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ABSTRACT

Staff development programs are needed in community colleges as a result of stabilizing enrollments, decreased faculty mobility, technological and disciplinary changes, student population changes, and the need for professional variety and personal growth. Suggestions concerning the role of the speech-communication teacher in staff development are made for administrative, classified, and instructional personnel. (AA)

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STAFF DEVELOPMENT IN THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE -
THE CONTRIBUTIONS WHICH A SPEECH-COMMUNICATION INSTRUCTOR CAN MAKE

A Discussion Paper

by

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Speech - communication instructors are a special group of people. Partially because we cannot claim a "pure" discipline of our own, our educational backgrounds have prepared us to deal effectively with information from a plethora of areas. Concepts from anthropology, business, composition, education, history, literature, math, political science, psychology, science and sociology are a part of our own interdisciplinary training in speech - communication education. As a result, we can relate effectively to many different segments within education.

When we bring this broad educational background into the community college setting, we indeed come up with a unique group of people. Community college instructors are probably closer to the pulse of societal changes than our four - year counterparts since we deal directly with students whose educational and occupational needs are closely tied to the technological advances occurring around us. As speech - communication instructors, we teach in an area which services both the vocational - technical and the lower division transfer student. Not only are we accountable for keeping our courses abreast of the discipline changes occurring at the four -

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year institutions, but we are also responsible for keeping our instructional methodology and content relevant to the occupational needs and technological advances of the job markets into which our associate degree and certificate program students will enter. Our approach to instruction cannot become traditional. Our student population is too diverse for us to not keep professionally renewed and revitalized. That's part of the beauty of teaching speech - communication courses at the community college. That's also part of the reason why people in our discipline have a great deal to offer our colleges in terms of staff development.

This paper will focus first on the nature of staff development -- what it is and why it is needed -- and then on the contributions which a speech - communication instructor can make to institutional staff development.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT - A DEFINITIONAL PERSPECTIVE:

Faculty development, management development, organizational development -- these terms have at one time or another been a part of the community college vocabulary for many years. Within the last five years, the term staff development has been added to this grouping. In every instance the word *development* is synonymous with improvement. This improvement is measured in terms of increased efficiency (*doing things better*) and increased effectiveness (*doing the proper things better*). As a result, programs of varying degrees have been developed which aid the efficiency and effectiveness of instructors (*faculty development*), administrators (*management development*), and the total college operation (*organizational development*).

Because it has been recognized that many developmental programs are not related exclusively to faculty, management or classified personnel, the term *staff development* has gained prominence. This provides an appropriate label for the more recent

trend in community colleges. Staff development is conceptualized as being both personal development (*improvement of people -- their attitudes about themselves, their jobs, the people with whom they work, etc.*) and professional development (*improvement of job-related skills, knowledge and attitudes*). Given this newer perspective, staff development can refer to programs for all personnel employed by a community college.

Organizational development is still a widely used term -- now, however, in conjunction with staff development. The former refers to other developmental changes in the college and its climate such as: establishment of clear goals and communication networks; existence and development of effective decision-making processes and techniques for problem-solving; procedures for managing and resolving conflicts; allocation of responsibility and authority; and assigning priorities. Both organizational and staff development are increasingly becoming recognized as needed. One without the other is insufficient. Efforts to develop the competencies of staff cannot be of lasting value unless they are accompanied by an equally strong effort to insure that the organizational structure and general operational climate keep pace with individual growth and innovation. (Hammons, 1976)

STAFF DEVELOPMENT - A NEED JUSTIFICATION:

Although the term *staff development* refers to the three component parts of a community college's personnel roster, this justification statement will focus attention principally upon the faculty members. The rationale can be identified more easily since we are community college instructors. It should be noted, however, that similar principles apply to both the administrative and classified personnel at any community college.

There are four basic reasons why staff development has become increasingly important to community college faculty members -- institutional stability,

decreased faculty mobility, educational changes, and professional variety. By Briefly examining each of these four, we can gain a better perspective of the role which the speech - communication instructor can play in staff development.

The first reason why staff development has become more important to community colleges is that institutions are finally stabilizing in size and number. In 1960 there were only about 540 registered public two-year post-secondary schools in the nation. By 1970 this number had increased to 1500. About 200 more have been added to the national ranks since 1970. The total number of two-year public schools in this category has more than tripled within sixteen years. The two-year school movement itself is only 75 years old. Within a short span of sixteen years the nation moved from a solely college-preparatory junior college focus to one which also embraced vocational - technical occupational training, and continuing and adult education. It realized the open door concept and espoused a philosophy of comprehensiveness. The success of the movement was founded on change.

