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Reflections on Teaching Courses in Faculty Development: Three Case Studies

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While faculty development programs are increasing in number and scope, opportunities for educating and training individuals in faculty development are few. The purpose of this paper is to highlight three current approaches to teaching instructional and faculty development. Teachers of these courses were asked to reflect upon their experiences in developing courses and teaching about faculty development. These reflections became case studies that were examined for commonalities across the experiences. Themes related to content, methodology, and professional growth are identified and discussed.

Despite the vagaries of federal funding during the past two decades, a proliferation of teaching support and faculty development activities has appeared on American college campuses. In an early survey of faculty development practices (Centra, 1976), 167 (41% of the 408) respondents reported that their institutions had some person or unit on campus whose charge was faculty development or instructional improvement. A more recent survey (Erickson, 1986) concluded that more programs are being initiated; in this study, 277 (or 44% of the 630) respondents reported that their institutions had some person or unit on campus whose charge was faculty development or instructional improvement. Moreover, 66% of the 630 respondents reported that their institution's commitment to faculty development and instructional enhancement was *greater* than it was three years earlier.

While faculty development programs are quickly increasing in number and scope, opportunities for educating and training individuals in faculty development are growing less rapidly. Although some practitioners have received short-term or on-the-job training, many report that they are "self-taught" and practice "by the seat of their pants" (Brinko, 1990). This article describes efforts undertaken to address the need for ways to provide education and training for instructional/faculty developers. The purposes are threefold: first, to highlight three current efforts to teach courses in instructional and faculty development; second, to examine the approaches to the field of faculty development as conceptualized by the instructors; and, third, to identify common themes among the efforts.

The first effort is a graduate course taught at the University of Toronto, an urban doctoral-granting institution; the second is a graduate seminar team-taught by two individuals at Appalachian State University, a rural comprehensive institution; and the third is a national residential institute for new instructional/faculty developers, team-taught by five individuals. Implicit in each of these efforts is a carefully considered definition of faculty development and perhaps the beginnings of some conceptual models for training and practice in the profession.

Richard Tiberius: Reflections on a Graduate Course at the University of Toronto

Graduate courses at the University of Toronto, like graduate courses almost everywhere, are not supposed to be "how-to" courses. Our School of Graduate Studies would like graduate instructors to emphasize the enhancement of understanding and the critical examination of ideas rather than the

acquisition of skills. This requirement is no problem for teachers of “academic disciplines” like philosophy or history. But what about teachers of subjects that are practices, rather than disciplines, like medicine and educational development? What is the role of such courses, if any, in a graduate program? Since 1978, when I first taught my graduate course entitled “Educational Development: An Examination of the Strategies for Improving Teaching and Learning in Post-Secondary Institutions,” I have been struggling with this issue.

There has been a strong and constant demand for a survey course in the methods of enhancing the teaching and learning process in higher education, and this course has been oversubscribed practically every year. It attracts a broad spectrum of students—community college chairs and principals who have responsibilities for faculty development or curriculum planning or organizational development; university and college teachers with similar responsibilities; teachers who would like to know more about their own teaching; and even some graduate students who intend to become instructional/faculty developers or educational consultants. Over the years these learners have made it clear that their priority is the practice of educational development, not the theory. The design of the course—both content and teaching methods—has been heavily influenced by this priority.

Goals and Objectives

The learning objectives, both practical and theoretical, are designed to help the student do educational development. The practical objectives include: familiarity with each of the methods through direct experience; knowledge about the major resources in the field—books, journals, organizations, and human networks; ability to speak at least “tourist-level” educational development language and familiarity with buzz words and shibboleths; and ability to define a teaching-learning problem and to design a systematic educational development program to address it.

The theoretical objectives include the ability to examine: methods of educational development critically using pragmatic criteria such as effectiveness and efficiency; theoretical criteria such as coherency and soundness of underlying assumptions, values, and metaphors; and moral criteria such as freedom, personal integrity, and equality.

