

STAFF DEVELOPMENT: A TEACHER-CENTERED IN-SERVICE DESIGN

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Competency and independence are the goals of this Teachers Center. Its aim is to offer sustained support to teachers by providing opportunities for each to learn how to do his or her job better.

"EVERY man owes some of his time to the advancement of his profession." Few teachers would argue the theoretical correctness of Theodore Roosevelt's statement; however, the advancement of the teaching profession collectively called in-service education has received plenty of lip service, but has too often been the stepchild of operating budgets. In-service education has frequently meant make-do programs initiated from the top down with little regard for what the individual classroom teacher perceives as his or her needs and competencies.

The Campbell County, Virginia, School System recognized that a good commonsense rebuttal to ineffective in-service was to design a plan based on the belief that teachers are professionally competent people who can and will select priority areas for their own in-service needs. Since curriculum development requires more than the adoption of new materials or changes of technique on the part of the teacher, all teachers responsible for implementing change need to understand

and be able critically to evaluate a project's ideas and materials. Meeting these requirements implies training and retraining (renewal) in the concepts and methods of curriculum development, particularly through involvement in the process itself.

The focal point of the program is a *Teachers Center*. The Campbell County Teachers Center is more than a building where teachers participate in in-service activities; it is a concept based on the following beliefs:

1. Teachers are key agents in effecting fundamental changes.
2. Teachers are unlikely to change simply because administrators or outside experts tell them to.
3. Teachers will take reform most seriously when they are, at least partially, responsible for defining their own educational problems, delineating their own needs, and receiving help on their own terms.

The Campbell County Teachers Center, originally an ESEA Title III project, relies almost entirely on teacher suggestions for planning activities; therefore, teachers have

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the major say in determining what their in-service program is to be.

The planning of the Campbell County Teachers Center and the development of the

program's goals were cooperatively established by the system's teachers and administrators. Local college personnel acted as consultants. The problem solutions developed

I. Requirements

A. 48 points must be accumulated from May 1 to April 30.

1. Basic Time Allotment (BTA)

1 hour = 1 point. Activities will count as BTA unless otherwise specified.

2. Points cannot accumulate from year to year.

B. Required meetings

No credit will be given for required meetings that are a part of the educator's contract. (Example: Faculty meetings, etc.)

II. Opportunities

A. Conferences, committees, workshops

1. Curriculum development (individual or group efforts)	BTA
2. Workshops	BTA*
3. Standing system-wide committees as established by superintendent or board (e.g., Superintendent's Advisory Council)	5 points per semester
4. State and regional conferences	BTA
5. National conferences	10 points
6. State or Southern Association of Colleges and Schools self-study	24 points
7. State or Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Evaluating Committee Member	10 points
8. Informal work sessions at teachers center	BTA
9. New teacher orientation	8 points

B. Professional leadership

1. Elected or appointed offices	
a. President or program chairman national, state, regional office	10 points
b. Other national, state, regional offices	3 points per semester
c. President or program chairman, local office	3 points per semester
d. Other local offices (including faculty representative)	3 points per semester
2. Leadership responsibility (e.g., conducting in-service workshops)	Double BTA for program

C. Writing, research, innovations

1. Published article	10 points
2. Other (e.g., professional reading)	Approved individually

D. Courses taken for college or university credit

8 points per 1 college credit

E. Campbell County lecture series and lectures sponsored by local colleges or professional groups (e.g., IRA, Kiwanis Travelogs, PAECE meetings)

5 points per lecture

F. Travel

(Attach resume to report)

5 points per week

G. Adult education classes sponsored by school divisions

8 points per semester

* Saturday Workshops

Double BTA

Figure 1. Teacher-Centered In-Service Design, Campbell County Public Schools

were an attempt to promote teacher renewal initiated by and disseminated from teachers in a sequential manner by:

1. Providing provocative experiences to motivate teachers to become actively involved in self-evaluation

2. Providing aid, resources, and materials to assist individual teachers in their programs of improvement resulting from self-study

3. Providing channels for the identification of outstanding teaching strengths and talents and offering opportunities to all staff for the utilization of identified competencies.

These broad goals encourage teachers to develop a sense of professional competency and independence. The purpose of the Center is to offer sustained support to the 675 teachers (K-12) in the system by providing many opportunities for each to learn how to do his or her job better.

Services Offered in the Program

The Center is staffed by: a director, a secretary, a media teacher, and a resource teacher. The staff works as a team toward implementing the objectives of the program and each wears many hats as duties overlap. A significant feature of the Teachers Center is the total operation by and for teachers. The professional staff members came to their current positions directly from teaching assignments in the system. Instructional supervision is *not* the responsibility of the Teachers Center staff; however, when an individual teacher requests assistance the Center's staff organizes in-service training in specific teaching skills or recommends appropriate resources.

The Teachers Center Advisory Committee takes the responsibility for assessing the in-service needs. This committee of 42 teachers, representing the system's 19 schools and six lay persons, one from each magisterial district, provides the following valuable services to the program:

1. Communicates teachers' needs, interests, and problems to the Center

2. Assesses the value of in-service programs and suggests additional ones

3. Keeps the Center aware of teacher strengths and talents to be utilized for leadership

4. Participates in selecting and planning realistic and vital in-service experiences especially single-unit courses for graduate credit and/or certificate renewal

5. Disseminates information about the Center services, programs, and workshops to individual schools to create an understanding of the nature and purpose of the Center

6. Assists in selecting and purchasing professional materials (magazines, books, filmstrips, records, tapes).

Small groups of committee members meet with the Center's staff throughout the year in planning sessions.

