Launching and Sustaining Teaching Centers: a case study

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Higher Education Challenges and the Role of Teaching Centers

Sorcinelli et al. 2006 conducted major study

- the academic world and the challenges it faces are becoming more complex

- Three primary challenges
  - the changing nature of Teaching, Learning and Scholarship
  - The changing nature of the student body
  - The changing professoriate
Higher Education Challenges and the Role of Teaching Centers

PEDAGOGY

Today’s Learner

LEARNING

Learning Spaces

Learning Technologies

Assessment
Higher Education and the Role of Teaching Centers
Innovations do not come easily

- **FACULTY**
- **BIGGEST CHALLENGES**
  - Are involved in their discipline/dept
  - Teaching is a private activity – pedagogical innovations remain isolated, rarely disseminated
  - Workload – innovations demand time
  - Shift to student-centered teaching
Learner-centered Teaching Concerns

- Fear about lack of content coverage
- Less control over assessment activities
- Require unfamiliar teaching skills
- Resistance from students
Faculty Development Programs –
Teaching And Learning Centers
Faculty development programs

- Focus on improving the quality and effectiveness of teaching and learning by working WITH faculty
- There are many models of faculty development programs – a lot of variation among them

This variation is essential and appropriate – each must fit the institution's culture
Examples of Models

- Single, campus-wide center**
  (*Teaching center*)
- Multi-campus cooperative programs
- Special centers with targeted limited goals
Single, Campus-Wide Center

- Numerous Programs offerings to serve a large audience.

Example:
- Workshops, symposia, fora
- Individual consultations
- Formative assessment activities
- Technology integration for teaching and learning
- Development of Instructional Materials
- Newsletter
- Program for Teaching Assistants
- Scholarship of Teaching and Learning
- Resource library (physical or online) ETC
Single, Campus-Wide Center

Two types:

- Centers mainly organized for teaching development
  - Center for Teaching: University of Mass. Amherst**
  - The Searle Center for Teaching Excellence: Northwestern University

- Centers organized for teaching development + integration of technology to support teaching and learning
  - Center for Teaching and Learning, UNC Chapel Hill
THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY ON CAIRO

A CASE STUDY
Our experience, and the experience of other similar centers, will not necessarily be applicable to your institutions.

But you may find that some of our successful initiatives can be adapted to fit your particular needs — and what we have learned from others may trigger ideas of your own.
2002: Established with the help of a 3-year Mellon grant, in which AUC cost-shared after the first year

- Campus-wide center, staffed and budgeted within the institution. CLT serves entire institution

- CLT Director reports to Dean of Libraries and Learning Technologies (under the Provost)
Staff

2002-2003:
- Director (faculty) - F 2002
- Associate Director (faculty) – S 2003
- Instructional/multimedia specialist - F 2002
- Administrative assistant - F 2002
## CLT FACULTY/STAFF - 2010-2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RANK/POSITION</th>
<th>EXPERTISE</th>
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<tr>
<td>Professor of Practice, Director</td>
<td>Pedagogy, Assessment &amp; Instructional Technologies</td>
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<td>Professor of Practice, Associate Director</td>
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<td>CLT Administration &amp; Budget</td>
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<td>STA Program Coordinator</td>
<td>STA Program Administration</td>
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Additional 1 FTE CLT FACULTY: 2011-2012

JOINT FACULTY POSITION WITH THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

JOINT FACULTY POSITION WITH THE SCHOOL OF SCIENCES AND ENGINEERING
1. Do Not Reinvent the Wheel

● See what other Centers are doing
● Visit them if possible (come to Cairo!)

Institutions I visited

(arranged by Mellon Foundation)

○ Mount Holyoke
○ Smith College
○ Amherst College
Mount Holyoke Met faculty doing very innovative projects using technology. {Got idea of STA Program}

Amherst College

Hampshire College

Center for Teaching: University of Mass. Amherst** {Got idea of mid semester assessment}

The Center For Educational Technologies In Middlebury Mellon funded program that serves 37 institutions
Virtual Mentor (s)

- Center for Teaching: University of Mass. Amherst
  
  MET MARY DEANE SORCINELLY DURING VISIT TO HER CENTER. I did not know it at the time but she became my virtual mentor. I saw how the Center was set up, got some very good ideas and little by little implemented what suited the purpose of our community. Our collaboration extended through the years since
2. Listen To Your Constituents

- Interview department chairs – Participate in departmental meetings
- Listen to their suggestions
(from a 2003 presentation)

Found out AUC Faculty members’ main concern: learning to use new technologies involved too much time.
Our Solution: The Student Technology Assistant (STA) Program

Pilot F 2002

Participants: 27 faculty members  Participants: 7 graduate students

(from a 2003 presentation)
I would recommend this program to a colleague

Strongly Agree

High degree of faculty satisfaction with the program

“5 on a 5 point scale”

“Terrific”

“Outstanding”

“Much needed…”

“Highly recommended. My compliments…”

“Excellent”

“Very useful”

“Extremely convenient”

“Extremely helpful”

(from a 2003 presentation)
STUDENT TECHNOLOGY ASSISTANT (STA) PROGRAM

Number of Faculty using STAs/year
3. Reach As Many Faculty As Possible

“New Chalk Talk” is CLT’s biweekly newsletter: it primarily focuses on teaching matters and is widely distributed on campus. Reaches faculty who are reluctant to participate in other ways.

