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A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR POST ENTRY EDUCATION
OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATORS

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Platitudes and insults are equally conspicuous in the history of local government. It has been labeled as the "kitchen of democracy" by some and described as the most corrupt and inefficient level of government in America by others. Yet, one consistently used descriptive word appears in contemporary literature to characterize local government. That word is, "trouble." While there is little disagreement that limited qualified manpower is contributing to the difficulties being experienced by local government there is even less disagreement on another point; that local government must be maintained and improved if the federal system of government is to be made secure.

Therefore, it is surprising that so little attention has been directed toward the development of a systematic procedure to provide the manpower skills that local government drastically needs. Perhaps the situation exists because only recently have the joint influence of federal sponsored programs and the increasing problems of urbanization combined in such force to reveal the strain being placed on the skills of local public administrators. However, now that local government has been revealed to be in short supply of skilled public administrators at almost every level, from the chief executive to the first line supervisor, perhaps greater attention can be focused on the development of a framework to provide post entry education for local public administrators.

The Significance of the Problem

Forces being exerted upon society to provide for the post entry education of public administrators include, (1) the need to improve the skills of current public administrators; and (2) the increased needs of additional skills in large numbers. Several trends that are intensifying these forces are related to the following:

- 1) Urbanization
- 2) Relative unattractiveness of local government employment
- 3) Increased competences required in most areas of employment
- 4) Increased competition from industry for limited skills
- 5) Rapid population increases in certain areas
- 6) Demands for additional services from local government

Theoretical Considerations

It is generally agreed that most professionals are required to continue to learn of new developments in their specialty if they are to maintain viable skills and competences. However, it is possible that such a requirement is no longer restricted to professional fields. The changes in society that are so rapidly occurring in east central Florida suggest that even sub-professionals may likewise become occupationally obsolete. The above considerations are couched within a framework that assumes that the employee was qualified prior to employment. What additional implications are contained in a framework that does not make such an assumption?

However, for purposes of this article we shall restrict our thinking to the assumption that the public administrator with whom we are concerned possessed the competences and skills desired when he entered his profession. And even with such an assumption, that may not be valid, we find that the theoretical considerations remain immense. In order to focus more sharply on the theoretical considerations important in the development of this conceptual framework we turn to the field of economics. The terms of "replacement" and "obsolescence" as utilized in that discipline might sharpen our thinking concerning manpower needs.

In economics, problems of "replacement" are generally considered to be primarily technical. As a result of the application of the term to technology it has often been overlooked that changes in technology may also require technical replacement of certain human resources with other human resources that are compatible with the new technology. Industry has recognized the economic implication of replacement of machines and men. Society appears to have only gone one-half as far in thinking of replacement needs of public administrators; it has recognized that technology changes but has not recognized that human skills do not necessarily and automatically keep pace.

Continuing this vein of thinking, it appears that if in industry replacement is a technical term, and if mechanical items can be replaced, it would also appear that a retooling of human resources could be

TABLE 1
EMPLOYMENT IN STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT
1955, 1965, and Projected 1975*

Function	Employment			Employment		
	1955	1965	Percent	1965	1975	Percent
	(in thousands)		Change	(in thousands)	Proj.	Change
			1955-65		1965-75	
Total all functions	4,727	7,713	63	7,713	11,400	48
Education	2,101	3,799	81	3,799	5,400	42
Elementary & secondary		3,020		3,020	3,930	30
Higher Education		741		741	1,400	89
Other		38		38	70	84
Highways	432	560	30	560	675	21
Health	472	795	68	795	1,350	70
Housing	23	39	70	39	75	92
Sanitation	109	172	58	172	320	86
Natural Resources	177	274	55	274	450	64
All other	1,413	2,074	47	2,074	3,130	51

Because of rounding, sum of individual items may not equal totals.

*Based on Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Manpower in State and Local Governments, 1965 and 1975."

