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ABSTRACT

The Georgia Instructor Academy (GIA) initiative is intended to provide staff development activities that enhance the quality of instruction delivered at the technical institutes. Before GIA could become functional, the following significant changes in the state's postsecondary technical education system had to occur: (1) creation of the Georgia Board of Technical and Adult Education to govern technical institutes and establish statewide, program-specific standards and curricula that reflect current job practices; (2) establishment of the Guarantee Program; and (3) development of regional consortia. GIA is responsible for delivering inservice training to both new and experienced technical institute instructors. It is divided into three divisions, each of which addresses specific needs of Georgia's technical institute instructors. The Technical Training division provides instructors with opportunities to advance their occupational expertise through industry-sponsored workshops and seminars, joint ventures with industry, job shadowing, and internships. The Professional Development division provides instructors with opportunities to enhance their professional lives. The Instructor Training Institute assists in development and improvement of the instructional competencies of new postsecondary technical institute instructors. Georgia has decided to use a networking system called PSInet (People Sharing Information network) to link all technical institutes and academy personnel into a bulletin board service. (Contains 11 references.) (YLB)

CRITICAL PEDAGOGY FOR VOCATIONAL EDUCATION: THE PRACTICE WITH NOVICE PROFESSIONALS

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Critical Pedagogy for Vocational Education: The Practice with Novice Professionals

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Many reports have called for improving the quality of the nation's teachers. Tomorrow's Teachers (The Holmes Group, 1986) endorsed a five-year pre-service program, levels of professional staffing, and national testing as ways to ensure better instruction. A Nation Prepared: Teachers for the 21st Century (Carnegie Forum Report, 1986) was similar to the Holmes Group report and, additionally, called for creation of a National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. The board would provide assessment of both pedagogical skills and instructional content. Other reports and groups indicated change is needed in teacher preparation. Futhermore, A Nation at Risk, A Call for Change in Teacher Education, various reports from the Southern Regional Education Board, and The National Governors' Association (Robbins, 1989) indicated a need to assess what is currently being done during pre-service and in-service preparation of teachers. All of these reports addressed issues germane to general teacher education; none however, gave any particular attention about how to improve preparation of teachers of technical subject matter. Improving the quality of technical instructors requires a three-fold initiative. Initially, they must be occupationally adept in their technical areas of expertise; additionally, they have to be foundationally sound in

pedagogical practices. Finally, technical instructors must be encouraged to become consummate professionals.

Different states in the Southeast are addressing these issues through various efforts. Virginia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Georgia all have joint ventures between colleges and State Departments of Education to meet a variety of needs exhibited by technical instructors. Each of these states has some kind of "New Teacher" workshop to help new instructors become effective in their new surroundings. Different states also have a diversity of in-service activities designed to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of practicing instructors. The mode of delivery for these services differs at various locations, but it generally takes the form of a contractual activity sponsored by state agencies and conducted by a college or university (Southeastern Trade and Industrial Educators' Conference, 1991). These types of in-service activities have been effective in the past but currently are under scrutiny to determine if cost is equivalent to services received.

The Georgia Department of Technical and Adult Education is endorsing an initiative to unify in-service offerings through a clearinghouse type arrangement. The Board of Technical and Adult Education believes it can centralize information, increase access, and control quality using a teacher-center type model (Kole, 1989). This concept has been named The Georgia Instructor

Academy (GIA). The intended purpose of the GIA initiative is to provide staff development activities which will enhance the quality of instruction delivered at the technical institutes. Before GIA could become functional, significant changes in the State's postsecondary technical education system had to be made.

Program Standards and Curriculum Guides

In 1985, Georgia created The Board of Technical and Adult Education (GBTAE). The governance and direction of the state's technical institutes were legislated to this board. In 1986, GBTAE began the monumental task of establishing statewide, program-specific standards and curricula that reflected current job practices. Technical committees, comprised of representatives from industry, state agencies, and technical institute instructors, met to determine content, instructional sequencing, and overall program design (Stonehouse, 1989). As different program standards and guides were completed, they were disseminated to all the institutes offering those programs.

Implementation has been phased in as materials became available. Currently, there are 65 program standards and curriculum guides completed. The Georgia Department of Technical and Adult Education has exhibited its faith in the new curricula by issuing a guarantee on the graduates of Georgia's technical programs.

The Guarantee Program

The "Technical Education: Guaranteed" program began in 1989. The warranty states:

> The Georgia Department of Technical and Adult Education has developed curriculum standards with direct involvement of business and industry. These standards will serve as the industry-validated specifications for each occupational program. "If one of our graduates who was educated under a standard program, and his/her employer agree that the employee is deficient in one or more competencies as defined in the standards, the technical institutes will retrain that employee at no instructional cost to employee or employer (GDTAE, 1990).