Organization

A collection of topics does not make a coherent course. Thus, I kept rearranging the topics, searching for an integrative theme. During that period I was writing about metaphors underlying educational development, and I

was struck by the powerful effect that metaphors of teaching had on the choice of both method of teaching and method of improving teaching. So, I arranged the topics in a sequence that reflected what I had described as an historical shift from teaching as a "transmission of messages" to teaching as "dialogue" (Tiberius, 1986). Moreover, as I teach, I draw parallels for each topic between this historical shift and a similar metaphorical shift within individual teachers, as described by Pratt (1989) and Sherman, Armistead, Fowler, Barksdale, and Reif (1987).

The weekly topics consist of various approaches to educational development. The first of these describes what I call the "generic skills approach to teaching and learning." Under this heading we examine teaching manuals, student skills manuals, "how-to" books for teachers, and other self-help materials. We discuss the likelihood that teachers and developers who are most attracted to such methods are those who tend to view teaching and learning as a process of transmission of information from teacher to learner. Such teachers view teaching as a set of skilled performances that can be learned in the absence of the students.

The second approach is described as "practice with feedback outside the real classroom." This approach includes simulations, exercises, workshops, and other interactive methods of teaching improvement. There are two main sub-categories, those in which the actual students are present (workshops and laboratory teaching) and those in which they are absent (workshops, micro-teaching, and video playback). Again, we discuss the metaphorical and conceptual basis underlying the choice of this kind of method. It is obvious that this approach must go beyond individual skilled performances to include the interpersonal interactions.

The third general approach to educational development is described as "practice with feedback in real classroom settings." Methods in this category must address the realities of the classroom setting. There are two sub-categories: the first includes classroom research and evaluation-driven methods, and the second includes consulting methods.

A fourth approach, "relationship enhancement," represents a most radical departure from the individual skills training approach. Methods in this category focus on enhancing the teacher-student interaction and relationships, and are therefore concerned almost exclusively with attitudes.

The fifth and sixth approaches take the class completely beyond the teacher and learner as an interpersonal system, to the teacher and learner as part of an "instructional system" (fifth) and to all the above as parts of an "organizational system" (sixth).

Methods of Instruction

The first part of every class consists of students' making brief summaries of the articles that they have read and connecting them with their personal experiences. We follow the "inside-out" philosophy of Hunt (1987) that inspires teachers and learners to begin with their own experiences rather than abstract concepts or external knowledge. Discussion in this section is guided by a number of questions such as: What are the techniques of this approach? Does it work? Is it cost effective? What are its advantages and disadvantages compared to other approaches? When is it most appropriately used?

After a break, we attempt to identify central issues and ideas that grew out of our earlier discussion. During this time we reflect on the metaphors that might influence a teacher or developer to choose one method over another.

Evaluation

In the plan for the course, which is handed out at the beginning, learners are invited to devise any evaluation that they choose. The only limitation is that the evaluation of class participation is not allowed because I believe that evaluation of class participation compromises the emphasis on risk-taking and disclosure. To assist the students in thinking about the options, I suggest two possible written evaluation projects in the plan of the course: a description of an educational development process and a review of the literature relevant to educational development.

In addition to submitting the paper, learners are required to respond to my comments about their written work. Their responses contribute to my calculation of their evaluation. Assuming the paper is submitted early enough, they may rewrite the paper based on their discussion with me and have their grade adjusted as warranted. Their responses must be in writing, in the style that would be appropriate for replying to letters from journal referees. Some learners have agreed with my comments and have written brief outlines about how they would improve their papers in a second draft; some have disagreed with my comments and have supported their disagreements with arguments; still others have reacted to my comments point-by-point.

Requiring a student response, consistent with my own metaphor of teaching and learning as a cooperative interaction, provides learners with practice in a skill that is essential to successful scholarship in the real academic world—responding to criticisms by colleagues, editors, and re-

viewers. I feel that this course should reflect the spirit of the field of educational development. We must practice what we preach.

Future Directions

Has the course finished evolving? Not at all. This year I added demonstrations of various techniques, one in almost every class. In the past I have observed that abstract discussions can become meaningless when participants have little first-hand experience with the methods under discussion. Perhaps I had been overzealous in trying to exclude skills in order to convince others that this was a “real” graduate course. The demonstrations, such as case-based teaching, microteaching, and video feedback have provided more opportunity for a larger number of participants to be actively involved.