The developmental years of this new "animal" were spent building programs and facilities to accommodate the increasing number of people enrolling in the schools. There was an ever increasing demand for more and more instructors. Traditionally, these people emerged from the ranks of high school teachers, recent college graduates, or business and industry personnel. All of these people had to learn together how to adapt to the community college student population. Few, if any, of these new instructors had any real community college experience.

With enrollment increases straining the capacity of the schools to accommodate the steady flow of students, staff development was not a high priority item. It was generally assumed that new ideas and new teaching techniques for this new clientele of students would emerge or come about through the regular addition of new staff who joined the ranks each year. Now, however, institutions are stabilizing in size.

There is now time to look more closely at the development of personnel instead of the development of new buildings and programs.

Just as the initial success of the burgeoning community college movement of the 1960's and early 1970's was founded on change, so does its future lie in change. Its ability to change depends upon many things, the chief among them being the ability of the staff to adapt to change or develop.

The second reason why staff development is increasingly important at the community college level is closely tied to the first. Faculty across the nation are faced with decreased mobility.

With stabilizing enrollments and in many areas "no growth" policies due to financial problems, community college faculty face the tightest job market in decades. In Oregon, for example, the Portland Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area estimates in its 1977 fiscal year forecast that there will be only 60 post high school teaching positions available due to replacement or expansion in the next year. These statistics reflect the job market at both two and four year post-secondary schools in the area and indicate approximately 1 or 2 positions for each institution. Faculty members must look to their own institutions for professional growth rather than to new teaching positions in different schools or new ideas from new instructors coming to their own institutions.

Gaff (1975) cites a national study of higher education. He reports that a school termed innovative in the 1960's now has a faculty from which 63% won't retire until the year 2000. My own institution is only in its eleventh year. 67% of our faculty will not be eligible to retire until the year 2000. This means that the average faculty member has at least two and one half decades of teaching ahead of him.

The Gaff study reported on a long established major university with over 90% of its

faculty "tenured in." At my own institution over 70% of the faculty have achieved tenure.

Considering both the decreased mobility factor and the fact that 25+ years of instruction remain ahead for our community college instructors, a big question arises: how can this faculty keep educationally alive and growing, appealing to changing clientele and devising new educational programs to meet emerging needs? As indicated by Wallace (1974), Justice (1976) and others, much of the growing literature on staff development has dealt with the rationale for growth and improvement. There is a growing recognition on the part of most faculty that they have training needs, and an expressed willingness and desire to participate in viable staff development programs on the part of many.

The third reason for staff development relates to the rapid changes which are occurring both inside and outside of education. One of these change areas lies within the disciplines. Vocational-technical instructors, for example, are working in areas of constant technical advancement. The national literature confirms what a survey on my campus determined last spring. Two to three years away from hands-on experience in the work world and the advances pass you by. Keeping up with the professional journals and attending conferences and workshops helps, but this alone is not sufficient. As one physical therapy instructor said at my institution: "I can explain the new concepts to my students, but I haven't been able to get back into an actual therapy situation in order to practice what I am teaching."

Look for a moment at the changes which have occurred in our own discipline within the past ten years. Nonverbal communication, interpersonal communication, transactional analysis - these areas, to name just a few, were barely in the exploratory stage. Most of our classes were public speaking in orientation. They

then moved principally to an interpersonal focus and are now either still with that emphasis or melding back into a combination of public and interpersonal. A need to adapt to the idea of *change* itself as the new status quo is demanding adjustments in attitudes, values and perspective for many faculty. Staff development is concerned with helping keep our instructors current with technological and disciplinary changes.

A second of these change areas lies in instructional delivery systems. Most of the present community college faculty members were not initially prepared to teach in the community college due to a lack of preprofessional and preservice programs to prepare them or the inadequacies of those which existed. In the last few years, the gradual development of a technology of instruction, including both hardware and software, has greatly accelerated. In the last decade alone we have seen the emergence of self-paced learning, competency based instruction, interdisciplinary approaches to learning, cognitive mapping, human potential training, audio-tutorial instruction, tape cassettes, video cassettes, and improved classroom delivery systems. Add to these innovations the fact that to many instructors outside the area of speech - communication, lecturing techniques, questioning and discussion techniques, mediated presentations and the like were not an integral part of their instructional preparation. Staff development is concerned with helping instructors adapt and learn about these areas of classroom innovation.