A study done by Bobell and Reeves (1990) indicated that institutes, instructional staff, students, and industry view the guarantee program as a positive indicator of the quality of technical education. The initiatives mentioned to this point were implemented statewide through administrative efforts. There needed to be a mechanism which allowed input from instructors in the field. In response, the state divided into regional districts that provided local institute instructional staff with access to the decision-making processes.

Consortium Development

The north, central, and south regions of the state were each divided into east and west sections. The 5-6 technical institutes in each of the sections formed a consortium that dealt with instructional needs of their region. Program specific committees were formed at the consortium level with representatives from every institute in that consortium. Each committee elected a chairperson to represent its respective consortium on the state executive committee. The end result was the Instructional Faculty Consortium Committee (IFCC) which provided all instructors with a channel to voice their programmatic concerns at institutional, regional, and state levels. One of the IFCC's major tasks has been modifying standards and curriculum guides to reflect regional occupational needs. Future efforts will focus on keeping curricula up to date and relevant. Now that the curricula and administrative restructuring efforts are complete, the state can turn its efforts to enhancing the quality of its technical instructors.

The Georgia Instructor Academy

Conceptually, it would be best if technical instructors were trained through traditional teacher education programs. In many cases however, instructors in technical, trade and industrial subjects had no collegiate teacher preparation program available to them. Although real-world experience may be the greatest teacher, even the most competent practitioner is not a teacher

unless that person's knowledge and skills can be passed on to students. Equally important is that practicing instructors keep abreast of technical advancements, as well as their own professional development.

The Georgia Instructor Academy (GIA) is responsible for delivering in-service training to both new and experienced technical institute instructors. The Academy is divided into three specific divisions: Technical Training, Professional Development, and the Instructor Training Institute. Each division addresses specific needs of Georgia's technical institute instructors (Kole, 1989).

Technical Training

The Technical Training division provides instructors with opportunities to advance their occupational expertise. Past collaborative efforts with industry were primarily aimed at enhancing opportunities for students, but if instructors are not kept abreast of change, how can students be expected to be technically adept. Georgia has standardized curriculum in order to keep up with work-place requirements, but instructors must also be kept current. Most of the resistance to technical changes have come from experienced instructors. The instructors often find their technical skills and knowledge out-dated or obsolete.

The technical competence of new instructors is also an important issue. Many times the breadth of occupational

experiences brought to the classroom is not wide enough to encompass all the curriculum requirements. Most new instructors in Georgia's technical institutes are job oriented as opposed to occupationally oriented. Job oriented refers to skills required for the job an instructor had prior to becoming a teacher. These skills are often limited to a specific area of an occupation and are not broad enough for the technical expertise required by standards. Occupationally oriented refers to the large number of technical competencies encompassed by an occupational title. Students need experiences in all competencies identified by program guides, and quality instructors should be able to deliver instruction in those areas.

Training and up-dating opportunities for technical instructors can come from a variety of sources. Industry-sponsored workshops and seminars, designed for industry personnel, often are run at less than capacity enrollment and technical institute instructors could fill empty slots. Additionally, industry can sponsor programs directly for instructors. Other efforts may include joint ventures between the Georgia Instructor Academy and industry with industry partners providing technical expertise and Academy personnel directing instructors to incorporate newly learned competencies into existing curriculum. Lastly, activities such as job shadowing and internships in local industries are programs that could be arranged and organized through the GIA.

Professional Development

A major problem facing Georgia's technical institutes is turn-over. Teachers who do not experience the intrinsic professional rewards of teaching are the ones most likely to leave the profession, they are often our brightest and most promising instructors (National Colloquium on Research in Vocational Education, 1986). The Professional Development Division of the Instructor Academy will provide instructors with opportunities to enhance their professional lives. Through classes, seminars, and workshops, technical instructors will learn about opportunities that provide service to self, home institutes, communities, and professional organizations. Professionalism in teaching depends on providing teachers with opportunities to: a) contribute to the development of knowledge in their profession, b) form collegial relationships beyond their immediate working environment, and c) grow intellectually as well as professionally (National Colloquium on Research in Vocational Education, 1986).

Activities offered through this GIA division will be wide in variety and can occur at the prompting of the instructors themselves. Information about the types of activities, needed or requested, can be gathered through surveys or by conducting interviews at consortium meetings. Final decisions on GIA activities for this division will be made by an advisory committee selected from technical institute instructors. While

developed and organized through the Georgia Instructor Academy, programs will not be delivered at one central location. The ideal place for delivery is in the consortium region, and at times more than one of the six consortia may be brought together for a particular program. Instructors will be provided with opportunities to leave their home institute and exchange ideas with their colleagues. Additionally, this practice will keep travel expenses to a minimum because activities will be conducted within commuting distance of participating institutes.

