Innovative Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategies: Basic Intervention Training in Counselling Skills

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Basic Intervention Training in Counselling Skills

Aims and Goals

• Increase students’ knowledge of counselling theory and skills
• Increase students skills in facilitative communication, assessment and intervention formulation
• Encourage an appreciation of attitudes, beliefs and values in counselling
• Introduce an understanding of professional issues relevant to counselling psychology. E.g confidentiality, privacy, legal issues
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• Content

  – Basic counselling microskills
  – Four therapeutic approaches: behavioural, cognitive, affective and systems
  – Client assessment including risk assessment;
  – Grief and loss
  – Client Resistance
  – Supervision and self care.

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Activities

- Experiential emphasis
- One hour lecture and two hour workshop plus ‘work groups’ out of class activities/homework
- Lecture demonstrations
- Ice-breaker; values auction
- Microskills practice
- Behavioural tasks (personal); relaxation techniques; desensitisation hierarchies; genograms (with family photos); personal concerns about therapy; implicit and explicit family rules; cognitive methods in reducing personal anxieties
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Assessment of the subject

- Videorecorded role played interview (35 minutes) with emphasis on students evaluating their own performance not their actual skill being judged by staff.
- Examination (2 hours) involving applying the therapeutic perspectives to unseen case studies
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What works?

- The selection of experiential exercises
- Out of class practice…it is done!
- The assessment tasks, especially the interview
- The scheduled time of the week: Friday afternoon
- Student evaluations are consistently high:
  - “I’ve waited four years to do this stuff”
  - “This is what I always thought I wanted to do”
  - “Why do we have to wait so long to do these practical things?”