ABSTRACT
              While maintaining and diversifying the services
offered in the Reading and Study Skills Laboratory (RASSL) at the
University of Texas, the RASSL staff also offers a wide range of
outreach services. Currently there are three types of activities
carried out under the general title of outreach: Basic Outreach,
Co-sponsored Instruction, and Consultation. Basic Outreach is an
information activity that involves talking to faculty members in
departmental meetings, to classes, to several graduate students'
associations, and to a wide range of other groups. Co-sponsored
Instruction has two purposes: as a vehicle for delivering reading or
study skills information at the co-sponsor's convenience, and as an
effective "teaser" to more involvement in RASSL programs. In
Consultation, the RASSL staff works with interested faculty or staff
on issues involving students' learning. An extensive example of
outreach services is presented to explain and clarify the activities
and the close relationship between outreach and regular RASSL
classroom instruction. (TO)

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DEVELOPING AN OUTREACH MODEL:

FROM PRACTICE TO THEORY

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For many years the Reading and Study Skills Laboratory (RASSL)
has offered free, voluntary, non-credit instruction in college-level
reading and study skills. RASSL is a part of the Counseling-Psycho-
logical Services Center and the U.T. Division of Student Affairs.
While maintaining and diversifying these services offered in our class-
rooms and labs to U.T. students, faculty and staff, the RASSL staff
has been vigorously pursuing a wide range of outreach services. Having
coordinated these outreach endeavors during this academic year, I'm
eager to share some of our experiences in a way that might be relevant
to the development of outreach programming on other campuses. It is
my conviction that the employment of various outreach activities can

yield great benefits not only in staying-power to budget-troubled
reading programs but in the larger efforts of our institutions to
respond to the changing needs of society.

The Background

A brief sketch of our context for outreach may be helpful. The
University of Texas has a large campus, populated with 40,000 students
who by virtue of admissions criteria tend to have better than average
academic skills. These students are taught by 3400 faculty members,
more than half of whom are graduate student teaching assistants.

Philosophically, the RASSL staff has always been committed to the
idea that learning skills instruction is not a luxury but an essential
component in intellectual development. Over the years it became clearer
that while our programs outside the academic mainstream were a valuable,
sought-after service to students, an additionally useful service lay in
providing information about learning in other places convenient for our
consumers - students, faculty and staff. Two other important consi-
derations were the need to maximize use of available professional time,
and the subtleties of administrative politics. For more complete coverage
of these factors, see Patricia Heard's paper in last year's WCRA pro-
ceedings. (4)

Out of this background we began about two years ago to develop
the outreach services of RASSL. Using rules for brainstorming detailed
in yet another WCRA presentation (3), our staff of seven came up with
a long list of both projects and suggestions for implementation. Some
of the ideas that looked most impractical two years ago are today an
established part of our outreach services. Some of the things which

were initially successful are no longer part of the overall program;
it is constantly changing, and, I hope, growing.

Three Types of Outreach

Currently there are three types of activities carried out under
the general title of outreach: Basic Outreach, Co-sponsored Instruction
and Consultation.

Basic Outreach is a central aspect of our efforts to inform members
of the University community about the scope and nature of RASSL services.
Publicity is always a problem, especially on a campus the size of ours,
so we try to be cheerfully available to speak to those who ask. During
the past year, that has involved talking to faculty members in depart-
mental meetings, to classes ranging from Classical Civilization to
Military Science, to several graduate students' associations, and to
a wide range of groups within the Division of Student Affairs. We try
to include in these presentations not only information about our
In-House services of Classes, Short Courses, and Self-Help, but also
further details about RASSL Outreach Services.

Co-sponsored Instruction has two purposes. First it is a vehicle
for delivering reading or study skills information at the co-sponsor's
convenience as to place, time and topic. Secondly, Co-sponsored
Instruction is often an effective "teaser" to more involvement in RASSL
programs. Requests from faculty members for Co-sponsored Instruction
within their classrooms have included talking to English classes about
how to read essays and take lecture notes, working with students in
a number of different foreign language classes to develop study habits
useful for that particular language, and helping government students

deal with a vast list of required readings. Graduate students in Business Administration are a particularly enterprising group on our campus, and they have repeatedly co-sponsored a four-week course in rate flexibility which uses their own textbooks for practice material. Groups of students and staff from the Division of Student Affairs constitute a major source of requests for Co-sponsored Instruction. A number of student organizations have also arranged for this service: sororities, student religious groups, and a student-sponsored minority recruitment and tutorial project in the U.T. law school.