To the changes in technology, disciplines and delivery systems another key area relates. The student clientele at the community college of today is much different from that of ten years ago, let alone fifteen or twenty years ago. When the "open door" philosophy became reality rather than ideology sixteen years ago, community college educators began to realize that what their institutions delivered did not equal what was promised. The open admissions policies seem to say that we can meet instructionally all the demands of all the students -- those who come well prepared

for college work as well as those whose entire educational background has been characterized by failure, those who are young and those who are old, those who attend full-time and those who stop in and out of school.

We can gain a better perspective of the demands of our changing community college clientele if we reflect for a few moments upon Harcelroad's 1975 report of one national study which included 750 two-year institutions. Nationally, part-time students make up 52% of the total community college enrollment. Students who for a variety of reasons sandwich school between work and other activities require a different form of education than those who live on a campus and attend classes full-time. Data from Harcelroad's study as well as investigations of several other individuals presents us with the following information for consideration:

1. The community college student population is no longer principally in the 18 - 21 year old range found in traditional lower division courses in our four - year counterpart institutions. There is an increase in enrollment of more mature students, particularly in the 25 - 55 age bracket and of students over age 55. In the Portland metropolitan area, the average age for a community college student is 28. This means that there are many people above that age level who compensate for the 18 - 21 year olds. Different age levels bring different experience levels. When these combine in the same classroom, the instructor's role changes.

2. There is an increased interest in vocational - technical programs. Many western community colleges are finding an equal split between vo-tech and transfer students. The vocational - technical student may be one who found school difficult and who has resultingly selected an area of training which does not deal in abstract learning concepts. That student may be in an automotive, welding, or forestry technology program for example. The vocational - technical student may also be one who is concentrating on a career in the medical field (respiratory or physical therapy, dental hygiene or nursing), the electronics industry (office machine repair to digital

or analog circuitry), or any other number of intellectually demanding, technical areas. The vocational - technical students come in a great variety. Add these to your classroom and throw in some general studies or lower division transfer students and the makings for change on the instructors part are all present.

3. Nationally more and more females are attending the community college. This female population is augmented by many women returning to school after their children have reached school age or after a life-style change has prompted them to seek initial or additional job training. These people present another change element in the student clientele.

4. Many schools nationally are experiencing an increasing number of "reverse transfers." This term refers to students who are transferring from four - year institutions back to community colleges. The traditional view of the football player who transfers back to the junior college to build up his grades so that he will be eligible to play ball again the next fall does not fit the majority of this trend. Many students are deciding that a two year degree or a certificate program will present them with more job opportunities than will a liberal arts degree from a four - year institution. In North Carolina, for example, 1,500 students transferred from two - year colleges to four year schools in the 1973 - 1974 academic year. But in that same year 1,300 transferred from the senior institutions back to the community colleges.

5. To the above factor add another. A large number of students with baccalaureate degrees are enrolling in the two - year colleges, often in the occupational programs.

6. There is a growing indication that more students are attending college in a "stop-in, stop-out" fashion. These are mostly non-degree oriented students who come to college whenever they feel a particular educational need or whenever their employers place an incentive like higher pay or promotion on additional course work.

7. Nationally there is a growing percentage of students (31%) who are from

minority groups. Many of these people have English as their second language.

These seven general areas of changing student clientele are not exhausting. Many more examples exist. Yet the examples given are sufficient to make the point: staff members who received their training even four to six years ago are now dealing with a student body having quite different characteristics. The "new" community college serves a new clientele: the convicted rapist or murderer in the nearby prison; the 50-year old accountant desperately attempting to learn computer programming in order to hold his job; the 35-year old housewife who, now that the children are in school, is finally ready to begin a career for herself; the truck driver who attends a store-front class at night so that he can eventually get out from behind the wheel and work in the transportation and distribution office. There is little in the background of present staff to suggest that we are equipped to meet the needs of these new students.

If the previously discussed three reasons for a growing emphasis on staff development are not sufficient to convince even the most difficult die-hard, the fourth may provide the final impetus. The need for professional variety and personal growth is one reason why staff development is important to instructors. Fortunately, there are both the experience of numerous colleges and national survey data to indicate that most community college faculty are aware of the need to change and, under appropriate conditions, will participate in staff development programs which they consider to be relevant, functional and rewarding.

