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ABSTRACT

Despite the wealth of information available about methods of instructional development, the practitioner still faces a major task of adapting these to any local situation. Precisely because instructional development is a "people process," most developers must work through the value systems and priorities set by clients rather than imposing their own. In this process, the clarity and logic of idealized instructional development models often become obscured by local variations in budget, personnel, facilities, and viewpoints. The question for the developers, then, is how to go about finding the best match between the principles they know must be followed and the perceptions and constraints of the people with whom they will be working. A way that looks promising is establishing a faculty ad hoc committee to study and make recommendations for developing and producing specific instructional media, without immediate reference to the more general, total instructional development program. Although attempts are indeed made to sort materials by the degree of their complexity and the assumed expertise of the viewer, the fact is that the same materials may be profitably used in different ways by creative faculty in several situations. (Author/KE)

SOLVING INSTRUCTIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROBLEMS IN UNIVERSITY SETTINGS

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Despite the wealth of information available about methods of instructional development, the practitioner still faces a major task adapting these to any local situation. Precisely because instructional development is a "people process," most developers must work through the value systems and priorities set by clients, rather than imposing their own. In this process, the clarity and logic of idealized instructional development models often become obscured by local variations in budget, personnel, facilities and viewpoints.

Furthermore, it has been well established that teachers prefer instructional methods and materials which they themselves have worked to produce (Lange and others). The local solution, therefore, is most likely to be the solution of choice, even if it is far from ideal. The question for developers, then, is how to go about finding the best match between the principles they know must be followed and the perceptions and constraints of the people with whom they will be working.

One common approach, workshops led by "the man from away," at best provide inspiration and a starting point. In many institutions, the percentage of faculty attending any one such session is insufficient to sustain a program, when participants return to the workaday situation.

Another first step, gaining administrative support, although generally recognized as essential in a plan for instructional development, still is not enough, unless the development plan also has general approval from within faculty ranks.

How to get that approval, how to get effective work started on a local development program, remains the question. A way that looks promising is establishing a faculty ad hoc committee to study and make recommendations for developing and producing specific instructional media, without immediate reference to the more general, total instructional development program.

Experience with such a committee for media development at the baccalaureate level in nursing education indicates that this approach may be one of the most effective in the long run. Focusing on the concrete requirements of specific media development may lead most directly to real consideration of the larger issues of instructional development.

Sometimes criticized as the "scatter-gun" approach, this was nevertheless an effective way to begin in the example cited. In this case, an invitation to sit on an ad hoc committee was circulated to all faculty who 1)were currently engaged in media production in some way, 2)had come to the media office for help with instructional projects, or 3)had expressed an interest in developing media for classroom use. Ten faculty who were approached responded favorably. The group was drawn from a broad representation of departments and influence groups. These faculty members were already major figures in established administrative councils, but they had not been able to steer an instructional development course very well there. Perhaps the job of simply getting through the agendas of most administrative councils may have an anaesthetic effect on would-be change agents, despite the real concern these people may have for improving instruction.

Since the membership of the committee in question consisted of faculty on whose time the greatest demands were already made, it was suggested that probably not everyone would be able to attend all meetings. Members were kept informed of recommendations made at meetings where they were not present and were asked to react by telephone. Pressure on these people was kept to a minimum.

At the first meetings, the committee shared general concerns. These concerns were then refined by members into specific recommendations for action, leading to a master plan of instructional media development for the school. In less than six weeks, a coherent group of recommendations crystallized. It was clear that many of

these ideas had been cherished individually by committee members for some time.

Although these recommendations were not immediately implemented by administrative bodies to which they were addressed, they served notice of the direction in which the committee -- the only group of faculty organized for this purpose-- was headed. They constituted the first group recommendation concerning general media development in the school.

Far from bearing out the "scatter-gun" criticism, these recommendations immediately extended to such general instructional development matters as the need to establish faculty rewards for improving instruction, and the overriding necessity of mapping out a master plan for implementing curriculum change.

