The Impact of Instructional Interns from a Faculty Perspective: A Qualitative Study
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INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE
To discover the impact of teaching assistants on faculty, specifically within the discipline of Communication Sciences and Disorders at UW-Eau Claire.

BACKGROUND
• Faculty in various disciplines commonly employ teaching assistants to assist in course delivery.
• The impact of those teaching assistants on faculty has not been studied often and has never been examined in Communication Sciences and Disorders (CSD).

RESEARCH QUESTIONS
1. How do instructional interns impact faculty teaching undergraduate courses?
2. How do instructional interns impact faculty perceptions of student performance in undergraduate courses?

METHOD

QUALITATIVE FOCUS GROUP
Faculty focus group (n=5)
  • Facilitated by student researchers & campus teaching & learning coordinator
  • Semi-structured interview based on findings from survey

QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS
Transcription of faculty focus group
  • Identification of codeable units
  • Assignment of descriptive codes
  • Thematic analysis

CONCLUSIONS/IMPLICATIONS
  • Instructional Internships positively impact students enrolled in courses where they serve
  • Faculty perceive the largest impact of IIs in gaining insight of student needs and a decreased workload due to assistance from the II
  • Instructional interns gain crucial skills in pedagogy that they may disseminate into a clinical or teaching setting
  • Instructional interns bridge the gap between students in the course and faculty teaching the course
  • Implementation of Instructional Intern programs within other departments and universities may improve student learning and support, as well as benefitting faculty

LIMITATIONS/FUTURE DIRECTIONS
  • Results reflect views of current faculty
  • Testing generalization to other departments/programs is needed
  • Future studies should evaluate long-term outcomes of instructional internship program related to clinical and student interest in pursuing doctoral degrees

REFERENCES

In terms of workload though, sometimes that is a little bit extra because then you have to read not only the assignment, but what the instructional intern graded.

“So there’s a learning curve for us and how to best mentor instructional interns because I do think we get more efficient as it eventually.”

“Another cost is the upfront cost, so we have a training session at the beginning of every semester an we usually run it twice and at least two of us are there for at least an hour training the instructional interns on what to do.”

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