

Summary: Professional Development Workshop Series  
Physician Assistant Faculty at South University, Savannah, GA

**Overview:** In the Fall 2012, bluknowledge LLC designed and delivered a customized professional development series for the Physician Assistant faculty at South University. Throughout the four-workshop series, ten (10) faculty engaged in a collaborative professional practice where they developed strategies that enabled them to:

- articulate and communicate learning objectives and expectations of student performance
- design and deliver pre-, formative, and summative assessments
- deliver student-centered instruction (e.g., flipped classrooms, small group instruction)
- create a culture of feedback for students and themselves

The overall workshop objectives included:

- Engage faculty in a collaborative professional practice to improve your instructional and assessment practices
- Increase faculty's repertoire of research-based instructional and assessment strategies
- Support the (re)design a segment of faculty's current instruction by
  - articulating learning outcomes for students
  - creating appropriate assessments to administer
  - identifying research-based instructional practices to implement
  - reflecting on peer and student feedback and evidence of student learning

Each workshop was designed to be

- *Relevant:* Faculty selected an instructional unit from their current or future teaching portfolio and worked throughout the series to (re) design it so that it clearly articulated learning objectives and expectations of student performance; offered pre, formative and summative assessments; included student-centered learning activities, and promoted positive learning outcomes.
- *Participant-centered:* Faculty engaged in learning activities that prompted them to reflect on their teaching, share challenges and best practices, and practice new instructional strategies. Faculty worked in pairs and small groups to “visualize” learning outcomes for their students, identify and categorize a variety of assessments (e.g., exit tickets, case studies, reflective prompts, projects, and tests), develop an instructional plan for a “flipped classroom”, and practice teaching their (re)designed instructional unit.
- *Collaborative:* Every session set aside time for faculty to provide constructive feedback on the instructional and assessment practices included in the (re)designed unit. As well, the facilitator guided discussion in a manner that welcomed faculty to share with each other their best practice in the classroom.
- *Lifelong Learning:* After each workshop, the faculty was provided the opportunity to continue to reflect on and refine their instructional and assessment design. Their “homework” was reviewed and feedback was provided. Also, the facilitator shared resources, such as articles and videos, to support further exposure to relevant instruction and assessment practices.

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**Survey Results:** After each workshop, faculty completed an online feedback survey. Overall, 100% of faculty reported that they agreed or strongly agreed that the all of the workshop series objectives had been met. Below, the workshop objectives are communicated as well as faculty reports of acquired knowledge and their plans to incorporate this new understanding into their teaching. (Note that while the N (number of completed surveys) is lower than desired, due to the difficulty of enforcing online survey completion, the reported statements still provide evidence and insights into the success of the series.)

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**Workshop 1: What do we want our students to know (and be able to do)?**

October 18, 2012 | (10 faculty in attendance, 6 completed surveys)

Objectives: At the end of the workshop, faculty will be able to

- Articulate learning objectives with regard to syllabus topic, course performance, PA program, and professional PA practice
- Design an instructional activity that communicates learning objectives and expectations of performance to students
- Provide constructive feedback that supports the effective communication of learning objectives and expectations of student performance

When asked, *What are two (2) things that you learned in this workshop?*, faculty reported:

- How to more actively communicate learning objectives. To be more assertive with students with expectations for learning outcomes.
- That what we think that the students think is important and what actually is - is different. Getting buy-in from them and engaging them from the get-go, sets the tone for the entire course. Thanks!
- 1. I don't understand half of the vocabulary instructors versus clinical professionals use. Understanding the material is not the same as teaching the material.
- I don't understand the concept of Course outcomes vs. Program outcomes. The importance of creating student buy-in
- Evaluate the students at different levels including, lecture, course, program and practice.
- Reinforced recent learning from grad education course. Reminder to always stay focused on constructing good objectives with clear explanations/expectations defined for the students.

When asked, *How do you plan to incorporate what you learned into your teaching?*, faculty reported:

- Discussing objectives at the beginning of each class session
- To spend a bit more time in the beginning of each class session on discussing objectives and expected outcomes.
- In the same way that we demonstrated the sample/example in the workshop, by teaching the objectives and why they are important and not just listing them.
- Think about my objectives in different planes as mentioned above.

## **Workshop 2: How do we assess what our students know (and can do)?**

November 1, 2012 | (8 faculty in attendance, 5 completed surveys)

**Objectives:** At the end of the workshop, faculty will be able to

- Identify various examples of pre-, formative, and summative assessments
- Design an assessment strategy that will help you monitor progress toward mastery of a learning objective for a specific syllabus topic
- Provide constructive feedback that supports the effective design of a learning objective for a specific syllabus topic

When asked, *What are two (2) things that you learned in this workshop?*, faculty reported:

- 1. I learned how to gauge the use of pre, formative and summative assessments in a more thorough way. I had never really thought of the student interaction with me in class as a formative assessment before. 2. A LOT of things...
- The main thing was creating a formative assessment. The ability to incorporate that into our teaching strategies with such a large class will be difficult, but we have some ideas.
- 1) the difference between the various assessments 2) Learned various ways to assess the students in a pre formative manner"
- The importance of pre-assessment in teaching. That all pre-assessment does not have to be high stakes. The use of post assessment can help instructors self evaluate.
- To add variety to the mix of types of assessments. To plan ahead better.

