultant left the workshop invigorated and motivated to be a better teacher herself.

Client Confidentiality

By showing a videotape of the client teaching, consultants reveal the identity of their clients to other consultants, which may seem to compromise the confidentiality of the program. Because this is such a vital component of the program, however, consultants explain this use of the videotape to their clients in the initial interview. Clients agree to this use of the videotape by signing a contract and release form before the data collection phase begins. They agree that their "pictures or likenesses and recordings of their voice in the production of a videotape may be used at workshops for teaching improvement." Early in the semester, prior to the videotaping session, the teaching consultant or the client also informs the students in the class that they

may be videotaped. Students are given the opportunity to be excused, without penalty, from that session if they object to being videotaped.

Accommodating Program Differences

It is our view that a consultants' workshop modeled after the UKCCS workshop would benefit those who offer different types of consultation programs. Because the videotape is such an important part of the presentation session, we also believe that the Teaching Consultation Workshop model would best serve to stimulate collaboration among consultants in programs where data is collected through videotaping. Having the client's permission to use the videotape would be, of course, a prerequisite. We also believe that the consultants benefit most from the workshop when it occurs at the end of the information collection phase or at the beginning of the information review and planning phase.

Conclusion

The Teaching Consultants' Workshop increases collaboration among teaching consultants, enhances their ability to help their clients make changes in their teaching, reinvigorates consultants' interest in teaching, and builds community among them. Using videotape as a part of the information collection process and providing for client permission to use the videotape at the workshop are key components.

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