The most disappointing aspect of the course has been the learner evaluation. Despite the invitation in the course plan for students to devise their own evaluation process, they rarely do so. Instead, they invariably choose one of the two written projects suggested in the course plan. As a result, next year the course plan will be modified to include an entire list of choices for evaluation in order to encourage students to choose more broadly.

Sally Atkins: Reflections on a Graduate Seminar at Appalachian State University

In the 1990-91 academic year, Kate Brinko and I developed and team-taught a new graduate seminar entitled “Faculty Development in Higher Education” in the Department of Human Development and Psychological Counseling at Appalachian State University. The rationale for offering such a course in this department was that the theories of adult development that underlie the departmental programs in counseling and student development are the same as those that form the foundation for faculty development. The rationale for offering such a course at the graduate level was that faculty development is an area of potential interest to our faculty, staff, and graduate students in related programs such as counseling and student development. We considered this course to be a “pilot project,” aimed at gathering as well as sharing information.

Faculty

Both instructors are faculty in the Department of Human Development and Psychological Counseling and faculty developers affiliated with the Hubbard Center for Faculty Development and Instructional Services. We

represent very different perspectives on the philosophy and practice of faculty development: Kate is trained and experienced in the field we traditionally describe as faculty development, and I am trained and experienced in counseling and psychology. We had found our different skills and perspectives to be very complementary in our practice; we had great hopes that they would be complementary in the classroom as well.

Students

The course attracted four professionals with prior background and experience in areas related to faculty development. One was a faculty member already involved in faculty development efforts on campus; two were administrative staff members who had been involved in staff development efforts for some time; and another was an advanced graduate student in the area of student development. Each of the students had completed course work beyond the master's degree, had prior work experience, was sophisticated in problem solving and thinking processes, and was highly motivated by the content area. From the beginning, we knew that we had a unique group of students, and we were able to use their experience and expertise to enrich the course.

Content and Methodology

After much research, debate, and deliberation, we designed the course to reflect a broad definition of faculty development that encompassed professional, organizational, and personal development. Because this was a graduate level course, we emphasized theoretical and philosophical issues that are inherent in the field rather than focusing on practical, "how to do it" strategies. The final content outline of the course included:

- I. Overview: The academic culture
- II. Foundations: Adult development theories
 - A. Levinson (1978)
 - B. Neugarten (1968)
 - C. Erikson (1963)
 - D. Gilligan (1982)
- III. History of faculty development in higher education
 - A. The origins of faculty development
 - B. Evolution of present practices
 - C. Trends and issues
- IV. Faculty development in practice: Intervention linked with theory
 - A. Professional development

1. Teaching (instructional and curricular development; feedback and instructional consultation; motivation)
 2. Scholarship (definitions of scholarship; issues of productivity; supporting research and writing; issues of balancing teaching and research)
 3. Service (academic milieu; committees; advising; faculty life; academic governance; long-range planning)
- B. Organizational development
1. Administration in higher education (lines of authority; communication; problematic areas)
 2. Academic departments (culture; expectations; governance; committees)
 3. Campus climate (motivation; vision; mission; institutional vitality)
- C. Personal development
1. Career development
 2. Psychological counseling (employee assistance programs)
 3. Wellness programs (exercise, nutrition, health education, stress management)

The content of the course reflects our beliefs that faculty development includes a large array of programs and practices, that these programs and practices are developed over time in many areas within the institution, and that they are determined by the history, mission, and milieu of the institution. Thus, our goal with regard to content was to examine the entire array of programs and practices to see how such practices relate to institutional missions, to the overall purposes of higher education, and to the quality of life of those who live and work in academia.

