RESEARCHPOP: ID# 101424

Title:
Creating an Environment to Enhance Faculty Adoption of Student-Centered Teaching Strategies

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Abstract Describes: Completed Work/Project

Applicable Category: Academic

Keywords: Cultural change, Faculty development and Student-centered pedagogy

Abstract Summary:
Student-centered pedagogical techniques have long been espoused as methods helping students retain knowledge. Ensuring that faculty members have the tools they need to develop and utilize these techniques is equally important. A strategy for maintaining enthusiasm over time will encourage faculty participation and make successful cultural change more likely.

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Abstract Text:

Purpose: The study was conducted to identify educator perceptions of changes needed to become adept at student-centered pedagogy.

Methods: A phenomenological study was conducted with 6 educators from a small, private college in Pennsylvania who all indicated they had transitioned to student-centered techniques within their classroom. Each faculty member taught in face-to-face classes in either nursing or general education courses. Each faculty member participated in at least two semi-structured interview sessions with the researcher. An Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis was performed to identify participant experiences.

Results: The interviews reviewed several commonalities regarding influences on adoption of student-centered techniques, challenges to overcome to implement the strategies, and the need to identify and "act the part" of a student-centered instructor.

Conclusion: Although faculty find it easiest to talk about what happens in a student-centered classroom (flipped classrooms, group discussion, scenario building, etc.), the act of becoming a student-centered educator has both internal and external influences. The instructor must want to become involved with student-centered pedagogy but once that decision is made, there are a variety of influences as to whether or not the instructor continues to move in that direction. Having supportive colleagues is one strategy that can sustain educators as they transition. Institutions who provide time and resources for instructors to connect will prevent feelings of isolation. Ensuring student preparation is also a key to success. Support from both the instructor and the institution will be important to a successful transition. Class size is also an important consideration. The strategies work best when an instructor can work with each group of students at least once during the class time. Ensuring smaller class sizes or incorporating team teaching techniques can also lead to success in incorporating the strategies. Faculty will also need sufficient preparation time to develop in-class activities and to assess the student work and it is important that administrators provide this support. While technology is not required for student-centered teaching to be

successful, using any type of technology will mean that faculty must be competent and the institution must be able to support the in-class requirements either through internet access or specific software/hardware requirements. Administrators will need to ensure that the college is ready for such an undertaking.