Subsequently, this committee developed time and budget guidelines for faculty media development (Figures 1 and 2), following some general introductory PERTing principles (Cook). These guidelines were purely local, having application only to this one situation, in which, for example, technical support services were provided without charge for regularly scheduled classes. Likewise, the time estimated as essential for the production of a "unit of audiovisual instruction" was based solely on the experience of faculty developers in this one institution under circumstances which obtained there. The local solution was indeed the one of interest to these people.

Further localization of the time and budget guidelines was achieved by keeping a log of actual time and money spent on media projects undertaken during the year of the committee's ad hoc existence. From this log, for instance, it was noted that production was generally shorter than faculty had predicted. It appeared that expertise in technical support services had greatly increased in this institution, and that more cooperative pre-planning among those services, faculty and the school media office had shortened production time. The log also demonstrated that this faculty did not generally keep track of time spent researching content, and that often the bulk of the research had taken place before

specific media development was contemplated. Including the research step in this local development model, therefore, did not prove practical, despite the fact that this activity generally appears in idealized instructional development models.

The benefits of such an ad hoc committee now seem clear. The members can articulate the purely local problems to be encountered in instructional development. They can help develop the possible stepping stones to locally pertinent solutions. Of special importance may be the visibility that committee members receive for engaging in teaching practices they have felt to be good ones, but for which there had been little recognition. This group may provide more leverage to gain faculty rewards for instructional improvements than any single member can achieve alone.

Significant among the benefits to the institution is the fact that the committee members are those people who can see the problems inherent in change. As a group, better than as individuals, they can isolate and articulate the philosophical basis for changes in instruction. As an interdisciplinary group, they may reach more faculty, to help them see the need for specific change.

The temporary nature of the committee lessens the perceived drain on members' time. It lessens also the threat the committee might be seen to pose to existing ways of doing things. Because it is temporary, the option to reject is preserved for the remainder of the faculty. Keeping that option open may be essential to the success of the change process. In the university example cited, the greatest faculty resistance to the committee came only when that group sought to become a standing committee, a procedure which required a favorable majority vote in full faculty meeting. Three attempts were necessary to gain approval.

It may be noted of the local media development model illustrated that some standard elements, such as analysis of learners' entry behavior, are not included, although these elements have received widespread endorsement by instructional developers (see, for instance, Kemp and Merrill). Some readers may consider that

this kind of omission is an unfortunate result of provincialism. However, this omission is in fact the result of appropriate tailoring to local needs: Media produced in a school of nursing is used in many academic settings, introduced in different contexts and discussed in an array of different course offerings. A videotape illustrating the stages of dying, for instance, might be used to introduce nursing care of the terminally ill to beginning students, or to stimulate discussion of intra-family communications techniques in a psychosocial nursing graduate class. It may be used with families of patients.

Although attempts are indeed made to sort materials by the degree of their complexity and the assumed expertise of the viewer, the fact is that the same matefials may be profitably used in different ways by creative faculty in several situations. Learner or user entry behavior for any one unit is highly variable in this institution and is generally characterized broadly only as "graduate" or "undergraduate." (Relatives of dying patients would probably be classified in this case as "undergraduate.") Flexibility in applying the standard instructional development technique seems, once again, important for local practicality.

How effective a standing committee of this sort may be is not clear. As an ad hoc group, however, the value it has for crystallizing local guidelines for action cannot be overemphasized.

(1974)