When asked, *How do you plan to incorporate what you learned into your teaching?*, faculty reported:

- Use our web site to create assessment quizzes that enforce pre-class learning/review and responsive 'homework' to assess post class comprehension
- Will consider using reflective writing as well as entrance tickets.
- Include some form of pre-assessment in most class sessions. Increase the immediate class post assessments to get feedback on student teaching and learning."
- I used a real upcoming syllabus objective to update my delivery and contents.
- I plan to ask my students what they anticipate having difficulty with, rather than just presuming that I already know. I plan to request an ""entrance"" question to draw from their experiences.

## **3: How do we teach so that our students master the learning objectives?**

November 15, 2012 | (9 faculty in attendance, 4 completed surveys)

**Objectives:** At the end of the workshop, faculty will be able to

- Practice adapting *Teach Like a Champion* instructional strategies to graduate education settings
- Design a student-centered learning activity to support students to progress toward mastery of a learning objective for a specific syllabus topic

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- Provide constructive feedback that supports the effective design of student-centered learning activity for a specific syllabus topic

When asked, *What are two (2) things that you learned in this workshop?*, faculty reported:

- First, I learned about the techniques and utilization of Teach Like a Champion to engage all students in classroom participation. Secondly, I learned about the strategies of how to effectively design student centered learning activities structured from writing learning objectives.
- To use a variety of methods to elicit responses. To involve all learners more.
- I learned that I can utilize all of the Teach Like a Champion techniques. I just needed to see some examples of how they are done. Flipping the classroom is definitely doable!"
- The value of working collaboratively to develop teaching/learning strategies. That the concept of flipping the classroom can be used to better engage students.

When asked, *How do you plan to incorporate what you learned into your teaching?*, faculty reported:

- Utilizing the Teach Like a Champion technique was very impressive and it will be utilized in classroom discussions. The various techniques of Cold Calling, Wait Time and No Opt out will ensure that students open up to being an active part of classroom discussions by fostering positive engagement. Also, the Wait Time technique can be utilized . . .
- I already have. Using these new techniques to elicit responses.
- I plan to use as many techniques as possible to help solidify my comfort with them and also, so the students get used to being more engaged.
- In medical interviewing I plan to flip the classroom more often. Will give assignments prior to class that require students to come in to class prepared to "teach" something.

#### **4: How do we create the opportunities to receive feedback from colleagues and students?**

December 6, 2012 | (10 faculty in attendance, 3 completed surveys)

Objective: At the end of the workshop, faculty will be able to

- Practice teaching a portion of your designed instructional unit (e.g., communicating learning outcomes, assessment strategies, and student-centered learning activities) that supports students to master a learning objective for a specific syllabus topic
- Share strategies for creating opportunities to receive feedback from colleagues and students
- Provide constructive feedback that supports the effective design of an instructional for a specific syllabus topic

When asked, *What are two (2) things that you learned in this workshop?*, faculty reported:

- Reaffirmed need for peer review and feedback done professionally. To me this seems an important part of mentoring in a way. Having a form, such as the one we used in this workshop, provides a good learning tool at least for someone like myself which is new to conducting a more formal peer review. Thank you for that resource!"

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- - use new methods to engage students - think way ahead when preparing the material
- Created a more ordered 'flow' to how I'll actually run the class. Generated some great ideas on how to present complex patients in a 'graduated' manner"

When asked, *How do you plan to incorporate what you learned into your teaching?*, faculty reported:

- Utilizing the form as a good starting place for peer review. Giving careful thought to when feedback is requested and how to structure that request for feedback especially when being asked for from students.
- - will use new methods to engage students. - will continue to align objectives with plan and assessment"
- Keep using faculty to bounce ideas off of, specifically in the development of formative assessment"

When asked, *What are two (2) specific ways this professional development series helped to improve your instructional and assessment practice?*, faculty reported:

- Reaffirmed and clarified approach and concepts for appropriate assessment. Reaffirmed and clarified need for clear presentation and explanation of learning objectives. Sometimes I think the initial and important aspects of activities, courses, etc., i.e. - why are we doing this? is overlooked and it is assumed everyone knows why they're here or why they're doing what they're doing. Often a bad assumption I think."
- - using different types of assessment tools - new ways to engage"
- It gave me an expanded vocabulary to create a base of information that has been lacking in my experience