

deliberate for their needs. Another process, based on the reporting requirements for agricultural experiment station projects, would involve the following steps:

1. Submit a project proposal and have it accepted.
2. Provide written reports of periodic progress.
3. Give a final written report on project outcomes.

The oversight committee or department head would then decide if the project made a significant contribution, and on the credit to be recorded in the project leader's permanent record.

Teacher Motivation

While these two evaluation methods may seem unusual, the intent is to emphasize that faculty motivation for long-term, durable education improvements come from peer recognition and real rewards to the professor. In order to sustain faculty belief in multiple tracks of scholarly activity another necessary condition must be met. The evaluation and reward for educational improvements cannot be transitory. Instead, there must be over an extended period of time with explicit, visible actions by peers and administrators that recognize the contributions of a professor's capital projects. Such visible actions include nominating and supporting a person for teaching awards at college, state and national levels; salary increases and possibly bonuses; promotion in rank; and tenure.

All of the previous discussion focuses on the input factors in educational development. Inputs such as the professor as a professional; the length of time for a project; an evaluation method for the professor's efforts; and the incentives for project success. Given all these inputs, the most important aspects of such a plan are the outcomes for the participants. The expected outcomes of this FIPSE plan are:

- students have continued access to progressive, stimulating educational experiences;
- faculty are receptive and enthusiastic about educational development;
- an on-going process exists for long-term improvements in the educational infrastructure;
- positive awareness by citizens and peer institutions of a progressive commitment to student education.

Summary

Many programs aimed at improving teaching effectiveness focus on existing, on-going teaching activities that center on the teacher-learner discourse within the classroom. These programs gather data to measure either input to the teaching activity or outcomes from it, or both. The plan given here encourages capital investment in making long-term, durable improvements in the educational infrastructure. The motivation for the teacher comes from a project evaluation method that treats a capital project in education equivalent to a research activity. When a project is completed, then tangible and countable credit is applied to the teacher's long-term, written account that details professional activities and publications. On-going, long-term improvements are encouraged by this plan, and the ultimate beneficiaries are the students.

Bonding With Freshmen

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Abstract

Generally, beginning college freshmen fear the unknown and seek peer support and understanding. Additionally, most freshmen benefit from faculty who understand their new situation and help them make the transition to the college community -- this could be called bonding. This proven technique of faculty bonding with freshmen is frequently used in transition or orientation type courses. This technique can also be very beneficial to freshmen majoring in Agriculture. Discussion will feature the benefits of personal student letters, personal appointments, phone lists, writing assignments, group learning activities, visits to professor's home and the use of peer teachers. The benefits of freshmen bonding are higher student retention in the course and higher academic performance by freshmen in their courses.

Introduction

Effectively teaching the college freshmen requires many skills other than a vast knowledge of an academic discipline. One of these vital skills is the ability to bond with freshman. Bonding is a long term process and requires many different approaches and techniques. Bonding, for this manuscript, would be defined as mentoring freshmen for the purpose of making their entry into the college community less of a risk. If faculty are eager to bond with freshmen, the stress of adapting to the challenges of the freshman year can be alleviated greatly.

Methods

Initially, faculty should be eager to share their personal history. Students have an interest in hometown, colleges attended, college leadership roles, career employment and family. This should be followed by having the students share their personal histories. During this activity, faculty

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should take notes that can be used to establish a common ground with each freshman. These notes should be reviewed before the next few classes and should be kept readily accessible. The next step is to develop a class phone list. This is accomplished by having class members list their phone number on a class roster. The phone list is then typed and distributed. The activity initiates the development of their peer group. Additionally, it gives the peers easier access to each other. The first class writing assignment should be, "Why am I enrolled in Animal Science?" This writing activity will reveal their real motivation for being in the course. It will also add to the professor's knowledge of the student, thus developing a good rapport with each individual student.

An excellent team building exercise for the fifth or sixth week of class is a pop quiz over the common ground one has developed with the class. Faculty can evaluate the students' responses on the quiz by reviewing accumulated information (day one notes and other findings), thus be in a position to determine the students progress in adapting to the college community.

Generally, freshmen will experience their initial college exam approximately four to five weeks into the semester. Taking a few minutes to hand out tips on exam-taking will convey to the students of the class that the professor has their welfare at heart. I would not suggest discussing the handout, merely share your findings or experiences.

Because freshmen will be very curious about your lifestyle, inviting the class to your home is an excellent method to develop a bond. This will permit them to meet your family and tour your home. Additionally, scheduled office visits promote bonding and add to one's opportunity to develop common ground with the individuals. Personal letters to the freshmen are very beneficial. Letters to those shy quiet students are very helpful in involving them in the class. The letter stimulates the to participate in class activities. If the faculty member's work load is typically too large for personal letters, a letter to the entire class is worth one's time.

Peer teachers are one of the most successful techniques for bonding with freshmen. Three years of experience indicate that peer teachers are very effective and enhance education. The benefits of peer teachers are:

1. Perspective enhances organization of course.
2. Class discussion is enhanced.
3. More demanding on academic protocol. Enables the faculty member to be perceived as more relaxed.
4. Excellent teachers.
5. Stimulate faculty member to be a superior teacher.
6. Definite liaison between freshman and faculty member.
7. Many peer teachers have higher grading standards.

The key to peer teacher success is the selection of a qualified person that will enhance the professor bonding with the class. The professor and the peer teacher must have a sense they can work together. Previous experience in working together is very valuable. The peer teacher needs to be polished, poised, mature, campus active and a communicator.

Additionally, they should have completed the course with a high grade. Peer teachers are an asset to the course learning without monetary compensation. It is recommended they receive academic credit for their teaching and leadership effort.

Survey results demonstrate that class members feel the peer teacher is qualified to lead the class or laboratory. They feel more comfortable speaking with the peer teacher concerning problems as compared to the faculty member.

Academic success is measured by the final grade in the course. I taught Animal Science I from 1979 to 1988 and did not make any special effort to bond with the freshmen. In 1989, 90 and 91 bonding activities were used. Results indicate that prior to bonding techniques the average final percentage in the course was 73.2 percent. Following the adoption of bonding activities the percentage rose to 76.8 percent. The percentage of the class earning the final grade of A did not change. Those earning a B increased 3 percent. Those ending the semester with a C increased 4 percent. Those earning a D decreased 7 percent. Those earning an F did not change. Some students just refuse to attend class. It should be stated that the academic skills of the students could have improved slightly over this period of time. ACT composite scores are not available on all students. Those available indicated a difference of less than one point in the composite. The students in the bonding group display a slightly higher ACT.

The opportunity to "drop a course" is a common policy that exists at essentially all universities. Some universities are more liberal than others. Southeast Missouri State University has a program that allows students to drop the course up through the eleventh week of class. The course drop rate was 7.9 percent prior to the use of bonding activities. The present drop rate is 3.5 percent.

Discussion

These bonding techniques take less time than most faculty believe. Much of it can be accomplished in five to six minutes before the class is scheduled to begin. One benefit of bonding is a higher retention rate of students in the course because their academic performance is enhanced. A higher percentage of the class will wish to enroll in subsequent course offerings from this teacher and his/her department. The class will consider the teaching effort to be successful because they attended class and found it was fun, educational and personally rewarding. Their peer group was developed for them. It was a safe environment. Their fear was lessened due to bonding with a professor. It is strongly recommended that more faculty consider using a peer teacher. They make bonding easy and successful and give you many unique and new perspectives in your own classroom.

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