The building is a remodeled former four-room school. The facilities include a lobby/office, large work area, professional library, conference room, and lounge.

Topics pursued in a wide selection of workshops, seminars, and courses have included Montessori practices and materials, film-making, environmental studies, drama, arts and crafts, meteorology, elective curriculum revision, early childhood activities, athletic training, skin and hair care, career education, recreational mathematics, individualized instruction, rhythms and movement, archaeology, learning centers, inquiry, European study-tour, and others.

Participation Is Increasing

While many of the activities have taken place within the Center, the program has used the entire county as its base—whenever and wherever individual teachers have requested specific programs. The three senior colleges in the area, Lynchburg College, Randolph-Macon Woman's College, and Sweet Briar College, along with Central Virginia Community College, have provided classroom space and/or expertise. The University of Virginia and Virginia Polytechnic Institute have also been involved. Consultants and lecturers have been selected from all



parts of the United States. Administrators, college personnel, college students, para-professionals, and members of the community, including students and parents, are invited to participate in program activities.

During the first operational year, 85 percent of the system's staff engaged in some activity sponsored by the Teachers Center. Participation increased during the second and third years. On evenings and Saturdays the Center serves as an informal gathering place where teachers can view displays by publishers and suppliers, interact with colleagues to gain and share ideas, or enjoy a good, free cup of coffee.

The Campbell County School Board views staff development as an imperative and adopted as policy the "Teacher-Centered In-Service Design" developed and recommended by the teachers. This design requires that each professional in the system, including administrators, accumulate 48 in-service points each year. These points are based on six days of eight hours each. Contractually each professional staff member receives six-days pay for six nonscheduled days of participation in in-service education. How and when a staff member fulfills the contractual obligation is his or her own choice. In May and December, the Teachers Center publishes

a calendar of locally designed in-service activities for a six-month period. As additional programs are planned, they are announced in the division's monthly newsletter, the CAMPBELLGRAM, edited by the Teachers Center staff.

Each individual is responsible for recording his or her professional-growth activities and designating points accumulated in a Professional-Growth Activities Record Book. Any activity which contributes to the professional growth of the individual may be listed. More than 50 percent of the staff earned in excess of the required points during last year.

The system's employees believe this in-service design appreciates individual differences. Teachers who feel they can find more worthwhile enterprises than the Center-sponsored sessions are encouraged to follow their inclinations. Local and state scholarship funds are available for employees who wish to seek advanced degrees or career changes.

On-Going Evaluation

Evaluation of the program is on-going and conducted in several ways. Each activity is evaluated in writing by the individual participants, employing a staff-developed appraisal checklist. The professional-development record for each employee yields the percentage of participation and independent evaluators have been engaged to assess the strengths, weaknesses, and reception of the program. Two in-depth surveys have indicated that in-service is intrinsically satisfying to the participant. Data reveal that teachers especially appreciate that the program offers more alternatives than just college courses and supervisor-designed workshops.

What elements have contributed to the program's initial success? Adequate local funding to supplement the Title III monies and the cooperation of the colleges have certainly been determining factors, but the primary element has been the extent of teacher involvement. Both the design and the implementation belong to the teachers. They have realized that much can be learned from

colleagues and that in-service is an integral part of a school system's improvement plans which must take place prior to curriculum changes.

This type of staff-development approach aims to ensure that participation in teacher-requested and designed in-service activities will result in lasting learning and ultimately produce improved, innovative educational programs for the students in the Campbell County schools.

Program Details

1. Publication includes articles written by County personnel which are printed in the CAMPBELLGRAM.

2. A teacher may take 8 points in lieu of a personal leave day.

3. Classes taken during a second



semester or third quarter count toward the current contractual year.

4. Acquiring the minimum points (48) does not indicate that an employee is less professional than a colleague who has attained 150 points; it only indicates that a staff member has fulfilled his/her contractual obligation.

5. For economic reasons it is impossible for an employee to be paid for points accumulated beyond the 48.

6. Travel is defined as trips outside the immediate area of at least one week's duration. Driving to and from workshops does not constitute travel.

7. Reading should receive fair point count. Suggested point value: 2 points for a professional journal, 8 points for a full length book; however this remains individually approved by the employee's immediate supervisor.

8. Saturday workshops carry double BTA points because of the extra effort involved in attending an activity on the weekend. Saturday activities scheduled by the Teachers Center have generally been of a superior quality and of no more than 3 or 4 hours duration.

9. Much discussion has centered on point allocation for the lecture series. It was generally agreed that since special effort was being made to bring outstanding speakers to the division on topics of widespread interest the point value should remain as it is, 5 points per lecture.

10. Curriculum development is defined as:

a. Infusion of new subject matter/content into the instructional program, for example, developing an entirely new course, developing units of study, preparation of materials for individualizing instruction.

b. Curriculum revision projects, for example, preparation of materials for individualizing instruction, such as reorganization of content (semester courses to quarter courses), updating of units to include topical material, or revision of units to include recently acquired knowledge.

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