TABLE 2
SELECTED ADMINISTRATIVE-PROFESSIONAL-TECHNICAL OCCUPATIONS IN STATE AND LOCAL
GOVERNMENTS, EMPLOYMENT IN 1965 AND 1975 PROJECTED REQUIREMENTS*

Occupation	Employment		Percent Increase 1965-1975
	1965	Projected 1975 Requirements	
Administrative-Professional-Technical	3,850,000	5,450,000	42
<u>Selected Occupations</u>			
Agricultural scientists	6,000	9,500	58
Biological scientists	7,700	13,500	75
Chemists	2,900	4,200	45
Draftsmen	18,700	29,500	58
Economists	900	1,600	78
Engineers	66,600	105,000	58
Engineering technicians	44,600	70,000	57
Geologists and geophysicists	1,100	1,800	64
Life science technicians	7,000	12,000	72
Mathematicians	400	700	75
Medical scientists	3,000	5,000	67
Physical science technicians	11,500	16,500	43
Psychologists	3,300	6,000	82
Professional nurses	72,000	88,000	22
Sanitarians	11,400	15,000	32
Statisticians	2,100	3,700	29
Surveyors	17,100	29,000	70
Teachers, college	121,900	210,000	72
Teachers, elementary	942,000	1,130,000	20
Teachers, secondary	709,000	965,000	36

Taken from Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Manpower in State and Local Governments, 1965 and 1975."

utilized to replace outworn skills with new skills.

Furthermore, following economic terminology it is recognized that the replacement costs of these resources become an inevitable charge against current governmental production and as a result society will be called upon to pay the costs.

Yet, a more severe problem than replacement is the problem of obsolescence. No longer can it be assumed that the effective productive life and the physical life of human resources are of the same duration. The professions of engineering and medicine are outstanding examples of fields wherein this concept has already been recognized.

Society should recognize that professional and sub-professional public administrators face similar threats of becoming obsolete through an advance in the art or through the development of new processes.

Projections

National projections indicate the enormity of the task of merely keeping pace with demand for additional skills and competences among employees of local government. When one considers that these projections should be supplemented by the affects of replacement and obsolescence then the situation does appear to be critical. Furthermore, the crises may be intensified in certain population growth areas such as the east central Florida region and Brevard County.

According to national projections, additional resources, or at least the resources of existing institutions, must be applied in differing ways to meet the great manpower needs that governments will be facing in the second category or level of governmental service. For example, Tables 1 and 2 reveal the projections of manpower needs made by Leo Kramer, Incorporated.¹

Regional Projections

No definitive work has been done to arrive at suitable projections for categories of local governmental employees for east central Florida. However, a few aggregate projections have been made and these will serve to illustrate the salient features of the problem.

The East Central Florida Regional Planning Council reported that there were 22,450 governmental employees in the seven-county region in 1960. Furthermore, they project this information to 1980 and suggest that approximately 74,550 governmental employees will be required to serve the region.²

At this time there is insufficient data to indicate how many administrative, technical and/or professional employees of local government exist in the seven-county region. However, the Municipal Manpower

Commission has suggested that nationally an increase of approximately 75 percent should be required among these categories of public administration.

The rapid population increases occurring in the east central Florida region would lead one to expect an even greater increase in the proportionate increase among these administrative, technical and professional employees of local government. According to data provided by the East Central Florida Regional Planning Council, the regional population may be expected to increase from 6,962,962³ in 1960 to 1,640,000 in 1980.⁴

Findings of Research Conducted in East Central Florida

Whereas, the preceding has been concerned with generalized information and conditions that concern local government and public administrators throughout the nation, it appears desirable to deal with a greater degree of specificity with the problem. Therefore, from this part forward we shall be concerned with east central Florida. This specificity does not imply that conditions in east central Florida are different or are necessarily similar to problems at the national level. Instead, this approach is utilized to sharpen the impact of the concept and to provide an illustrative geographical area to frame our thinking. Furthermore, the results of a two-year study concerning the continuing education interests and behavior of public administrators in the area are available to provide data useful in formulating and verbalizing applicable concepts.