Because of the expertise and sophistication of the students involved, we continually adapted both the content and the methods of the course to allow the students flexibility to pursue individual issues within the field and to share their own knowledge and experience. We taught the course primarily as a seminar, with class discussions punctuated by individual presentations, writing projects, and synopses of readings from books and journals. The major requirement was for each student to produce a scholarly article of publishable quality within her or his area of interest. This assignment resulted in four very different and interesting projects, two involving original data collection. One of the articles has been published, and two others are in preparation for publication.

Effects on Students

In their evaluations, students reported that the class content, assignments, and interactions were very meaningful both professionally and personally. Particularly valuable to them was the opportunity to pursue different interests in a context of challenge and support. The students enjoyed the team-teaching approach and the different perspectives offered by each instructor. They also liked the richness of the seminar format, which encouraged all to share their experience and expertise. The class was considered to be quite demanding in terms of reading, but appropriately so for the topics and for the level of students. Future plans for the course will reflect this feedback and will also include efforts to recruit more students.

Effects on Faculty

As faculty for the course, the most exciting and meaningful part of the experience was the opportunity to define for ourselves, in the company of questioning and motivated students, the field of faculty development. Sifting through the growing body of literature in faculty development, we grappled long and hard with a variety of design issues to determine what was appropriate in terms of content, structure, and evaluation methodologies. We expanded our scholarly backgrounds in the field to develop an extensive bibliography for the course. We stretched our own perspectives through readings and discussions with each other and our students, thus providing opportunities to consider faculty (and staff) development in its broadest sense. This collaborative re-examination of our own philosophies and practices broadened our definitions of faculty development, shifted our individual paradigms of faculty development, and strengthened our commitment to the profession.

Judy Greene: Reflections on a Training Institute for New Faculty Developers

In 1990, Sally Atkins, Kate Brinko, and I planned a week-long program to train new faculty development professionals. Aware that formal programs for the education of faculty development professionals have been very limited, we at the University of Delaware and Appalachian State University collaborated to respond to this long-standing professional need.

Purpose and Goals

Our primary purpose in planning the institute was to respond to the

growing demand for training opportunities from institutions that were initiating or planning faculty development programs. Except for the annual one-day pre-conference workshops offered by the Professional and Organizational Development Network in Higher Education (POD), few training opportunities are available to new faculty/instructional development professionals. Thus, our primary goal was to design and offer a very practical “survival” course in faculty development.

We wanted to expose participants to traditional programs and practices in professional, personal, and organizational development. We also wanted to present to these new practitioners our visions for the future of the field, so that they might have an appreciation for the complexity and depth of it. Our overarching goal was to focus on building foundations for future success within the context of each person’s campus needs.

Philosophy

The institute was based on the following assumptions, which we shared with our participants in the first session:

- Learning occurs when new information is connected with old;
- Learning involves risk-taking;
- Learning is a shared responsibility;
- Learning requires respect;
- Learning requires us to reflect on our practice;
- Learning happens in the context of community, where the experience and expertise of all members is shared and valued.

Our strong commitment to creating a community of learners permeated the planning and implementation of the institute. To help create community among both faculty and participants, we included a three-hour team-building session on the first day. This session provided an opportunity to get acquainted, to build a high level of trust and confidence, and to take risks in a non-traditional learning setting.

Faculty

We identified faculty for the institute by surveying past directors and CORE members of POD and presenters at POD’s pre-conference workshop for new developers. Each person was asked to identify colleagues who might be appropriate as institute faculty and who would work well in a collaborative, residential setting. We compiled a list of those who had been mentioned most often and interviewed these potential faculty about their philosophy, goals, essential content, teaching style, and availability for such an institute. Two colleagues, Marilla Svinicki and Ron Smith, were invited to participate

as primary faculty to complement the styles, skills, and experience of the three planners. Several talented faculty from Appalachian State University volunteered additional sessions for the institute.

Participants

We designed the institute for faculty who were in their first three years as faculty developers or who were intending to initiate a program. Participants in the institute included 25 new practitioners from the United States and Canada. They represented diversity in race, gender, and type of institution—private, religiously affiliated, public, two-year, four-year, and doctoral institutions. They brought a wide range of perspectives from their experiences in instructional media, teaching, academic administration, faculty development, and graduate studies. This serendipitous variety created a mix of viewpoints that made the institute a truly rich and unique learning experience.

