Collaborative Consultation: An Innovative Model for Faculty Development in Technology

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ABSTRACT

Extensive faculty development must be an integral focus of any university's system change efforts. At Northwestern Oklahoma State University, a small regional university in the United States, a federally funded Preparing Tomorrow's Teachers to use Technology (PT3) project, known as the TEACHNOLOGY Program, is providing faculty development through a collaborative consultation model. This model has been a very effective model that has resulted in systemic change in faculty member's technology use, particularly the integration of technology into a wide variety of teaching and learning activities.

Universities across the nation are exploring innovative strategies to comply with the most recent standards of the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE). These standards place an increased emphasis on both technology and faculty development. The U.S. Department of Education’s Preparing Tomorrow's Teachers to Use Technology (PT3) initiative has provided federal grant funds to support the transformation of teacher preparation programs. At Northwestern Oklahoma State University, a PT3 project, known as the TEACHNOLOGY Program, is providing faculty development through a Technology as a Second Language Coteaching / Collaborative (TSL-CC) Consultant.

Collaborative consultation, founded in special education research and practice, is an interactive process that enables professionals with diverse expertise to generate solutions to problems (Friend & Cook, 1992; Idol, et al, 1994). According to Idol et al, the central disposition in this model is that consultation should be voluntary and that participants have parity and equity. Parity requires mutual respect and reliance on one another’s unique contributions while equity involves equal treatment of each team member. A fundamental goal of the model is to improve and maintain the competencies of all personnel.
The following seven “generic principles” of collaborative consultation: (a) team ownership of the identified problem; (b) implementing change involves recognition of individual differences in developmental progress; (c) collaborative consultation is guided by situational leadership; (d) cooperative conflict resolution processes underlie the model; (e) appropriate interviewing skills must be utilized; (f) active listening facilitates meaningful interactions; and (g) oral and written communication relies on common, non jargon and positive nonverbal language (Idol, Nevin, & Paolucci-Whitcomb, 1994). Implementation of the Collaborative Consultation Model requires all participants to change teaching practices as they progress through multiple stages of growth and development. The Concerns Based Adoption Model (Hall, 1981) is a useful model for understanding these stages of change and can guide the consultant’s specific consultation practices.

The CBAM is founded on the basic premise that adoption of an innovation requires comprehensive changes in pedagogy, curriculum, and faculty practices (Hall, 1981). To facilitate change, the consultant must first address the critical underlying need for a systemic game plan - not short-term, isolated changes in a few faculty member’s behaviors. In this model, change is viewed as a process, accomplished by individuals in a highly personal manner that follows a predictable pattern of developmental growth (Hall, 1981). The TSL-CC Consultant serves as a change facilitator who often must persuade, push, pull, promote, prod, and propel the integration of technology into the design, development, delivery, and assessment of competencies university-wide.

The TEACHNOLOGY Program's implementation of the collaborative consultation model has resulted in a statistically significant increase in faculty members' technology use, particularly the integration of technology into a wide variety of teaching and learning activities.

REFERENCES

