

Making it Real: Faculty Collaboration to Create Video Content

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ABSTRACT

Interest in integrative health care is a growing area of health practice, combining conventional medical treatments with safe and effective complementary and alternative medicine. These modalities relate to both improving physical and psychological well-being, and enhancing conventional talk therapy. In an interdisciplinary collaboration, teaching and library faculty have created a series of sixteen on-line video interviews that introduce practitioner-relevant experiences to students as supplemental course material. These videos are available through the department web-pages to students in other related disciplines as well, including Social Work, Counselor Education, Psychology, and the Colleges of Public Health, Nursing, and Medicine. The video series was undertaken as part of the educational mission of the library, bringing to the classroom new material that is essential to the professional development of future counselors.

Keywords: video interviews, content development, collaboration, integrative health techniques, mind-body techniques, holistic approach, mindfulness, well-being, counseling

INTRODUCTION

While there is growing interest in exploring complementary medicine in counseling [1], there is no text book on cutting edge practice, by practitioner, by location. Not all students can afford to go for a session or two with local therapists to experience a technique firsthand. Practitioners don't have time to field student emails over the semester, and the content would probably be repetitive. A one-time guest visit to a class benefits that class only. The professor can't be expected to ask the same practitioners again and again to his classes, year in and year out.

At the College of Behavioral & Community Sciences in the University of South Florida-Tampa, Dr. Dudell discussed the problem of practitioner-relevant resources with librarians familiar with his coursework. The professor wanted video content specific to his class. When nothing appeared to be available commercially, they decided to engage in a joint project to create the target content. One of the librarians, Claudia Dold, had extensive experience in filming, editing, and producing academic videos using in-house equipment and software.

The videos would be available for other teaching staff with similar interests, as well as to the community at large. Specifically, the professor would ask practicing colleagues, many in the local area, to engage in

videotaped interviews to discuss their philosophy, practice, and outcomes using mind-body techniques. The interviews would be structured in a similar manner to make possible the comparing and contrasting of various integrative health care techniques. The professor would conduct the interviews in order to guide the discussion to the important aspects of each technique and also to maintain a consistent structure, and the librarian would address the videotaping and technical aspects of the work.

This paper discusses the details of the collaboration, with the intention of shedding light on the collaborative process so other faculty may engage in a similarly rewarding and productive experience for themselves, for their students, and for their academic institutions when published material is not available to enrich a course.

VIDEO IN HEALTH EDUCATION

Video is currently used as an education tool in the health field in numerous facets: in preventive health measures [2], [3], [4], [5]; to teach medical students and practitioners new procedures [6], [7], [8], [9]; to demonstrate interventions [10], [11]; to improve counseling skills [12], [13], [14]; and to deliver health information to the patient [15], [16]. A review of the literature identified one article that addressed the influence of demonstration videos on the students' perspective on the counseling profession [17]. The Keats article discusses the trainee's reflections on viewing expert counselors in session with patients and recommends research into how students select modalities to incorporate into their own counseling style. The author notes that video gives students a view of the practicing therapist at work, offering them a window on professional demeanor and performance. The literature did not reveal studies concerning the use of video to introduce emerging alternate therapies to students.

The College of Behavioral & Community Sciences at the University of South Florida (USF) prides itself on translating theory to practice. The video interviews produced in the collaboration are viewed as a means of bridging that gap and making the variety of mind-body techniques real to future professionals in the counseling field.

VIDEO APPLICATION IN COUNSELING EDUCATION

In the case study discussed in this paper, video interviews were used to introduce future professional counselors to the application of successful therapies practiced by counselors usually within driving range of their university. The geographical area is significant, since students could follow up a particularly appealing modality with the practitioner they had seen. Furthermore, if they established a practice in the Tampa area, they could also maintain contact through regional conferences and potentially make referrals to a known practitioner.

Choice of Modalities: Defining the students' need concerned decisions about content selection. The initial series was entitled, "Conversations with Mind/Body Practitioners" and was defined as a series of eight interviews with integrative health professionals. It was designed for students in the Department of Rehabilitation and Mental Health Counseling at USF. The definition of integrative medicine was taken from the National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine (NCCAM), a branch of the National Institutes of Health: "an approach to medicine that combines mainstream medical therapies and CAM (complementary and alternative medicine) therapies for which there is high-quality scientific evidence of safety and efficacy"[1, p. 65]. Suggested topics included yoga, tai-chi, nutrition, fitness and stress-management, all of which engage in a relation between maintaining positive lifestyle habits and increasing emotional well-being.

RESULTS

The first series was well received by the students in Dr. DuDell's counseling class and by the department chair. Students commented that they were impressed by the sincerity and commitment of many of the interviewees. They could see ways to enrich their future practice by suggesting some of these alternative therapies when appropriate to meet particular needs of their clients. However, no formal assessment was made at the end of the first course.

