FOR NEW IDENTITIES

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tional University has developed a system of instruction to train teams of instructional development specialists for the public schools. It is a validated, performance-based system. Trainees from this program are working in Detroit, Phoenix, and Atlanta, and others will be trained for at least 20 different locations this year.

The Far Western Laboratory for Educational Research and Development has developed systems of instruction to train school personnel in several new roles. One such role is that of the educational information consultant. This consultant makes available to his colleagues specific packages of information reflecting the latest applied research in the field. Another role, the educational evaluation specialist, involves the training of a person to be employed in the schools in the capacity of carrying out program and personnel evaluations.

However, few meaningful role changes are currently in widespread use. The titles "master teacher," "directing teacher," "team coordinator," and the like are tossed about everywhere. Yet, more often than not, much title juggling has occurred, but very little task change. Look for a directing teacher, discover a department head; query a master teacher, find a curriculum coordinator; ask a resource center specialist to make multiple resources available to learners, encounter the librarian.

Effective Role Change

Why have such promising innovations had such limited success? Each of the changes has had its testimonials and has been hailed by its supporters as an avenue to solving school problems. The irony of the situation is that while task and identity changes are demanded, the innovations have also held out false illusions about their effectiveness in solving problems. The difficulty has not been with the idea of task change, but rather with its practical application within the existing framework of education.

However, designers and implementers of change continue to place the innovations in the same organizational context of the old roles. Little attention is given to the rela-

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tionships and implications which the new identities and tasks have for other educational roles. The structure of the school and its hierarchy of authority which removes decision making from those charged with carrying out the new tasks remain untouched. Supporting this viewpoint, Coffin indicates that:

. . . few totally new administrative designs have emerged. For the most part, the administrative framework of education still reflects the assumptions and constraints of a bygone era when society was comparatively stable and the expectations for the schools were less complex. The administrative support system has not been realigned in keeping with the requirements of emerging curricular and operational patterns, let alone with the needs of contemporary society (1968, p. 26).

There is a need to move away from the idea of changing peoples' tasks and identities to fit the existing authority structure as a component of that organization, regardless of how poor the present design of the system might be.

There is ample evidence to suggest that changes do not occur unless the rest of the structure is arranged or modified to support the new role change. Placing a person in a new role in an organizational setting that does not accommodate that change may lead to a high degree of frustration, disappointment, and bitterness. Thus the new tasks may run counter to the needs of students and other organizational members as the individual is confronted by the reality of the situation.

Additionally, change is often suggested as an answer without first raising pertinent questions. We are caught by saying that team teaching, differentiated staffing, and so forth are good without ever asking, "good for what?" Whenever we speak of organizational change, we need to know what is being changed or improved. Too often there is simply a nebulous feeling that a change is needed. Usually there is no discussion or understanding about goals, objectives, and concrete behaviors that need attention. Perhaps this is true because few, if any, of us have a very good idea of what constitutes the various tasks and behaviors of an effective administrator, teacher, counselor, supervisor, and student.

Too many role changes are irrelevant to their stated purposes. Crucial to the success of any innovation are the establishment of specific criteria of role behavior and understanding the relationship between that role change and the rest of the organization.

To be effective, change must be directed toward organizational needs, and organizational support is required if the desired change is to be more than superficial and then discarded. Proper analysis of the organization and its needs must precede any changes in the identities and tasks of organizational members.

Few significant role changes, we believe, are actually in widespread use today. Central to any meaningful change must be a major modification of the pyramidal structure of present bureaucratic school organizations. School models are required which take into consideration the interrelationships of people, activities, and tasks to the goals and objectives of the school. Proper organizational analysis is required.

Finally, conceptualizers and implementers of change must recognize that the fate of any new identity and task change ultimately rests in the hands of practicing school administrators and professionals in the field.

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