

Summary of Best Practices Twin Valley Behavioral Healthcare Dayton Campus

Meeting Date: April 19, 2005

Time: 3:00-4:30 p.m.

Attending: Sue Berry, Student/Employee
Pat Russell-Campbell, OCSEA
Cathy Graves, Student/Employee
Thomas McElfresh, Sinclair Community College, Instructor
Sherri Sabin, Student/Employee
Susan Sutton, Sinclair Community College, Instructor
Della Wampler, Director of Training, TVBH
Rhonda Wyatt, Student/Employee

Moderator: Paul VanMarter, Consultant

Summary of Discussion

After a brief explanation of the overall project and our purpose for coming together, the participants freely shared their views as to which practices made their educational experience successful at Twin Valley. Discussion was steered into eight categories which are thought to encompass the total student experience. The categories are: Recruitment, Retention, Administration Support, Course Scheduling, Classroom Atmosphere, Curriculum Content and Teaching Methodology, Assessment/Grading, and Instructor Behavior/Attitude.

Recruitment

1. It is important to have strong OCSEA encouragement.
2. Letters in paychecks explaining the program provided legitimacy to the program.
3. Literature from the College was available on the wards.
4. College personnel made themselves known on the Twin Valley campus.
5. Getting time off work for education showed administrative support.
6. Early sign-ons recruited co-workers.
7. Workforce Development Fund meant no cost to student
8. Chance to “go to college” and earn college credits
9. Credits would count toward a degree.
10. No cost for books
11. Classes at workplace very important
12. All three shifts were accommodated.
13. Getting assistance with college application and filling out schedules very helpful
14. Tap the employees’ desire to provide better service as a motivating tool
15. Any outreach activities which seek to overcome employee fears and insecurities are highly recommended.

Retention

1. A portion of the first course offered was devoted to “college survival skills”. (time management, note taking, testing, overcoming fears, study skills)
2. Students were helped to become part of the “college culture”. They were provided with college catalog, student newspaper, given tour of college campus, given college picture ID and student handbook.
3. Tutors were made available, which students viewed as a safeguard against failure.
4. Participants said they kept going, in part, because they didn’t want to let their classmates down. They developed cohesion and provided much support to one another.
5. A recognition ceremony at the end of each academic year made them feel appreciated by ODMH, OCSEA, and Twin Valley administrators.
6. Course content helped students understand themselves, their family and co-workers better. They began to see the value of education from a personal perspective. One participant said she felt “empowered” through her learning.
7. The knowledge that they were earning college credits for life was very motivating for the students.

Administration Support

1. Administrative support was first evidenced during the recruitment phase as previously noted.
2. The Director of Nursing was instrumental in working with participants to schedule time for classes while maintaining proper coverage. Participants felt strongly that if there had been ongoing hassles with supervisors, they would not have continued in the program.
3. Having a designated classroom on campus but apart from their primary work site, was very important. They were not distracted by pages or codes. This was a clear message that the administration was serious about their student role.
4. Doing half of the class time while “on the clock” and half on their own time was a clear sign that administration was in partnership with them.

Course Scheduling

1. Scheduling classes to overlap both first and second shifts was seen as a good way to recruit from both shifts while treating each shift fairly.
2. Third shift workers were not accommodated in any way. This was seen as a problem.

Classroom Atmosphere

1. Class size should be around fifteen.
2. Designated classroom important to avoid moving around
3. It should be a place to have some fun.
4. Students should be allowed to bring in workplace issues and personal situations as a way of unburdening.
5. Room should look like a classroom and be equipped accordingly, with VCR, video camera, PowerPoint projector, overhead projector, whiteboard, etc.
6. Encourage students to share notes and work together. Avoid competition when possible.

Curriculum Content and Teaching Methodology

1. Very important that the curriculum content be connected to student's personal or professional experiences.
2. Be aware of testing fears. Review for tests, have study guides, more short quizzes vs. long exams
3. Move more slowly when students seem lost. Don't be a slave to the instructor's time line.
4. Journaling, especially in the beginning, can help students express fears, etc. and get feedback from the instructor.
5. Emphasize team projects, demonstrations, role playing, video and focused handouts. Deemphasize reading chapters and journal articles.
6. Provide lecture outlines which can be used for study later on. Not everyone can keep up by taking notes.

Assessment/Grading

1. If written papers are required, allow them to be handwritten. Allow rewrites for a better grade. Relax expectations with regard to grammar and syntax.
2. Students liked having skills videotaped so they could self-critique and get peer feedback.
3. Role playing was seen as a fun way to show skills.
4. Students liked being rewarded for PACE (Participation, Attendance, Cooperation, Effort).
5. Study guides, frequent quizzes which were returned for preparation for major exams, study groups, instructor review of material

Instructor Behavior/Attitude

1. Instructors should be volunteers who aren't "sent" to the facility.
2. Instructor should be honest about what they know and don't know. Don't play "professor".
3. Appreciate and validate the students' practical experience. Help them understand what experience has already taught them.
4. Be willing to learn from the students.
5. Show flexibility. Don't be a slave to the syllabus. Start where the students are and, within reason, address what is important to them.
6. Instructors should be oriented to the facility and the residents.
7. Instructors must have a sense of humor.