Consultation is the third type of Outreach Service. The staff is prepared to work with interested faculty or staff on issues involving students' learning. In the past this has ranged from a phone conversation with a professor about ways to assist a student having special difficulties with a math course to more extensive training with groups of faculty interested in diagnostic and developmental reading techniques for history students. Our staff has also been called upon to act as consultants to a number of groups developing minority recruitment and retention plans.

Though the three types of Outreach Services have been discussed as if they were discrete entities, there is in fact considerable over-lap among the categories. What begins as a phone call requesting Basic Outreach may easily become a plan for Co-sponsored Instruction. Consultation often leads to some type of direct intervention. Thus, delivery of outreach activities requires emotional plasticity and professional flexibility which serve to keep the job deeply exciting, if occasionally nerve-wracking!

An Example of Academic Services

There is one example that I think will serve to illustrate many of the different aspects of Outreach Services. Not accidentally it involves that part of outreach about which I am personally most enthusiastic: working with faculty members to enhance their students' learning. One of our principal publicity efforts this year has been aimed at faculty. In September we supplied information to each member of the teaching faculty about the availability of what we called Academic Services which are essentially the three types of options detailed above, described specifically in terms of their applicability to teachers and their classrooms. This spring we hit upon a newsletter format, the first edition of which was received by faculty in February; the second is scheduled for April.

Early this semester, I received an invitation to "do something" with the students in Management 336. I must confess at the outset that none of our conscious publicity efforts was instrumental in securing this request. Instead, it happened, as many of the best things do, by accident.

Management 336 is the first in a sequence of courses for management majors and is also a required course for many other business students. Though there are several different sections of the course, there are 560 students, meeting one night a week for three hours, in the particular section to which I was invited. The effective teaching of so many students (1/80th of the whole student body, as I was reminded more than once) has been accepted as a personal challenge by two professors and one teaching assistant who share equal billing as "the Benevolent Management." The three, aided by assorted student assistants

and factotums, have been planning, teaching, and refining their
design for the course for two semesters. The course format now involves
weekly lectures heavily illustrated with pictorial and print slides,
weekly quizzes alternating between tests of information conveyed in
lecture and that contained in the readings, frequent films and thirty-
minute guest lectures, and group exercises designed to overcome the
isolating effects of such a large group.

My first contact with the class was on the night of their second
meeting. After the lecture and film, the class began their first
group exercise: the 560 students were to find a way of dividing them-
selves into uniquely-numbered groups of no more than six students each
and thereby provide the Benevolent Management with an accurate class
roster - a task to which the computer technology of The University of
Texas had proved entirely unequal.

The following Tuesday I attended the meeting of the production
team. Instead of guessing about the problems students might have in
the course, it was decided that three sources of data would be used.
My experience as an auditor in the class and the background of the
teachers would be two sources; another source would come from the
students themselves. Using the course syllabus, I had drafted a brief
questionnaire listing the learning techniques required by the course
curriculum (lecture note taking, preparing for and taking objective
quizzes and the like). The questionnaire also contained a free-response
item about other difficulties with the course, and three brief questions
about whether students were interested in learning about study tech-
niques applicable to the course, whether they wanted to spend class time

to do so, and whether they wanted additional information about RASSL.
It was decided that as the first guest lecturer my topic would be
"complexity reduction.'

At the next week's team meeting, I presented the data from the
student questionnaires. With some misgivings I had included a tran-
script of all the comments to the open-ended question. In fact, it
was some of these comments that led to very constructive thinking about
ways the team could enhance the students' learning. For example, it
was decided to provide students with written objectives for the reading
assignments, to tie the material from reading more clearly to the
lecture material, and to provide a time for students to take notes on
films. I based my plans for the guest lecture around the thesis that
there are ways of studying through the semester which will 'reduce the
complexity' of a final exam, because studying for the comprehensive final
had proved to be the item about which most students were concerned.

The guest lecture took place at the next class meeting. To relate
the topic to my function as a reading and study consultant, I des-
cribed the method of complexity reduction the management team and I
had used in determining the study difficulties for students in the
course. I summarized the results of the sample survey and explained
the ways in which both the management team and I had chosen to
respond. Using transparencies made from the lecture notes I'd taken,
I then talked about the theory behind editing lecture notes and showed
how it might be done. The questionnaires had indicated a strong
interest in using class time for the discussion of study techniques.
They expressed an equally strong desire NOT to hear more about RASSL,

however, so I checked my inclination to describe our In-House
programs.