A variety of sources will be tapped to conduct these activities. They include college faculty, state department personnel, private consultants, or others as circumstances require. Technical institute instructors with a special interest or expertise in a particular subject are often an overlooked resource for their colleagues. Professional development of technical instructors will enhance personal images, increase awareness of their important role, and help them understand technical education's value to society.

The Instructor Training Institute

The quality of instruction provided through Georgia's Technical Institutes is reflective of the capabilities of the instructors. Yet, historically, many states have permitted instructors in postsecondary technical, trade and industrial subjects to enter teaching without degrees in education (Purcel, 1989). The essential qualification for new instructors to teach

occupational courses is their technical expertise. Individuals who have mastered a technology must now develop the necessary knowledge and skills to provide a beneficial learning environment for their students. The idea of recruiting instructors with technical expertise as opposed to pedagogical training leaves institutes with instructors who have job-centered work attitudes reflective of industry demands (Duenk, 1990). Job-centered individuals are task oriented and are primarily interested in completing the job at hand. They must be taught to become people centered as required by education (Duenk, 1990). The people-centered approach emphasizes training and developing each individual in a classroom, regardless of his/her individual strengths or weakness. The Instructor Training Institute (ITI) provides new instructors with the basic pedagogical skills need for initial survival. It is a three-phase program, with each succeeding phase building on the teacher competencies presented in the previous ones. It should be noted that the Instructor Training Institute is currently the major thrust of the Georgia Instructor Academy and served as the building block from which the other divisions developed.

The ITI began in January of 1987 as one of the first initiatives sponsored by the new Board of Technical and Adult Education (Bobell, 1989). The goal was to assist in the development and improvement of the instructional competencies of new postsecondary technical institute instructors. Originally,

the program was offered at two sites within the state, Americus in the south and Clarksville in the north. In August of 1990, the two programs were brought together to ensure an effective, efficient, and cohesive program.

The Instructor Training Institute format is presented in three phases, each phase four days in length. A total of 22 programs are offered each year; 11 phase I's, 7 phase II's, and 3 phase III's. There is a maximum enrollment of 15 new instructors in any given phase. This ensures that each participant will receive the individual attention she/he needs.

Phase I presents those basic instructional competencies considered essential for initial performance and effectiveness. Topics include effective presentation techniques, writing performance objectives, writing criterion-referenced test items, as well as other pertinent areas in need of development.

Phase II teaches intermediate instructional competencies designed to build upon and expand those skills learned in phase I. Topics include effective demonstration techniques, how to lead a student discussion, teacher expectations, assessing student performance, and others. Phase III presents advanced instructional competencies, as well as topics deemed important by the Department of Technical and Adult Education. This workshop could include topics such as multicultural education, special needs students, and androgogy: the adult as a learner.

Instructors are encouraged to complete the entire program within three years. However, most do so in about 18 months. It is suggested that participants allow six months between phases. This time allows them the opportunity to implement the skills learned, work out any problems encountered, and try variations of techniques. After six months to a year, instructors return to the next phase with new ideas and questions. Between phases, ITI personnel conduct follow-up visits at participants' home institutes. Visitation allows ITI facilitators an opportunity to evaluate the progress of the new instructors. It also provides an opportunity to assist instructors with any special problems they may be encountering within the classroom or school.

The Communication Network

One final component was needed to bring the Georgia Instructor Academy together as a functioning entity. There had to be a way for instructors, administrators, state staff, and coordinators of the various GIA activities to communicate with each other. Georgia has decided to use a networking system called PSInet, the People Sharing Information network. Because of the diversity of activities planned under GIA direction, there can be no single location housing the Academy. GIA required a host computer to serve as a central collection and dispatch vehicle of all Academy activities. The purpose of the PSInet communication network is to provide a mechanism that links all technical institutes and Academy personnel into a bulletin board

service that combines activities, schedules, and electronic mail, as well as storage and retrieval services of conference documents and other important data. Currently, about one-third of Georgia's technical institutes are on-line, with the remaining institutes tentatively scheduled for hook-up before 1992.

Georgia believes that the quality of the Technical Institutes is demonstrated by their graduates who, in turn, are a reflection of the quality of instruction. The responsibility for the students success, as well of the technical education system as a whole, falls directly on the shoulders of the instructors. The Georgia Instructor Academy can provide various opportunities to enhance the quality of Georgia's technical teachers. By addressing three important areas of a teacher development--technical training, professional development, and pedagogy it is felt that the students, and ultimately the State of Georgia, will be the benefactors of this comprehensive program.

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