The survey results reported below consist of data collected in two phases. The first phase was completed in October of 1968 and consisted of a questionnaire mailed to a random sample of approximately 170 municipal elected and appointed officials in the region. Seventy-one questionnaires were returned and the results of this attitudinal survey are reported below:⁵

1. The mean length of time since municipal officials (participating in the survey) in east central Florida had been engaged in an educational activity was 5.24 years for elected officials and 6.41 years for appointed officials.
2. Eighty-six percent of the elected officials and 90 percent of the appointed officials indicated an interest in educational activities related to their responsibilities as a public official.
3. A majority indicated that additional educational opportunities for public officials should be provided.
 - (a) Sixty-nine percent of the appointed and 55 percent of the elected officials indicated that the

governmental associations should provide additional education service.

- (b) Seventy-three percent of the appointed officials and 68 percent of the elected officials indicated that the Florida State University System should provide additional education service.
- (c) Sixty-one percent of the appointed officials and 69 percent of the elected officials indicated that the junior colleges should provide additional education service.

Since the above findings were reported the writer completed a follow-up study of the 71 participants in the first survey. The results of the survey are as follows:

1. Eighty-six percent responded to the survey.
2. Fifty-five percent of the responding appointed officials and 36 percent of the responding elected officials indicated that they had participated in an educational activity during the year.
3. Fifty-five percent of the appointed officials and 66 percent of the elected officials participated in educational activities provided by associations representing municipal officials.
4. Fifty-five percent of the appointed officials and 22 percent of the elected officials participated in university activities.

The preceding survey results appear to substantiate the following:

1. Appointed public administrators are interested in continuing education.
2. Appointed public administrators favor "educational institution" oriented continuing education services.
3. Travel time is limited and local provision of educational service is desirable.

Additional Findings

The 1967 Municipal Yearbook reports the results of the annual data collection project of the International City Managers' Association that revealed cities of 100,000 and over were more likely to have regular training programs than smaller cities. The report further reveals that only 20.5 percent of the reporting cities in the 10,000-25,000 population category had an in-service

training program in 1966. Of these 55 percent had correspondence courses and 49.1 percent were served by local universities. 6

Other findings of the survey revealed the following reasons for not having an in-service training program:

1. 37.5 percent reported lack of qualified staff personnel to organize and administer the program;
2. 17.5 percent cited lack of money as the deterring factor;
3. 16.6 percent cited lack of interest by the city administration;
4. 10.6 percent cited the lack of qualified instructors;
5. 10.5 percent cited other reasons;
6. 7.3 percent cited lack of interest by city employees.

A review of the reports of the five largest cities in Brevard County, Florida revealed that none of these cities which were in the 10,000-25,000 population class maintained training programs for administrative, technical, and professional employees.

A Structural Framework for the Post Entry Education of Public Administrators

According to the theoretical concerns previously discussed, it appears that the costs of replacement and obsolescence in local governmental administration are passed on to the citizenry in terms of additional costs, poor service, and/or inefficiency of operation. Furthermore, it appears that these additional costs may be prevented by developing a system of education that would maintain the technical ability and skills of employees thus negating, or at least mitigating, the problems of replacement and the impact of obsolescence.

Therefore, it would appear that the concept of a system of continuing education for local public administrators should be budgeted with the same (or hopefully improved) public approval as are other investment or capital improvement items. Therefore, through such a budgeting arrangement each level of government would set aside sufficient funds to retool its employees each year. Through an arrangement with other governments and educational institutions, a joint powers agreement could be developed to create a mutual interest compact. Under this compact arrangement local officials and representatives of the educational institution would formulate an annual curriculum especially tailored to the needs of local government. Payment for services could be based on the details of the joint powers agreement that might be developed along lines based on population data with the expectation that the larger cities would receive more services by having more students than would the smaller cities.