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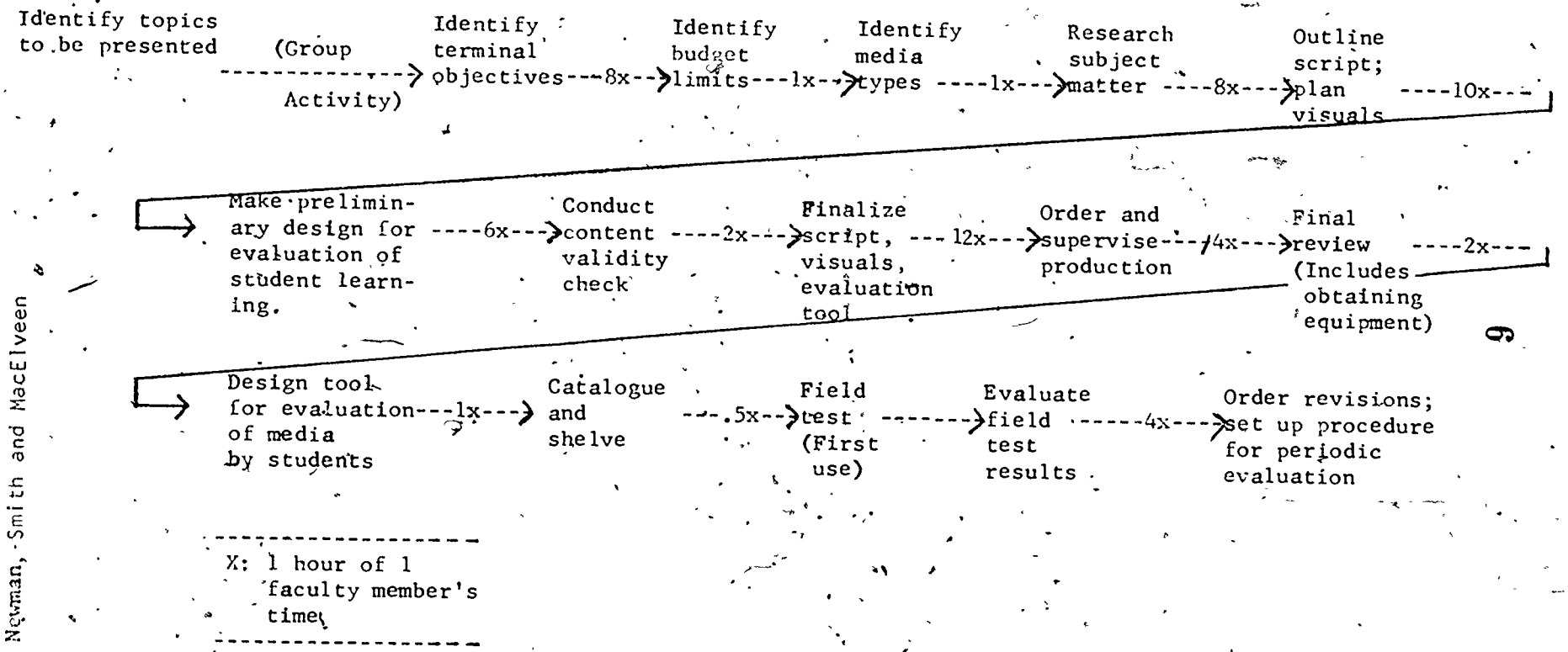

TOTAL 59.5 hours

Figure 1. LOCAL MODEL OF FACULTY TIME NEEDED TO PRODUCE ONE UNIT OF AUDIOVISUAL INSTRUCTION. As developed by an ad hoc committee at a University school of nursing. The unit of mediated instruction was defined as that which would be used by an instructor in one class hour, or by students in one self-study assignment. The amount of time estimated for each activity was based on local faculty experience. A similar model was constructed for revision of units.

Project	Time Necessary		People Necessary		Budget Necessary	
	Projected	Actual	Projected	Actual	Projected	Actual
Nursing Audit (Videotape)	59.5	40.0	3	3	$50.00	$40.00
Containment Isolation (Videotape)	59.5	41.5	5	5	$160.00	$160.00
Orientation to Clinic A (Videotape)	59.5	4.5, (but only work tape completed)	3	3	$51.00	$13 (work tape being used, as is)

Figure 2. PORTION OF LOG KEPT OF MEDIA DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES. This log was used as a model of time, personnel and budget necessary for the development of a unit of audiovisual instruction at a University school of nursing.

Projected figures reflect the estimates in the model shown in Figure 1. The fidelity of the actual figures to those predicted for people and budget, as well as the reduction in time actually needed to produce materials, was thought to be the result of improved pre-planning.

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