

Programs have potential to become integral part of university, or become extinct

Faculty development for higher education

By Delivee L. Wright

The decade of the 1970s might be described in higher education as a period of awakening to the need for expansion and revision of traditional in-service education. This may be a benchmark of one of the most significant changes of attitude in this century for higher education. Typically this in-service movement has been identified in the literature under the broad term of faculty development.

Changing Attitudes

Traditional concepts of college teaching were described in 1950 by Highet in *The Art of Teaching* as an art form growing out of a thorough knowledge of and love for one's field of expertise. This attitude was manifested among college faculties in development programs which emphasized content expertise. Activities supporting this included professional readings, support for travel to content-related professional meetings, conferences with colleagues on research, and sabbaticals for concentrated study.

A quarter of a century later, Eble (1976) proposed a significant change of attitude in *The Craft of Teaching*. He suggested that:

teaching is a craft, and as with any craft one's performance can be bettered by careful attention to detail . . . The center of all teaching and learning is the interaction between the teacher and the learner. The personal cannot and should not be set aside. Information and skills become important as they serve individual and social ends, ends inextricably bound up with our values and our perceptions.

The faculty development movement of the 1970s, which expanded the variety of teaching skills and the institutional approaches for accomplishing this goal, demonstrated that dominant opinion was consistent with Eble's view, i.e., that professors can learn how to improve their teaching. This paper reviews this movement in higher education.

Surveys of Practices

Surveys of faculty development practices in 1960 (Miller & Wilson) and 1969 (Many, Ellis, and Abrams) indicated a "death of well-articulated, comprehensively designed programs." In 1971 Eble reported in the AAUP Project to Improve College Teaching that faculty at 150 schools stated almost unanimously that their institutions did not have effective faculty development programs. Few of the institutions studied had budgets specified for faculty development.

This picture began to change in the early 1970s when Alexander and Yelon reported descriptions of 14 programs for instructional development. Growth in this movement has been gradual, but persistent through the decade. A 1976 survey conducted by Centra reported that over 40 percent of all responding higher education institutions had some kind of development unit, while two-thirds of the reporting universities had them. University offices have also generally been in existence longer than those in two- or four-year colleges and tend to have larger staffs.

Conditions Supporting the Movement

A number of forces influenced the urgency with which faculty development has been addressed. Centra (1976) termed the decrease in faculty mobility resulting from declining rates of growth in higher education as the "steady state condition." As a result of this, institutions could no longer depend upon new staff to help keep institutions vital. Professors could not expect to broaden their own perspectives by changing jobs.

Gaff (1976) cited as another important factor, the large number of middle-aged faculty who were "tenured-in." These professors would be part of the institution for the next 20-30 years. As a result, it was imperative for the health of the institution to maintain the vitality of this group.

In addition, research in education from the 1960s resulted in a great expansion of knowledge about learning and teaching. Increased awareness of conditions promoting learning, motivational factors, communication skills, instructional design and systematic observation contributed to the resources to support improved instruction. Faculty who became aware of these developments often attracted considerable attention with innovations in their classrooms. Colleagues were both skeptical and curious about these departures from the traditional. In some cases, these efforts received national attention from content-centered professional groups. New instructional methods including independent study, self-paced instruction, mediated instruction, experimental learning and interdisciplinary approaches also received

considerable attention.

Changing clientele also has contributed to the need for variety in teaching approaches. Ethnic minorities, first generation college students, and a wide range of adult-aged learners required a new look at classroom practices. Even the typical 18-22 year olds entered college with new characteristics. They often were more traveled and had extensive variety in their secondary school preparations.

Considerable motivation for instructional improvement resulted from rating forms introduced in the late 1960s. Student ratings were most commonly used to provide information for promotion/tenure decisions, to inform other students about the class, and to identify areas for improvement. Colleague and administrative assessments were also collected and used for decisions relating to teacher effectiveness.

A general "disenchantment" with the quality of college instruction had been expressed by students, parents and legislators (Centra, 1976). Pressures resulted in budgetary allocations to support improvement efforts.

New funds to support faculty development programs came from both public and private sources. State legislatures approved budgets for state supported programs. Federal agencies such as the Fund for the Improvement of Post-secondary Education (FIPSE) and the National Institute of Education (NIE) promoted these efforts in developing institutions. Private foundations also focused on faculty development in colleges and through consortia of small colleges.

Faculty Developer as a Professional

One might expect leadership in this movement to come from professional educators, and in many cases it has. However, people attracted to this "newest position in academe" (Gaff, 1976), often came from the faculty ranks and sometimes made a substantial career shift from their content areas. It involved being an internal consultant on teaching/and learning matters and serving as an educational leader in the institution.

Most individuals who entered this field did so with strengths in some areas and deficiencies in others. In some cases, skills in teaching and knowledge about learning and instructional methodology needed to be developed. Others had to improve their abilities in interpersonal communications and processes of change. Abilities for this position demanded a wide array of skills as well as infinite flexibility in work with diverse problems.

The particular background of the developer determined to a large degree the approach taken to improve teaching. A sociologist would perceive different needs than an organization/management specialist; the psychologist would approach problems differently than an instructional designer. Recognizing that the ultimate goal is "to make the profession of college teaching more successful and more satisfying," (Sikes & Barnett, 1977) many routes may be selected by the developer.

New professional associations have been formed for fostering communication among faculty developers. The Professional and Organizational Development (POD) Network in Higher Education, the American Educational Research Associations (AERA) Special Interest Group in Faculty Development, and the National Council for Staff, Program and Organizational Development (NSPOD) are examples of new groups which have been formed in the 1970s for the benefit of the new faculty developers. POD emphasizes skills of the practicing faculty developer,

AERA focuses on development of new knowledge about this field, while NSPOD is concerned with this movement in the community and junior colleges.

