Effect of a Teaching Consultation Process Upon Personal Development in Faculty

Mary Deane Sorcinelli

The purpose of this exploratory study was to answer two primary questions: (1) Does the teaching consultation process promote personal growth of instructors as well as change in teaching skills?; (2) In what ways do instructors experience personal growth in their teaching lives as a result of this process?

Design

The study involved two groups: 7 experimental and 7 control subjects. The experimental group included 5 males and 2 females who volunteered to participate in the semester long teaching consultation process. The control group of 4 males and 3 females had not volunteered for nor had any contact with the teaching consultation process and received no treatment. The two groups were closely matched in terms of age, rank, and division affiliation.

Personal Orientation Inventory. Personal growth was measured by the Personal Orientation Inventory (Shostrom, 1966). The POI measures personal growth defined through humanistic concepts of self-actualizing persons are characterized by their increased knowledge of self, acceptance of self, autonomy, flexibility, and ability to develop meaningful interpersonal relationships. The POI consists of

150 two-choice, paired opposite statements of values, behaviors, and attitudes seemingly of importance in the development of the self-actualizing individual. The statements are scored on two major scales, Time Competence and Inner-Directedness, and ten subscales which reflect a particular facet important to personal growth.

Personal Interview. Due to the exploratory nature of the study, the experimental groups' perceptions of self-growth and change were assessed through a semi-structured personal interview. The interview provided an opportunity to explore perceptions, values, and attitudes toward teaching that could not be examined through a questionnaire. The interview instrument consisted of five open-ended questions which asked faculty to identify what they had learned about themselves, their students, and their teaching style and behaviors as a result of the teaching consultation process.

The teaching consultation process has been described in detail by Bergquist and Phillips (1977). Its three stages include an *initial analysis of teaching* through an instructor interview, classroom observation and videotaping, student questionnaires and instructor self-assessment. Teaching strengths, problems, and improvement goals are identified by the instructor and consultant following the information collection. During the *teaching improvement* stage, the instructor and consultant devise activities to assist the instructor in achieving his or her improvement goals. During the *final review of teaching*, the consultant and instructor recollect information about the instructor's teaching in order to reassess teaching strengths and areas of improvement.

In order to allow for personal development as well as changes in teaching skills and behaviors, several activities designed to assist the instructor in increasing knowledge of his teaching self were included in the teaching consultation process. Some activities focused on increased awareness of the "internal self" of the instructor—his teaching behaviors as perceived by self others, and how those behaviors reflected personally held beliefs and values. All were designed to move the faculty member from self-exploration to self-understanding.

These personal growth activities, which blended in as a natural and integral part of the teaching consultation process, were adapted from techniques suggested by practitioners in the fields of faculty

development and humanistic education (Bergquist & Phillips, 1975; Curwin & Fuhrmann, 1975; Weinstein, 1971). They included: Teaching Styles Activity, Introductory Personal Interview, Pre- and Post Observation Interviews, Teacher Attitude Activity, and Teaching Patterns Activity.

Personal Orientation Inventory. The POI was administered several days prior to the beginning of the semester to all experimental and control group faculty. The experimental group instructors then participated in the teaching consultation process throughout the semester. The author acted as a consultant for each instructor. The control group did not work with a consultant. The POI was administered to both the experimental and control groups two weeks following the end of semester classes.

Personal Interview. Besides taking the POI as an indication of personal growth, faculty in the experimental group were interviewed a month after they had completed the teaching consultation process. A week before each scheduled interview, an interview schedule was mailed to each faculty member, indicating the kinds of questions that would be asked during the interview. Faculty were asked to write down their initial responses to each question prior to the interview. Each interview was tape-recorded and lasted approximately one hour. Interviews were completed within two weeks.

Results and Discussion

Table I presents the means, standard deviation and the values of pre- and post-test scores for subjects in the experimental and control conditions on the 12 POI scales. All 12 mean scores of the experimental group changed in a positive direction following their involvement in the teaching consultation process. Statistically significant changes occurred on the two major scales, Time Competence and Inner Directness and the subscale of Capacity for Intimate Contact.

On the other hand, control groups mean scores increased on four subscales, but decreased on seven scales, including the two major scales. Only the subscale of Self-Acceptance was statistically significant.

TABLE I
Means, Standard Deviation, and Test of Significance of Difference Between Means of POI
Scores on Pre- and Post-tests for Experimental and Control Groups