A second series of eight videos was planned and is now complete. A student in the Masters of Library and Information Science program at USF was hired to record,

transcribe, and edit the raw video. The librarian provided technical assistance and performed administrative tasks; the professor again selected the therapists he wanted to interview and conducted the interviews.

The two series of eight videos were merged into one series of sixteen videos, prefaced by a brief video interview with the professor. In the brief introductory unit, he discusses the recurring themes in the videos: connection, personal responsibility, and therapist passion for improving the lives of others.

DISCUSSION

Grant Application: The project was funded by the Center for 21st Century Teaching Excellence, a unit within USF that encourages innovative teaching techniques. The grant enumerated the advantages for the students and listed the courses for which this series would enhance the curriculum. Other venues were also mentioned that might be interested in posting the videos in their outreach programs. To further strengthen the grant proposal, the application listed the alignment of the project with the department, the college, and the university strategic goals.

A cost projection was submitted, detailing the estimated hours of labor per video and the cost of essential equipment: videocassettes, headphones, and a one-terabyte hard disk for external storage. The library already owned the video camera, tripod, video-processing computers, and software. The grant was awarded for just under \$2000 with a deadline of six months to complete the project.

The Working Collaboration: The professor and the librarian brought a variety of useful skills to the project. The former had experience conducting interviews on radio; he also had been in private counseling practice for years. He knew integrative health workers in the local area and across the country from attending professional conferences. The librarian had been working in the mental health library for several years. She was well acquainted with the library's video equipment and Camtasia, the software product used to process the raw film into captioned, edited units. With practice, the team improved its filming technique. Experience pointed out the importance of planning the interview space so that the background was

unremarkable, the light was ambient, and the recorded sound was crisp. No interviews had to be repeated due to faulty performance of equipment, personnel, or planning, and the viewer's experience improves in subtle ways over time as modifications in the process were applied.

The typical interview lasted an hour. The professor and the guest were seated and the microphone was placed centrally to capture their conversation. The interview was recorded using the videocamera affixed to a tripod. After the interview, the taped session was downloaded from the videocassette to a desktop computer. The professor and videographer/librarian would look at the film together and decide what pieces to keep, to zoom in on, and to amplify. The goal was a finished video interview of not more than thirty minutes. A standard title and credit page were created to bring a sense of unity to the series. Fourteen hours were allotted per interview for the videographic work, which spanned the initial interview set up to the posting of the final product

The Unique Role of the Librarian: The academic librarian is poised in the college structure to assist both faculty and students. Teaching faculty ask for literature reviews and syllabus updates, and students ask for help refining their search topics and finding information. As faculty, librarians are both colleagues to teaching faculty and teachers to students, not only in bibliographic skills, but also in subject matter within their own sphere of academic background and interests. Librarians may collaborate with faculty before the semester begins to ensure that the resources are on hand for use in a course. Librarians then assist students who come to the library during the semester to work those assignments. From their unique position, librarians are situated to observe what works in the academic setting and to notice what could work better for both faculty and students.

Librarians have a long history of partnering in health education, teaching research skills that complement nursing faculty curriculum and prepare nursing students to keep up with the latest in professional literature concerning treatment protocols and patient care [18], [19]. For example, the University of Arizona in Tucson placed librarians on site in the colleges of medicine, pharmacy, nursing, and public health to readily serve their patron groups [20]. "Embedded librarians" collaborate with teaching faculty, gain specialized knowledge of the field, and become familiar with the

course material that students will cover during the semester and over the course of their larger program of academic study [21].

One of the unexpected benefits of the video project collaboration at USF was the insight gained by the librarian as the interviews were recorded, the audio track was transcribed, and the film was edited. The content brought the librarian up-to-date with complementary therapies, informed her searches in the literature as part of her consulting activities with the students, and situated complementary and alternative medicine within the larger field of contemporary health care. For the information professional, the experience of interdisciplinary collaboration broadens one's awareness of expanding fields of knowledge and of the challenge of accessing reliable research [22].

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CONCLUSION

Creating content is a challenge at many levels. The video project collaboration succeeded for several reasons. The principal investigators had a very clear idea of what each one would do, and each was fully capable of performing the tasks assigned. The goals and purpose of the project were clear from the start: the video series filled a gap in the education of future professionals. The grants were well-written and showed the potential impact on the university and the community. The collaborators respected each other's talents, personality, values, and time. Each gained an understanding of the other's expertise and mission within the university. In the end, they created a professional relationship, which in itself is a valuable resource. They created original content that will serve students for several semesters and become part of the teaching repository. They also demonstrated the advantages of interdisciplinary collaboration in advancing education.

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