

Learning Consultant Training and the Chinese Section

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LEARN Conference

May 14-15, 2014

Outline

1. What is a Learning Consultant?
2. Expectations of Learning Consultant training
3. Selection of participants
4. Content of training
5. Applying training to Chinese section operations
6. Outcomes of training

What is a Learning Consultant?

A Learning Consultant pays attention to how a student is faring during language training, and helps guide him or her through to success.

Expectations of LC Training

- ✓ The need for more individual student support, especially for inexperienced learners
- ✓ Handling the steady growth of a large section
- ✓ General enhancement of the program: LC training for all staff (ideally)

Selection of Participants

- ✓ Section selection (English test, interview, track record)
- ✓ LCS selection (input from section, interview)

Content of Training

- ✓ Knowledge
 - Learning style
 - Language learning strategies
 - Affect and language learning
 - The brain, memory, and learning
 - Learning disabilities

Content of Training

- ✓ Communication Skills
 - Active Listening
 - Coaching
 - Giving Feedback Effectively
 - Receiving Feedback Effectively
 - Giving Advice (no training needed here 😊)

Content of Training

- ✓ Approaches (ways of thinking, attitude)
 - Holistic Approach
 - Objective Approach
 - Collaborative Exploration

Applying Training to Chinese Section Operations

- ✓ Working with Learners
 - Utilizing communication and interpersonal skills
 - The role of “Active Listening”
 - Diagnosing learner issues
 - Holistic and objective approach
 - Attending to the affective factors
 - Lowering anxiety, encouraging risk-taking and building ambiguity tolerance

Applying Training to Chinese Section Operations

- ✓ Working with Learners (*cont.*)
 - Working on learning styles and strategies
 - While acknowledging learner's preferred learning styles, helping them to stretch and adapt too
 - Vocabulary learning/retention strategies
 - Reading strategies
 - Memory strategies
 - Balancing teacher guidance and learner autonomy
 - Time management (study hard vs. study effectively)
 - Setting achievable goals and prioritizing
 - Self monitoring/evaluation and adjustment

Applying Training to Chinese Section Operations

- ✓ Working with Colleagues and Supervisors (LTS)
 - Working with instructors
 - Seeking partnership and collaboration with them
 - Coordination amongst instructors
 - Communication with them when there exists teaching/learning styles mismatch
 - Working with LTS
 - Bringing learning issues to the supervisor's attention
 - Advocating for learners—making the case for extra attention when needed
 - Updating and keeping the LTS informed about how things are going, especially when extra attention is given

Applying Training to Chinese Section Operations

- ✓ Curriculum and Activity Designs
 - $i + 1$ —spiral design for the curriculum
 - The transportation metaphor
 - Assignments/activities and the scaffoldings
- ✓ Partnership with SLS Language Consultation Service
 - Referring/recommending learners to meet with a counselor (knowing our boundary)
 - Working with a counselor on challenging cases

Outcomes of Training

✓ Voice of section leadership

- Awareness of individual differences and needs
- Flexibility, providing options and choice
- Supportive attitude rather than judging

“Before we were quick to say ‘She is not working hard enough.’ Or, ‘He is just not capable.’ Now we ask, ‘What methods can we use to help them learn and make progress?’”

Outcomes of Training

- ✓ Voices of the LCs
 - “LC training has enhanced our ability to carry out all of our section roles..., and has enabled us to be more resourceful both for our students and colleagues.”
 - “LC training has added new tools to my tool box in working with learners. It has allowed me to wear different hats, help in many ways, from various angles.”
 - “Now I take a holistic and objective approach to learners’ issues, and try not to rush to judgments.”
 - “Active listening has really helped me a lot in understanding a learner’s issues, and building rapport...”