POI Scale	Experimental Group					Control Group				
	Pre-test		Post-test		t df=6	Pre-test		Post-test		t df=6
	M	SD	M	SD		M	SD	M	SD	
Time Competence (Tc)	18.29	2.92	19.00	2.70	*2.50	16.00	4.20	15.00	3.91	-.96
Inner Direction (I)	89.43	15.93	97.14	10.51	*2.35	84.43	19.45	84.28	18.20	-.07
Self-Actualizing Values (SAV)	20.71	3.72	22.28	1.70	1.51	21.15	3.77	20.00	3.79	-1.80
Existentiality (Ex)	21.14	5.17	23.00	5.03	1.36	20.57	6.80	21.57	4.65	.82
Feeling Reactivity (Fr)	16.86	3.33	19.14	.69	1.73	14.43	5.09	14.71	4.82	.26
Spontaneity (S)	12.86	3.62	14.29	1.98	1.76	12.00	4.50	11.86	4.98	.16
Self-Regard (Sr)	13.29	2.43	14.00	1.73	1.70	12.85	3.85	12.00	3.65	-1.44
Self-Acceptance (Sa)	17.43	3.46	19.00	3.65	2.29	15.00	5.80	14.14	5.14	*2.52
View of the Nature of Man (Nc)	12.71	1.98	13.14	.69	.66	12.57	1.28	12.57	.98	0
Synergy (Sy)	7.14	1.87	7.86	.69	1.51	7.43	.98	7.14	.69	-.79
Acceptance of Aggression (A)	18.29	4.23	19.29	2.06	1.02	15.57	3.95	16.14	4.41	1.00
Capacity for Intimate Contact (C)	18.71	3.64	21.29	2.14	*2.46	17.71	4.39	19.00	5.56	.79

* p < .05, two-tailed test

A two tailed test performed between the pre-test mean scores of the experimental and control groups indicated no significant difference at the outset on any of the 12 POI Scales.

The more positive results of the experimental groups' scores suggest that a teaching consultation process which focuses on expanding awareness of self as well as improvement in teaching skills may be an effective method for fostering personal growth and improved interpersonal functioning of faculty who volunteer for such a process.

While the POI results were encouraging, examination of the experimental groups' responses to the personal interviews offered further insights into the kinds of changes in faculties' awareness of their teaching selves. Three major themes emerged from the data. As a result of involvement in the teaching consultation process, the experimental subjects reported (1) changes in awareness of self as teacher; (2) changes in their perceptions of students; (3) changes in teaching skills and behaviors.

Changes in Awareness of Self as Teacher. In the personal interview, a majority of the experimental subjects (N=5) described a heightened awareness of self as teacher. Awareness of classroom performance, behavior, patterns and feelings was mentioned as a positive result of the process.

More than half of the respondents (N=4) reported an increased awareness of their teaching style as a result of several personal growth exercises (Introductory Personal Interview, Teaching Styles Activity, Teaching Patterns Activity). They felt they had gained both the ability to understand and modify their teaching style so that it would be more compatible with their feelings and beliefs about teaching.

All of the sample (N=7) reported a strong sense of self-affirmation and an increase in self-confidence. Factors which influenced their feelings of self-regard and allowed for a clearer picture of teaching strengths included the supportive assistance and interpersonal skills of the teaching consultant, use of the personal growth activities, and information on their teaching from a variety of data sources (videotape, observation, student questionnaires).

In addition to having realized their strengths as teachers, all of the respondents (N=7) indicated an increase awareness of areas in their teaching lives which called for improvements. Over half of the sample

(N=4) commented on their realization that their teaching lives were not static, and indicated that the non-judgmental role of the teaching consultant allowed them the confidence to move toward more satisfying behaviors.

Finally, over half of the respondents (N=4) indicated personal changes outside of their teaching and classroom experience. These respondents pointed to positive changes in their interpersonal dealings with colleagues and family as sources of personal satisfaction. These findings reflect the beliefs of faculty development spokesmen (Bergquist and Phillips, 1975; Gaff, 1975) who have argued that change in the professional performance of an instructor often touches on family life, relationships with colleagues, and self-image.

Changes in Awareness of Students' Needs. More than half of the respondents (N=4) reported a greater overall sensitivity to student needs in their teaching lives. Respondents indicated a greater empathy for students and an acceptance of their feelings, ideas, and opinions.

Six of the respondents also pointed to an increased awareness of students' academic backgrounds and cognitive needs. In particular, faculty appeared to be more conscious of the needs of the adult as well as the traditional learner.

Over half the sample (N=4) mentioned increased awareness of student needs in affective areas of the teaching and learning process. Greater sensitivity to factors such as students motivations, interests, feelings, and involvement in the learning process was indicated by faculty.

More than half of the respondents (N=5) indicated a greater awareness of student learning styles and how they related to faculty teaching styles. Respondents indicated not only a sensitivity to a variety of learning styles, but also a willingness to assess and work with different styles and preferences of students.

Finally, six of the respondents reported an increased respect for and rapport with students. Getting to know students by name, consulting with students in and outside of class, and improved interpersonal communication with students were areas faculty most often noted change in following their involvement in the process. Several faculty members' increased sensitivity to students seemed to have been

awakened as a result of personal growth exercises, particularly the Introductory Personal Interview and Teaching Styles exercise.

Changes in Teaching Skills and Behaviors

All of the experimental subjects ($N=7$) reported improvement in skills related to stimulating student interest and involvement in the course. Respondents pointed to increased participation through teacher or student-centered discussion, and use of alternative teaching methods such as case studies or paired and small group activities. More than half the sample ($N=5$) noted improvement in questioning skills and felt such skills allowed them to surface more thought-provoking issues. Several subjects ($N=4$) spoke of becoming more sensitive to their interactions with students during class and of working harder to maintain an atmosphere of mutual respect.