Content

Content for the institute was determined from a number of sources. Using a modified DACUM (*Develop A Curriculum*) model (Seibert & Mauser, 1979), we consulted the literature, new practitioners, and other colleagues. Beginning with our own knowledge, experiences and readings over a number of years, we established an initial content list. Then we conducted a paper survey of participants at the annual POD conference in fall 1989 and a series of structured telephone interviews with potential institute faculty and authors in faculty development literature. We examined several successful residential models for content and format, including the Kellogg Institute for Developmental Educators and the Canadian Potlatch Seminars. We also studied the content of syllabi from two graduate courses, one in faculty development and one in college teaching.

Several cycles of development, review and revision, and discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of various components led to the final curriculum for the institute. Within these cycles our priorities about content became more explicit. First, considering the developmental stage of our intended audience in their careers, we wanted to focus on practice rather than theory. Second, we wanted to be sure that we had adequate breadth, as well as depth, in the practice of personal, professional, and organizational development. Third, we wanted to build on the experiences and expertise of the various participants. Fourth, we wanted flexibility in order to meet the participants' needs. Fifth, we wanted to create an experience that would

encourage participants' personal growth—in mind, body, and spirit. Thus, the final content of the institute focused on:

- understanding the role of faculty development and its influence on the organization;
- getting information from faculty and translating it into strategies;
- building support for faculty development;
- consulting with individuals and groups;
- providing feedback to faculty;
- looking at teaching: classroom observations, peer perspectives and students' viewpoints;
- designing and conducting learning activities for faculty;
- developing written materials: newsletters, handbooks, and flyers;
- evaluating faculty development programs;
- budgeting and funding programs and activities;
- thinking about the future of faculty development.

Teaching Methodology

Our teaching methods were driven by our desire to use what we knew about adult learning and model what we were teaching. We accommodated a variety of learning styles through active learning strategies such as short writing assignments, mini-lectures, interactive lectures, large and small group discussions, problem-solving tasks, role playing, case studies, printed resource materials, homework assignments, and readings. We provided formal and informal opportunities for participants to consult with us and to share experiences and materials with each other. Participants became involved in the instructional process by designing optional sessions and giving continuous feedback that resulted in revisions to both content and methods.

Effects on Participants

Results of the evaluation indicated that all the participants would recommend the institute to a colleague. In general, they liked the ideas, activities, and strategies that helped them to learn how to “do” faculty development. They liked the fact that they left with concrete plans and ideas for use on their own campuses and that they developed a network of colleagues to contact after they returned home. They also liked the collaborative learning environment and cited it as an important factor in their personal growth during the week.

A follow-up survey after four months showed that the effects of the institute were still present. Participants were networking with each other and still using the content that they had learned. Several new teaching centers and

faculty development programs were established, and some institutions had begun internal or external searches for staff. One institute participant from a community college team reported that her program went from “just talk” to “full steam ahead” due to the positive learning experience that she and her team members had at the institute. After attending the institute, one of the other members of her team—a key administrator who reluctantly signed up but enthusiastically completed the institute—suddenly found the *raison d’être*, resources, and budget for their program.

Effects on Faculty

As institute faculty, we were forced to frame what has become our life’s work (a combined total of over 50 years) into language and activities that could communicate the essence of faculty development to people from other backgrounds. We learned from each other, not only about content and new twists on classic themes, but also about what it takes to trust other professionals we did not know well. It was a challenge to honor and adjust to each of our ways of knowing, being, and working. We were constantly asking ourselves what it is that we do. What are the theoretical bases for our actions? Can I be the bridge to help connect us without being a lightning rod? Can I delegate and retain my sense of responsibility and competence? The answer was, “Yes.” With renewed respect for ourselves and each other, our confrontations and struggles led us through a fruitful journey in the company of candid and caring colleagues.