Annotated bibliographies of books and articles as well as many other resources for faculty development have been summarized in a helpful book, **Professional Development: A Guide to Resources**, by Gaff, Festa & Gaff (1978).

Approaches to FD

Three alternative models or approaches to faculty development represent different foci and goals: personal development, instructional development and organizational development (Gaff, 1976; Berquist & Phillips, 1975).

The conceptual basis for the personal development approach is derived from psychology and sociology. Faculty members themselves are the target audience. Seminars, workshops and retreats are typically used to help them explore attitudes, acquire knowledge and sensitivities, and gain a personal perception of the teaching role—all with the objective of improving relationships with students and colleagues.

Instructional development arises from professional education and emphasizes the improvement of materials and processes to promote learning. Instructional design as well as teaching behaviors and methods receive special emphasis in workshops, seminars and individual consulting activities.

Organizational development emphasizes the creation of an environment within the institution which is conducive to effective teaching and learning. Typical activities include workshops for administrators, team-training, and observation of departmental groups. Concern is for clarifying goals, implementing policies and evaluating results. Organizational theory and group process knowledge are applied in this model.

While these three models form distinctly different conceptual approaches, in actual practice most faculty development programs involve all three. An individual developer will undoubtedly emphasize one model but may incorporate the other two.

Faculty development programs are organized in a variety of settings. Some have been associated with centers for research on teaching in higher education; others with media centers. Campus-wide faculty development centers have been used to develop a systematic, comprehensive, and integrated approach across departmental and college lines. Some colleges within universities have formed resource centers to serve a limited number of faculty more intensely. The consortium center offers resources to small campuses when one institution alone could not support such an effort.

Activities for Faculty Development

Specific activities of individual faculty development centers are varied according to local needs; however, a representative list of activities might include the following:

Newsletters function to provide efficient communication with a large number of faculty. They often include: Articles about teaching, announcements of programs to provide instruction on teaching, recognition for outstanding teaching efforts, suggestions of helpful "how-to" hints, etc.

Workshops, seminars and retreats are organized to provide instruction on topics relevant to teaching.

Workshops imply participative application, while seminars may be restricted to discussions or presentations. Retreats are often planned for longer periods of time, two to three days, and are used for more extensive instruction and for moving participants out of roles they assume on the campus.

Individualized consultation is used to work on problems that are important to the faculty member. The consultant can assist faculty in identifying problems, collecting relevant information, analyzing strengths and weaknesses, prescribing alternatives, and reviewing videotapes of classroom instruction. These all are considered in the context of the teacher's own content and specific situation. This activity has potential for both significant impact on teaching programs and for greater satisfaction to the teacher. Course development in which instructional design principles are applied incorporating appropriate instructional technologies can also be achieved by this individualized approach.

Informal Discussion Groups are often organized to promote communication among colleagues about teaching. For example, a monthly luncheon group provides an informal opportunity to test and share ideas. Colleagues who have strong interests in teaching and have applied knowledge about teaching/learning can be excellent models for other faculty. Sharing of projects or ideas of mutual interest contribute to attitudes supportive of teaching.

Resources including books, reprints, bibliographies, papers, videotapes, and self-instructional programs can be used in support of all programs described here. Availability of these materials is essential to an effective program.

Small Grants Programs for faculty teaching projects encourage the implementation of ideas which might not otherwise be possible. These grants can offer small amounts of "risk" money for untried ideas and may even lead to larger grants from external sources. Travel or summer fellowship grants with the purpose of instructional improvement can be part of this activity.

Awards for outstanding teaching are most common at universities. They publicize the institution's commitment to quality instruction and usually carry a monetary award.

Clearinghouse functions related to teaching can be important to generate faculty networks or linkages among those with related needs and interests. They can extend the impact of improvement efforts beyond a limited professional staff.

Faculty advisory committees can not only guide the direction of faculty development efforts, but can encourage participation among colleagues.

Faculty exchange programs and visitations to other institutions can be reasonably low-cost, but useful approaches for broadening perspectives on teaching.

Individual Growth Contracts or long-range professional development plans can be used as effective devices to target appropriate activities in a positive way and on an individual basis for maximum impact in a well-planned sequence.

Toward the Future

The decade of the 1970s has brought a whole new perspective to faculty development in higher education. Attitudes accepting the need for organized programs supporting improvement have encouraged a large number of efforts implemented in a variety of ways. Faculty participation is growing in many programs and they are viewed as important to the institution. In other cases programs have been closed from insufficient funding or lack of faculty and/or administrative support. Many programs are new enough that they are still being tested. The most effective ones will survive.

The next 10 years will offer new challenges to the viable faculty development center. A major task will be to broaden the impact by increasing the participation to a larger percentage of faculty, particularly to those who need improvement. This participation must be incorporated into the institution's rewards system.

The faculty developer will have pressing need for translation of theoretical aspects of teaching and learning into the context of college-level content, students, and professors. Great need for the study of college teaching practices exists now and will become increasingly important with the expansion of the faculty-development movement. Organizational development as well as faculty "career" development will demand greater attention.

Principles of program planning and evaluation must be applied to faculty development centers as well as other institutional units. Analysis of goals and objective consistent with local needs, combined with assessment of realistic outcomes will serve to refine existing programs to optimum effectiveness.

Faculty development may well become a strongly institutionalized resource for faculty or it may fade from the academic scene as a passing idea. This will partly depend on values of faculty and administrators, but more importantly on the leadership with which the program is implemented.

The need has been demonstrated. The raw materials for change exist. Strong leadership and effective programs will be required to shift momentum of an institution steeped in tradition to change.

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