Making the Case: Utilizing Case Study Reviews for Professional Development

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Agenda

1) Background and purpose of case study

2) Discussion of unit needs and advising culture

3) Development of specific strategies for case study implementation in your unit

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What is a case study?

Case studies, in which the researcher explores in depth a program, an event, an activity, a process, or one or more individuals. The case(s) are bounded by time and activity, and researchers collect detailed information using a variety of data collection procedures over a sustained period of time (Stake, 1995).

Our process

- Recognized need for professional development
- Formed a Case Study Task Force
- 1-2 workshops per semester, done in different formats (discussed later)
- A manual of best practices for reference and training purposes
- A time to get back to 'talking about the student' in a constructive, productive way

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What about you?

What are common advising patterns/questions in your unit?

- Mental health issues?
- Progress toward graduation?
- Students who self-advise?
- Parental involvement issues?
- Students on probation?
- High-achieving student issues?

What challenges exist in your unit that may prevent you from successfully conducting a case study workshop?

Cohesion of unit?

Dissimilar philosophy of advising?

Administrative support?

Time?

Not enough experience with facilitation skills?

Sufficient documentation?

Size?

DGS Case Study Workshop Description

We identified:

- A need for a space of discourse among advisors to exclusively discuss difficult student cases

- Patterns of student behavior/questions that warrant in-depth discussion and analysis

- Dissimilar together: An opportunity to communicate techniques, resources, and strategies to working with prototypical student situations among different advisors

- Similar together: A way for advisors to track and document best practice strategies for current and future reference, including the gathering of sound bytes for specific scenarios

- A method for collaboration and collectively solving common problems in advising

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For the smaller units…

Things to consider…

- Similar units
- Similar student populations
- Departments you already work with frequently
- Key colleagues
- People you really want to work with (IlliAAC)

Let's get started!

Identify Objectives

- Opportunity to voice concerns

- Structure and purpose

- Evaluate efficacy

Objectives example

- Get idea of how other people advise on a variety of scenarios
- Gather sound bytes, referrals and suggestions
- Leave feeling more comfortable on how to advise a similar case
- Validation for colleagues and sending a message that we can collectively solve problems
- Create a manual of best practices

Pick a case

- Tapping our resources
- Identify key issues in advising
- Number of cases to review
- Format/structure of the workshop (groups, partners, pre-workshop review)
- To theme or not to theme

Case examples

- **International student on academic probation. Student self-advised and was resistant to advisor and support staff. A serious academic integrity issue emerged.**
- High-achieving student who failed to stop writing at the end of an exam, thereby failing the class based on accusations of cheating.
- Student shared final paper for a University 101 course and received an F on paper due to academic integrity concerns.
- Student fabricated petition documentation about graded feedback in order to late drop a class.

Setting the tone

- Anonymity

- Establishing ground rules

- Bringing in outside resources to help facilitate

- Mandating attendance?

The Facilitation Piece

Asking good questions
- Looking for both positive feedback and constructive criticism
- Thinking about the key issue, what information do we want to glean in order to either do things differently or maintain consistency of positive practice
- Ask what might be done differently

Embodying the role of facilitator

Synthesis and follow-up

What happens after the Workshop?

Create a simple evaluation. You've got one ready-made using your objectives.

What other advisors had to say:

"What I found most helpful was reading through another advisor's notes. It provided great insight into what I can be doing better and/or differently as I work with my own students. It was refreshing."

"I was impressed with how the advisor in our case study handled the situation, followed up with the student via email, made referrals, etc. It was a good reminder that I need to continue to keep up with that kind of pace in my advising."

"It's always good to get multiple opinions about a case. Plus, we got a break from seeing students."

Questions? Want more information?

We have a virtual facilitation guide for you to get started on your own Case Study Workshops in your office. Please email us if you would like more information or if you want us to send you the facilitation guide.

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