In addition to on-the-job training and classroom instruction that would result from such a compact, the joint powers agreement could also spell out provisions for the exchange of manpower among the governments. This may improve the possibility of differing cities securing highly qualified personnel in separate areas with the other cities having reciprocal benefit of their knowledge on a consulting basis. Similar arrangements could provide for the sharing of these highly skilled public administrators in a variety of ways, where they could share their skills with others and directly increase the competences of their less qualified counterparts among the other governmental levels.

Such an arrangement could also provide for the development of a central "inquiry" facility where any public administrator could go at any reasonable hour to secure information from a variety of sources. These sources would include video tapes, audio tapes, and a special library of materials developed especially for public administrators. Individual cities could be encouraged to hook-in to the system as technology improved and interests developed whereby at least one inquiry facility would be available in each governmental headquarters unit.

Figure 1 provides a graphic illustration of the conceptual structural model that may be developed to provide for the post entry education of public administrators.

INDIVIDUAL UNITS OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

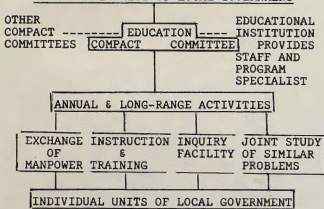


Figure 1 - A model of an intergovernmental structure designed to provide post entry education to public administrators.

In addition to providing a structure for county or specific geographical area-wide cooperation, Figure 1 illustrates how local education compact committees could establish mutual agreements with other local committees in adjoining geographical areas.

Conclusions

It appears that a variety of forces and trends are being exerted on local government that threaten the very fabric of the

federal system of government as developed in America. It is believed that nothing less than the improvement of local governmental personnel will be able to strengthen local government sufficiently to enable this level of government to meet the myriad requirements and expectations currently bombarding it.

Furthermore, it appears that local government is developing an interest in, and is beginning to recognize the value of, post entry education for administrators from first line supervisors to the chief administrator. However, this interest has not been translated into a viable structure that could provide for such needs at the local, county, or regional level. The framework suggested in this paper appears to offer promise because, (1) it recognizes the limitations for travel and absence from work by providing for the educational activities to be held within easy traveling distance; (2) it recognizes the need for cooperation among governments at the local level; (3) it ties the educational institutions to the training program; and (4) it suggests a mutual financing system that should be equitable for all participating units.

Summary

Post entry education for public administrators has been recognized as containing important implications for the survival of the federal system of government. Intense pressure from a variety of recent developments such as technological advances and urbanization appear to threaten local public administrators with the necessity of replacing skills or of becoming obsolete.

A two-year study of public administrators interest in, and behavior concerning, continuing education activities designed to assist them conduct their official responsibilities was cited. The findings of this longitudinal study revealed that a high percent of responding appointed municipal officials in the region do participate in educational activities. However, it appears that these activities are not developed according to the interest or behavior patterns reflected in the survey. Thus, it appears that the value of such participation could be enhanced by framing the activities according to expressed interests, needs, and behavioral patterns.

Therefore, utilizing interests and behavioral data, the writer formulated a structural framework of a system of post entry education that appears to be capable of providing for the achievement of the conceptual and theoretical goals of such a system. This structure is based on the idea that local governments might form an educational compact wherein a joint powers agreement would be executed by the participating governments to provide for the interchange of differing human resources that might improve the post entry education of the officials from the chief administrator through the first line supervisor.

References

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3 Council Keynotes, "Population and Employment Projections," East Central Florida Regional Planning Council, Titusville, Fla., September, 1966.

4 Council Keynotes, loc. cit., January, 1965.

5 Long, Huey B., Continuing Education Interests of Municipal Officials in East Central Florida, Florida State University, Urban Research Center, Titusville, Florida, 1967.

6 International City Managers' Association, The Municipal Yearbook, 1967, p. 147

7 Ibid, p. 157