Active Learning (1)
The Problem-Solving Method

Dr. Azita Ehsay
Director, Center for Learning and Teaching

During this year’s “Teaching at AUC” panel discussion at the faculty’s “Newcomer Orientation”, the talk invited the challenge of involving and engaging students in the process of learning. Dr. Robert Switzer (Associate Prof of English and Comparative Literature), specifically asked the panelists to share the insights that they may have, or that they use in class, which could transform our students from passive listeners to active, engaged, and implicit in the question that is relevant to teaching alone is not sufficient to bring about active learning.

Research on learning and teaching has shown that certain in-class teaching strategies lead to learning. The next few “New Chalk Talk” issues will dedicate to those instructional strategies which could be integrated into the lecture.

I will start with E. Mazur’s recognized “Peer Instruction” (PI) method, which he developed and successfully put into practice at Harvard University where he was teaching introductory Physics. The method has since been used very successfully by many instructors in the sciences. I myself used the method successfully in Organic Chemistry and core curriculum science courses and found it to be very effective. Once I tried it, I could no longer return to the formal lecture approach.

Following is a description of the method in Mazur’s own words:

“My students now read the material before class. To get them to do the reading, I begin each class with a short reading quiz. The lecture period is then broken down into a series of digestible snippets of 10 to 15 minutes. Rather than regurgitating the text, I concentrate on the basic concepts and every 10 or 15 minutes I project a “ConceptTest” on the screen. These short concept questions generally require qualitative rather than quantitative answers. The students get one minute to think and choose an answer. They are also expected to record their confidence in their answer. After their answers, I ask the students to turn to their neighbors and convince them of their logic. Chaos erupts as students engage in lively and usually unattended discussions of the question. I run up and down the aisles to participate in some of the discussions—to find out how students explain the correct answer in their own words and to find out what mistakes they make. After one or two minutes, I take time and ask students to record a revisited answer and a revised confidence level. A show of hands then quickly reveals the percentage of correct answers. After the discussion, the number of correct answers and the confidence level typically rise dramatically.

I am not satisfied. I repeat the cycle with another question on the same subject. When the results indicate a mastery of the concept, I move on to the next subject.” (Mazur, 1997)
From: David Blanks  
Date: September 24, 2002  
Aziza,  
Loved the Idea. Today I started a “Chalk Talk” file. The format is great: clear, simple and readable for academics on the run. Bravo.  
David

From: Amani Elshimi  
Date: December 24, 2002  
I would like assistance in developing my WebCT class during the winter break, any time after the first week of January.  
Thank you for the excellent services the center provides, and for the very illuminating (and fun to read) newsletter, “Chalk Talk”.  

Amani Elshimi  
English 100 Instructor  
The English Language Institute

From: Larry L. Fabian  
Date: March 24, 2003  
Aziza,  
I brought a lot of assorted reading back with me from Cairo -- including Chalk Talk, which I’ve just gotten to. It’s a very classy job -- congratulations.  

And cheers,  
Larry
4. Attend To Institutional Priorities

AUC’s Academic Integrity Initiative

Plagiarism Prevention: Turnitin.com
5. Cultivate Administrative Support
SUSTAINING THE CENTER
6. Institutionalize Your Successful Initiatives

- Start slow - expand successful pilots into regular offerings
INDIVIDUAL CONSULTATIONS
ENCOURAGE FACULTY PARTICIPATION AND OWNERSHIP
RECOGNIZE FACULTY CONTRIBUTION TO CENTER
BUILD COLLEGIALITY AND COMMUNITY
7. Keep a database and assess... assess... assess... your programs' performance who participates, how much they participate, how satisfied were they?
New Chalk Talk Readership (N=124)

“Please indicate how often you read the CLT Newsletter (New Chalk Talk)”

From faculty survey F2010
8. Make sure that participation is voluntary, confidential, and non-evaluative
More on the subject...

Chapter 2

“Ten Principles of Good Practice In Creating and Sustaining Teaching and Learning Centers.”


K. H. Gillespie, L. R. Hilsen, & E. C. Wadsworth (Eds.), A guide to faculty development: Practical advice, examples, and resources
Visit our website

http://www.aucegypt.edu/lit/clt/Pages/default.aspx
Thank you

Any questions?
References