Report after report across the nation indicate that community colleges are proud of their faculty members. These people are qualified and dedicated individuals who spend the greatest part of their professional time involved in teaching. These people are dealing daily with a very fragile product, the training of another human being. Yet, with the prospect of two and a half decades of instruction ahead of

most of them, staff development options are needed just for professional variety. One instructor put this reason for variety quite succinctly: "After teaching 120 sections of the same basic course, I feel like a machine. I begin to wonder if I've said it to this class or to another class. I begin to lose that fine edge of quality which I pride myself in." Staff development opportunities are needed to keep our instructors continually growing and challenged, as well as professionally satisfied.

Stabilizing enrollments, decreased faculty mobility, technological and disciplinary changes, student clientele changes, professional variety -- these are all valid reasons for staff development. As schools grow older, institutional arteries can begin to harden unless staff development is given a high priority. We must remain able to adapt to the changes occurring around us.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT - THE SPEECH-COMMUNICATION INSTRUCTOR'S CONTRIBUTION:

As speech - communication instructors at the community college level, we all have our own individual needs for professional growth and development. Our job market potential within education is no greater than that of our colleagues in other teaching areas. Our professional discipline (and the multitude of disciplines from which it derives its impact) is constantly changing. Our student clientele is affected by enrollment variances sometimes even more than that of other instructors. We often teach in a service capacity to all of the transfer and vocational - technical programs and as a result find ourselves faced with a broader variety of student types and educational backgrounds. Many of our students have had difficulty communicating within their own environment and have built walls and it seems sometimes blockades to ward off anything which the world of speech - communication has to offer them either personally or professionally. We, too, find a need for professional variety. How many times have we explained the principles of speech composition or taught students how to organize a presentation?

To how many sections have we developed the nature of attitudes, values and beliefs? How many times have we talked about effective discussion principles? The list of these questions could become quite extensive. The point, however, seems made: we are also in need of options for our own professional growth and variety.

Not only do we face similar general needs for development, but as speech - communication instructors we also possess a variety of talents which can be shared with others in our institutions as they pursue their own staff development. In so doing we can not only help our institutions grow and adapt to change but we can also add a dimension of variety to our own careers.

What can the speech - communication instructor offer the administrative branch of a community college in terms of staff development? Our instructional backgrounds can offer special training programs to meet administrative staff development needs. Although few formal surveys of administrators have been nationally cited, first-hand experience by this author conducting numerous workshops in the Northwest for education administrators reveals what the literature suggests: improved communication skills top the list of need areas. This is followed by a need to develop decision making skills and a need to build effective interpersonal skills into the process of team building.

The same elements of intra and interpersonal communication which we teach as a given element in our courses are the concepts which we can share with our administrative personnel. The importance of two-way communication is a given element in our classrooms. We can share this information with our administrators as well.

These brief suggestions probably do not turn on any magic light bulbs in our heads. They shouldn't. What they might do, however, is shed a different perspective upon ideas which many of us have taken for granted. Our training has brought us a wealth

knowledge from a wide range of educational areas. Few of our administrators have had these experiences. (How many of the administrators at your institution have had a speech - communication background?) As the community college movement grew, so did the need for people to administer these institutions. Just as faculty had little training about the community college before they found themselves in the classroom, so did the majority of administrators have little training before they found their desks and launched upon the work of scheduling, budgeting, and building. They, too, now have time to reflect and revitalize. We can offer them some of our background to help in this process.

What can the speech - communication instructor offer the classified branch of a community college in terms of staff development? Again, the answer lies in interpersonal communication. Few community colleges have even looked seriously at the staff development needs of the classified personnel. Some schools in the western states are becoming more concerned about this component of the institution. The Seattle Community College District, for example, has developed personal growth programs for its classified personnel. Many schools provide free tuition which allows these people to take additional coursework. Most of the formalized training, however, deals with technological updates and does not focus on other developmental needs. The speech - communication instructor can offer programs on interpersonal skill improvement, team building, and other general communication topics to aid this segment of the institution as well.

What can the speech - communication instructor offer the instructional branch of a community college in terms of staff development? The list in this area can easily become extensive. May a few suggestions suffice to stimulate your thinking?

