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# Section II: Renewing Centers for Professional Development

Lance C. Buhl

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## Renewing Centers for Professional Development

What do we know about infusing life into professional development programs? This is something we have struggled with throughout the fifteen (+3) year history of the contemporary professional development movement in postsecondary education. The question is especially pertinent during a time when "retrenchment" has lost its shock value and has become a tired, but accurate, descriptor of what most POD members live with daily. Is there programmatic life after retrenchment? If so, what can be done to ensure it and give it meaning?

Each of the four authors whose articles appear in this section address these questions. And, of course, each approaches them in a different way. Fortunately, the approaches complement one another and form a more or less cohesive answer—or, if not "an" answer, at least a mutually reinforcing set of building blocks with which we can form our own answers.

Christopher Knapper sets a philosophic and international context for considering the renewal questions. He reminds us of the basic purpose of higher education—"the ultimate criterion of any university's success is its ability to promote effective learning." And, relying on his personal surveys of professional development practices in Western Europe and Australia as well as North America, Christopher comments on the impact of staff development and on the states of instructional technology, lifelong learning practices and the "learning to learn" movement. In the process, he sets out an agenda for profes-

sional development in teaching common to all three cultures. It is an agenda of still unfulfilled promises, one which he addresses with specific and renewing recommendations for action.

LuAnn Wilkerson sets a different context. She focuses on the nitty-gritty process of planning (and replanning) professional development programs. But LuAnn's is no mechanistic, linear approach. Using examples from her own broad experience in our profession, she illustrates the pitfalls of thinking too circumspectly. She does more. LuAnn reminds us that there is a storehouse of experience, codified in a respectable, if not extensive literature, that we can use for creating instrumental professional development programs. Skillfully, LuAnn culls out of that literature helpful planning steps and guidelines.

In Robert Diamond we have a consummate practitioner of service to faculty and of survival politics. So when Bob says there are six specific things we ought to do to promote program effectiveness and longevity, we would all do well to listen up. The agenda he builds speaks directly to the issue of managing with less, a point that is crucial in any real answer to the question of renewing centers for professional development. Bob's sensitive antennae listen up, down and around the academic institution. His politic approach reminds us that our programs cannot serve if they cannot survive.

Dean Osterman, in a sense, brings us around full circle. His article is a testament to the many programmatic services we can and perhaps should provide in order to improve the teaching/learning interaction. An important strength to Dean's review is its historical development. He and his center have faced fiscal and hard times—since 1974. Now that's living with retrenchment. Yet, both have survived to nudge his institution toward realizing the "ultimate" educational criterion that Christopher Knapper defined—an ability to promote effective learning.

*Lance C. Buhl*