

2018-2019 UNCP Grant for Excellence in Teaching and Learning Award Final Report

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Background

The original intention of the grant was to integrate technology into my Theories of Counseling and Counseling Skills and Techniques classes in the summer and fall of 2018. I requested 20 Amazon Fire tablets for recording mock counseling sessions. Unfortunately, due to technology restraints from the institution, I ended up with 20 cameras with video recording capabilities instead.

Complications

The grant was complicated due to two factors: technological restrictions and a hurricane. As previously mentioned, the original idea for the grant was to utilize Amazon Fire tablets. I chose the tablets due to cost and the fact that students could both record and watch their videos from the device. All technology must be approved by the institution, and unfortunately, the tablets were not acceptable due to concerns for security. By the time the technology issue was sorted out, the fall semester had already started, so I did not include the technology into my syllabi. I decided if I did receive the cameras, I would do my best to integrate them into my classes.

To further complicate things, the cameras and accessories were ordered around the time a hurricane hit the area. My syllabi changed significantly and the only time I had available to use the cameras was the last class of the semester in one class. Needless to say, the semester did not go as planned as far as utilizing the grant.

Assessment

Due to the complications mentioned above, I was only able to obtain informal responses to the technology from my students. Students reported feeling uncomfortable watching themselves on video for the first time (this is typical for counseling students) but felt the recordings were helpful in identifying areas of improvement in their counseling skills. Many did complain about the battery life of the cameras. Students, during their next semester, also reported that recording for other classes was easier since they had already seen themselves practicing in my class.

Reflection

Overall, the grant wasn't utilized as planned, but I felt the technology was very useful. Since then, I have continued to utilize the cameras in other classes. One issue I did not think about before order the cameras was to make sure the students could play back the video on the cameras. Unfortunately, the ones I ordered did not have any type of sound output, so students had to remove the SD card and place it in a computer in order to watch their session. Also, the cameras I bought were not rechargeable. In hindsight, I would have bought different cameras.

As previously mentioned, my students did find the cameras to be valuable and helpful in their progression as counselors. It helped them see themselves in the counseling role (many for the first time) and what they could improve upon. Even with all of the struggles of ordering the technology and the hurricane, I found the cameras to be a great addition to my classes.