A short time after my guest lecture, I received a letter from
the Benevolent Management indicating appreciation for my work with
them and their students and the hope that such involvement could con-
tinue in the future. I would certainly hope so, too, for it was an
interesting and rewarding experience. There is another benefit from
my experience with Management 336 which for me has been most important
of all. That is what I learned about a management process called
"organization development" (OD) while an auditor in the class. Having
had no previous acquaintance with management or business theory, I
had been prepared to be baffled by their alien concepts. Instead I
found what they were talking about as OD strikingly similar to mental
health consultation about which I'd been learning through seminars at
the Counseling Center. I began to understand RASSL's outreach
endeavors as a form of consulting which could be greatly enhanced by
the application of OD principles.

<div style="text-align:center">Definitions of Organization Development</div>

In the first book of a series by Addison-Wesley Publishers on
organization development, Bennis defines the term this way:

> Organization development is a response to change, a complex
> educational strategy intended to change the beliefs, attitudes,
> values, and structure of organizations so that they can better
> adapt to new technologies, markets, and challenges, and the
> dizzying rate of change itself. (2·2)

A translation of Bennis' terminology into more familiar language might
read like this: Organization development, applied to higher education,
is a way of responding to change, or the need for it. It is a complex

educational strategy intended to change the beliefs, attitudes,
values and structure of educational institutions so that they can
better adapt to new methods, student populations, challenges, and the
urgently needed -- but not always dizzying enough - rate of educational
change itself.

Another definition, this one provided by Beckhard in his book
from the series, may be even more helpful to convey - operationally -
what is meant by the term.

> Organization development is an effort (1) planned, (2) organization-
> wide, and (3) managed from the top, to (4) increase organization
> effectiveness and health through (5) planned interventions in the
> organization's 'processes,' using behavioral science knowledge. (1:9)

Again I want to suggest a translation, reading for organization a
variety of educational synonyms: institution, department, and some term
which would convey that the classroom is an organization comprised of
students and the teacher.

Let me quickly suggest that RASSL's outreach endeavors have not
at this time targeted either western higher education, or even the
whole educational institution of The University of Texas. But I do
find that OD provides a model for the process our staff used in deve-
loping its program of outreach, and I think it is specifically relevant
to individual outreach services. Beckhard suggests that in the
broadest sense, OD efforts include these steps:

> Diagnosis
> Strategy Planning
> Education
> Consultation and Training
> Evaluation (1·5)

In retrospect, I can see each of those steps having been used by the
RASSL staff. We were moved by a variety of philosophical and institu-

tional factors to diagnose the need for outreach. Strategy planning has been carried on in a variety of ways, but I certainly recommend brainstorming as a valuable part of that step. The results of this planning have been some education, through the Basic Outreach presentations and Co-sponsored Instruction, and some consultation and training functions. Evaluation takes place continually as we assess what has been done and how better to do it.

The same steps illuminate the process of working with Management 336. Diagnosis involved input from the teachers, student questionnaires, and my own observations. Strategy planning took place in the team meetings as a response to the diagnostic information. The result was a two-fold intervention. There was education in the form of my guest lecture and consultation leading to changes such as writing objectives for the readings. The OD model is particularly helpful to me in pointing out the missed step. While an evaluative statement from the teachers was a much appreciated part of evaluation, assessment of the effectiveness of my lecture simply did not take place. Since realizing that, I've used consultants to help me with the evaluation issue.

Conclusion

In sum, the Outreach Services of the Reading and Study Skills Lab are proving themselves to be exciting and attractive to both the RASSL staff and to members of our university community. They help broaden the base of our impact and thus increase our sources of support. It is rewarding to have found theoretical justification for our actions in the concepts of organization development and to be able to use increasing understanding of that process to plan for the future. The

OD model also resolved a question of mine about the "exportability" of our experiences from the U.T. context. I believe it provides a generally applicable model which can still be sensitive to the subtleties of varying institutional settings. I hope others will find the OD model for outreach programming a viable response of college reading labs to some of their predicaments. As Bennis puts it, "Organization development is necessary whenever social institutions compete for survival under conditions of chronic change." (2·18)

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