Some of the questions we struggled with before and during the institute were the same that all faculty who use collaborative teaching strategies must confront: Where and how much do we collaborate and arrange for collaboration among students? How much do we structure, focus explorations, challenge the knowns before moving to the unknowns? What process will work best for sharing our work? When and how do we clarify, evaluate, extend, and how much? How do we best assess self, peers, and group efforts? What process will drive individual and group accountability and feedback?

Future Directions

We plan to offer the institute again. We will implement several changes that our first group of graduates recommended, but we will retain those factors that we feel were the keys to our success:

- being intentional about developing a sense of community in which people could take risks;
- selecting faculty who had complementary skills and experiences;
- structuring the agenda to allow flexibility;

- using participant feedback beginning the first day;
- empowering participants to meet their objectives; and
- hearing participants and each other.

We also envision expanding future institutes into a second week to provide an advanced level of interaction, thinking, content, and renewal for experienced faculty developers.

Themes Across the Case Studies

The previous case studies were examined for underlying themes that might be useful to faculty developers who wish to improve their practices and/or develop similar educational experiences. Emerging from this examination were three themes: one dealing with content, another with methodology, and a third with development.

The first theme that emerged from the reflections of these teachers of faculty development involved content appropriate for their courses. These instructors found no paucity of topics in faculty development for either a semester-long course or a week-long intensive institute. On the contrary, the abundance of topics necessitated difficult decisions about what to include and what to exclude. In all three approaches, instructors wrestled with the decisions of how much theory and how much practice to include in their curriculum. Each resolved this tension with a different balance between theory and practice according to the perceived needs of the students and context. Further, the three instructors found three very different approaches to the content: one used the theme of metaphors in teaching; one emphasized theoretical and philosophical issues within academe; and one focused on tactics and strategies useful for practitioners.

The second theme that emerged from these case studies was related to the teaching methodologies used. Each of the teachers sought to “reflect the spirit” of the discipline by modeling effective teaching-learning strategies and accommodating different learning styles. This theme was particularly salient in the kinds of class activities and assignments given to students. In the institute, students were required to take part in short writing assignments, large and small group discussions, problem-solving tasks, and case studies. At Appalachian, students were required to participate in seminar discussion, present information, write synopses of books and articles, conduct research, and produce a paper of publishable quality. In Toronto, students were required to summarize readings, connect them to personal experience, contribute to class discussions and demonstrations, and respond in writing to the teacher’s comments on their papers in a manner similar to responding to a

journal reviewer's comments. Clearly, integrity and fidelity to the discipline were priorities for these teachers.

The third theme that emerged from these case studies involved professional growth and development within the teachers themselves. All three teachers reported that the process of developing and teaching the courses was lengthy and extremely challenging professionally. Their reflections abound with questions about what content should be included, what methodologies would be most effective, how the material should be approached and organized, what outcomes would be most important, what learning activities would be most meaningful for students, how students should be evaluated, what the role of the teacher is within the course, what the role of the course is within the institution, and so forth. These are the kinds of questions that most teachers ask when developing a course. However, because faculty development is a nascent field and the curriculum has not been circumscribed, the process of answering these questions brought about a professional growth not always available to teachers of other subjects or to faculty development practitioners.

It is apparent that the act of teaching about faculty development contributed to the growth of the instructors as teachers, as practitioners, and as scholars. They were forced to examine the literature in more depth and to organize the information in a coherent manner, giving them new insights into the gaps, strengths, and weaknesses of the field. They were forced to examine their own assumptions and philosophies, to articulate their own perspectives, and to put them into practice. Each teacher felt that although developing and teaching such a course was demanding, the challenge yielded great professional benefits and rewards.

Conclusion

These case studies demonstrate the richness and complexity of the body of knowledge and the variety of practices that comprise the field of faculty development. They also point to the need for more empirical research on faculty/instructional development efforts and related topics (see, for example, Bonwell & Eison, 1991). These reports provide evidence of the ongoing evolution of the professional field. As practitioners continue to define the theories, issues, activities, and methodologies that constitute faculty development in order to be able to share the field with others, clearer definitions emerge. It is hoped that the sharing of these training experiences will stimulate further reflection as we move toward more formal conceptual frameworks and models for our work.

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