Most of the respondents ($N=6$) indicated improvement in skills related to organization and clarity. Areas such as improved course organization and individual class planning and presentation were mentioned most frequently.

A final area in which faculty indicated improvement was that of evaluation. Improved testing and grading procedures and sensitivity to their impact on students' were noted by four subjects.

Responses from students on the post-TABS questionnaire corroborated faculty perceptions of change in teaching skills. An approximation of student responses indicated that between one-third and one-half of the students responding to post-TABS saw "significant improvements" in skills and behaviors that had been the foci of their instructor's improvement efforts. An additional one-fifth of the students saw "some improvement" in teaching skills. At the end of the semester, only one-fifth of the students suggested improvement or considerable improvement was still needed by their instructor.

Summary and Conclusions

It is difficult to draw sweeping generalizations from a small sample size. Three interrelated conclusions seem reasonable clear, however. First, a teaching consultation process with an affective component appears to be an effective method for fostering increased

levels of personal growth in faculty participants. Participants appear to achieve a greater awareness of who they are and what they do as teachers—their values, attitudes, and teaching styles. They seem to achieve a more positive view of themselves, to accept others, and to move toward further change and self-growth. The kinds of personal growth realized through the process and illuminated by this study supports the viewpoint of faculty development spokesmen such as Bergquist and Phillips (1975) and Gaff (1975). They propose that programs that seek to improve instruction will have greater impact if they emphasize a wide range of attitudes, values, and sensitivities concerning teaching and learning. While dealing with the professional aspects of faculties' lives, the teaching consultation process seems to have left an imprint upon their personal lives as well.

The second conclusion is that through the teaching consultation process, participants appear to have an increased awareness of and improved interpersonal functioning with the students they teach. It seems that the more aware faculty become of their own feelings and needs, the greater their ability to understand students' feelings and needs. Participants appear to be more knowledgeable of students' affective and cognitive concerns, to interact more closely with students, and to view students as partners in the teaching and learning process. The findings seem to support Maslow (1962) and humanistic psychologists such as Combs (1974) and Rogers (1969) who maintain that self-understanding enables one to understand and relate to others more effectively. In this study, reflecting on their teaching selves appears also to have helped faculty to know their students in new ways.

The third conclusion that can be reached is that through the teaching consultation process personal growth in faculty is accompanied by changes in teaching skills and behaviors. It appears that the more aware an instructor is of himself and his students, the more conscious he becomes of his classroom behavior. The more conscious he is of behavior, the more open he becomes to a broader range of teaching behaviors and styles. Indeed, much like the subjects in Erickson and Erickson's (1979) study on the teaching consultation process, this study's subjects also felt the process helped them to improve their teaching skills and behaviors.

The apparent interrelationship of the above conclusions should be particularly interesting to faculty trying to improve the quality of instruction. As the instructors in the experimental group gained a more positive view of themselves, they seemed willing to listen to students—to meet students on a person to person basis. Perhaps, as a conjecture, they feel less threatened and gained more confidence and trust in the capacity of their learners. Likewise, as their perceptions of themselves and their students grew more positive, these faculty appeared more willing to experiment with teaching styles. Specifically, they were willing to test their own teaching skills and behaviors, inviting constructive criticism from the teaching consultant and their classes.

It is impossible to infer causality from these occurrences. For instance, one cannot conclude that a more positive self-image necessarily leads to improvement in teaching skills. But it is significant to realize that, in this study, these three phenomena (positive self-regard, sensitivity to student, improvement in teaching skills) occurred in an interrelated fashion, implying an interactive effect.

The interrelationships among the findings of the study also hold several implications for faculty development programs, particularly those using the model developed by Melnik (1976). First, the findings support the notion that those concerned with increasing the teaching effectiveness of faculty should include experiences which will assist instructors in developing personally as well as pedagogically. The personal growth activities suggested here offer a starting point for the integration of personal and professional development in a teaching improvement process.

Also, the findings raise questions concerning the characteristics of faculty who are most assisted by the teaching consultation process. Although the difference between the POI pre-test scores of the experimental and control groups were not significantly different, they are of interest. As the experimental group scores were somewhat higher prior to their involvement in the process, one might hypothesize that faculty who volunteer for a teaching improvement process have a higher level of self-actualization than those who do not, and thus are more motivated toward and amenable to such growth processes.

Finally, the findings suggest that teaching consultants could prove to be even more catalytic as change agents if they had opportunities for training in interpersonal as well as instructional development skills. Competencies in human relations techniques and helping skills (i.e. active listening, para-phrasing, perception checking) could only serve to enhance the effectiveness of teaching consultants.

Faculty development procedures such as the teaching consultation process have focused on the improvement of teaching and have been evaluated exclusively in terms of their impact on teaching skill performance. This study has broadened the landscape of such endeavors to include examination of the person who is the teacher. It has indicated the importance of looking upon faculty as whole human beings who have values, feelings, and attitudes which directly influence their professional development. This study suggests that the teaching consultation process is able to integrate personal growth in faculty with growth in their professional skills as teachers.

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