CLASSROOM PRESENTATIONAL TECHNIQUES: Creative, well-designed, well-presented lectures should be a given in our own classrooms. Demonstrations and media useage should be beyond reproach. If we learned the lessons taught us about audience analysis

and message adaptation in our upper division and graduate courses, teaching to a diverse classroom audience should not be horribly difficult for us. To other full and part-time instructors these areas are far from givens. Those who came to the community college from high school teaching situations or graduate classrooms in disciplines other than our own probably received instructional methodology principally from education courses. Those who came to the community college from their diverse backgrounds in business and industry probably had no preservice instructional methodology. In Oregon workshops dealing with improving lectures, mediating lectures, or developing demonstration techniques fill rapidly with new and experienced community college instructors. Why? The answer seems simplistic -- perhaps it is: in speech - communication these procedures are an ingrained part of our preparation; in other teaching disciplines these components have been by-passed. Mediocrity in classroom presentations can no longer suffice. Community colleges are teaching institutions. Our changing student clientele, evaluation procedures and accountability demands effective classroom techniques. We can share our training with our colleagues in this area.

GROUP DISCUSSION AND QUESTIONING TECHNIQUES: Again, we are talking about a topic area which was ingrained in our professional preparation. Again, this is a topic which was not a part of the professional preparation of most of our colleagues. We know the research in educational theory which cites active learning as better than passive learning. We know that discussions and questions are a part of the active learning package. So do our colleagues. What we can share with them is our "how-to-do-it" ability. Full and part-time instructors from a variety of disciplines are most interested in this area of instructional development (Justice, 1976).

We take many of our presentational skills and classroom techniques for granted. We can capitalize upon these and provide our colleagues with welcome developmental information as well as add a little variety to our own professional teaching situations.

What can the speech - communication instructor offer to the total staff development needs of a community college? In addition the specific area needs of community college personnel, there are several development concerns of the total staff to which we can contribute.

INSTITUTIONAL COMMUNICATION IMPROVEMENT: Depending upon the climate within your own institution, this may be an area which you can either share information yourself or facilitate the hiring of an outside "expert" to present a workshop to personnel from all levels of the school. The business world's professional journals are full of articles about upward and downward communication, about communication networks, about active and passive listening, and other similar communication topics. The education journals have only begun to embrace this topic. Most community colleges could benefit from a general session or series of meetings identifying problems and working toward solutions. Too often the administrative staff will decide that they must do something to improve communications; the classified staff will make a similar decision; the faculty will also embrace the topic. But rarely the three will meet. As we well know, open lines of communication cannot exist unless they are in fact opened. Face-to-face sessions on improved institutional communication deal with the information, again, from our training backgrounds. This is another area in which we can provide growth for our institutional staff.

We can also lend our experience to sessions on generalized interpersonal communication skills, on effective use of time in group meetings, on small group leadership styles, and on transactional analysis as it applies to both personnel and students. Again, the list can become endless. Again, the point simply is this: we take for granted many of the skills which as speech - communication instructors we can share with the total staff development effort at our community colleges.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT AND THE SPEECH-COMMUNICATION INSTRUCTOR'S ROLE - A SUMMARY:

For the multitude of reasons listed earlier in this paper, staff development is a welcome addition to the community college picture. With the exception of a few states which have strong financial support for post-secondary education, this concept is still relatively new to most community colleges. It is expensive in the eyes of many budget committees because no increased FTE ratios can be evidenced by the price tag. Resultingly, many institutions are still slow to accept the trend. Garrison (1975) summarized a key argument for the movement toward greater emphasis for staff development. He indicated that despite increasingly cramped budgets, and the savage inroads of inflation during this time of institutional stability and decreased mobility, provision for staff growth should be one of the last items to get the budget axe. One sure way to perpetuate an increasing mediocrity in education is to permit staff members to lose their sharp edge, to lapse into routine, to talk to itself and become increasingly self-satisfied and parochial. Staff development is one means of keeping an expensive and sophisticated instrument functioning at its best capacities, equipped to cope with change and maintain high institution morale.

The contributions of a speech - communication instructor alone cannot possibly meet the need. Release time, short-term leaves, sabbaticals, tuition payment for extra course work, on campus workshops and seminars, faculty exchange programs, business-industry-education liaison programs, and the like can greatly contribute to an institution's total staff development picture. But the talents we, as speech - communication instructors, can share with our community colleges are great. We do not have a "pure" discipline to call our own. This, perhaps, is a blessing in many ways. Because we relate our training to so many different educational backgrounds, we do have many ideas to share with our colleagues as they meet the challenges of their own staff development and as we seek variety in our own profession.

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