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# COLLEGE INSTRUCTORS' PERCEPTIONS OF INSTRUCTIONAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

by

Thomas Arthur Gagné



A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

in

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled COLLEGE INSTRUCTORS' PERCEPTIONS OF INSTRUCTIONAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES by Thomas Arthur Gagné in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Administration of Postsecondary Education.

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## ABSTRACT

This study explored college instructors' perceptions of instructional skills development activities. A survey of relevant literature led to development of a conceptual framework which guided the study.

A qualitative study was performed at a medium-size Western Canadian college. Data were collected by interviews with 12 instructors chosen by purposive sampling, college documents, and a reflective journal. Data analysis involved the creation of analytic files which were coded, combined, and re-sorted in order to develop a thick description.

The study revealed that faculty experienced a need to work and talk with other instructors, believed they should listen to students to determine their instructional development needs, were required to keep up with technological changes, and were hindered by time constraints which impinged on their keeping up-to-date.

Respondents found value in learning new methods of teaching, believed that skills learned in one area would carry over to other areas, and wanted other instructors rather than outside experts to help them with instructional problems. The major reasons for non-participation in instructional skill development activities were reported as follows: (a) lack of time and (b) this type of activity was not valuable for them personally.

Interviewees concurred on the three attributes of a good instructor: expertise in the field, knowledge of the application of appropriate teaching styles for each individual's learning style, and being able to establish good relationships with students. They also believed that the diversity of learners in community colleges required instructors to have a large repertoire of teaching skills.

Collaborative learning, inventories (personality or learning style), and computer applications were the main instructional development activities that transferred directly to teaching practice.

The study found that the institutional climate, collegial relationships, and instructors' personal philosophy of education all had a much greater effect on college instructors' perceptions of instructional skills developmental activities than was reported in the literature. An interpretive framework of instructors' receptivity to change guided a revised conceptual framework.

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

When I started this journey, I believed I would do it on my own. How wrong I was! Without the support and friendship of instructors, fellow students, colleagues, friends and family, I would never have reached my destination.

I would first like to acknowledge the time, thoughts and suggestions of the interviewees at the study college. Their openness, coupled with their genuine concern for the students in their charge showed me I was fortunate in my selection of the college to do the study.

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their share of work, as well as to offer support and comfort to me when I needed it most.

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*tag*

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

I had always believed I was a good teacher. Although I worked students hard, I usually had a good rapport with them and generally they did quite well. Some students complained that I went through the course material too fast, or I went into more depth than was necessary, but I "knew" how to teach. If people did not believe it, all they had to do was ask me! I knew I was not like some of the university professors I had.

Attending university in the mid-1960s was an enlightening experience. "Flower power", freedom of expression, student unrest, the Vietnam War, civil rights, and the ease of obtaining jobs all contributed in their own way to the belief I had in my ability to become a good teacher, to make a difference. Many of my university classes had over 100 students, and were taught by professors who did not even know my name. I would be different--I would get to know students, and would have a positive effect on their lives, by effective teaching and by being a role model of a good citizen. Coaching teams, operating school clubs, community service, and teaching made me feel I was making a difference. I had fun, enjoyed teaching immensely, and

looked forward to each day, but the day came when these aspects were not enough.

Possibly it was the job (it seemed so easy), or my age (approaching 40), or just plain restlessness that "forced" me to take a leave of absence from the high school where I was teaching. I then obtained a job at the local community college which required all new instructors to take an instructional skills course. Having taught for 17 years, I was not enamored with the prospect of "wasting" four days learning how to teach, when I had new courses to prepare. I knew it would not be a worthwhile experience, and it more than lived up to my expectations. It was a total waste of time.

The following year I obtained a job at a different college which also required new instructors to take an instructional skills course. Again I was not happy about wasting my time, when I could be preparing new courses.

What a pleasant surprise I had! It was an enlightening experience. The Instructional Skills Workshop (Center for Curriculum and Professional Development, 1986) was well designed and managed. It "forced" me to get involved and not only relearn the basics of teaching and practice mini-lessons, but also to examine the what, how, and why things were taught in a certain way.

After teaching for 18 years, it was a revelation to me that there was a lot more to learn about teaching. The personal growth over such a short period of time encouraged

me to become actively involved in the program, first as a workshop facilitator and later as a trainer of facilitators. At every workshop I learned something new. After 10 years of active involvement, I am still excited about the program, and grateful to those who initiated me in it my first year at that college.

Our College Mission stresses excellence in teaching, and backs it up with its support of an instructional skills program. The students in the college are the beneficiaries of this program, because it helps to nurture more committed and effective instructors. The program has been valuable to me and my students, and I wondered if this kind of program was of value to other instructors as well.

**Coming to the Purpose**

Institutions of higher education generally have a three-fold mission: teaching, research, and community service. They tend to do all three to some extent. Community service is offered by nearly all institutions in many and varied ways, whereas the majority of the institutions usually focus on one of the other two. Universities have traditionally emphasized research, whereas most colleges emphasized teaching excellence. While research is important, it should not detract from the dissemination of knowledge in ways that are applicable to the learners in the institutions, that is, there should be effective teaching.

Much research has been conducted about the nature of high-quality college teaching. Although these studies show what must be done to ensure quality instruction, it is not always achieved. Part of the problem is shown in an American study by Galbraith and Shedd (1987) who found that among faculty studied, 44% had no training in adult education, 53% had no formal teaching training of any kind, 30% were trained to teach only in higher education, and 17% were trained to teach in public schools. They also found that instructors used styles of teaching that matched their own preferred styles of learning regardless of the students they had. How do we reach students? What teaching styles do we use? What should our focus be? What learning styles do we have? What methods should be used? We must have answers to these questions in order to achieve the college mission of effective teaching.

While community college instructors have a tendency to be concerned with the teaching and learning process, they could use various techniques to improve their skills: on-the-job training (peer groups, modeling, mentoring, etc.), on-site inservice training (through a college development office), and graduate degree programs (adult education, curriculum and instruction, or instructional design).

One of the areas that is rapidly expanding at community colleges is on-site inservice training. Inservice training programs come in many and varied forms. Many institutions have developed their own programs. Others use standardized

programs such as the *Instructional Skills Workshops* (Center for Curriculum and Professional Development, 1986) discussed further in Chapter 2. Kort (1992) found that by 1990 over 4,000 instructors in Canada and the United States had completed the *Instructional Skills Workshops*. This in an indication of the involvement of faculty in these types of programs.

College faculty members have the option to either become actively involved in many of the instructional skill development programs, or seek instructional skill development on their own. It is not known if their involvement is because these programs respect their autonomy and status, because it affects their promotion and tenure, or because faculty members feel these programs have an intrinsic value. Do they feel that these activities are transferable to the classroom and that they can improve the quality of their teaching?

**Statement of Purpose**

The purpose of this study was to explore college instructors' perceptions of instructional skill development activities.

**Specific Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the study.

1. a. What do faculty believe are their instructional skill development needs?

b. What value do faculty place on instructional skill development?

2. a. What reasons do faculty members offer to account for their participation and/or non-participation in instructional skill developmental activities?

   b. What value do faculty members place on instructional skill developmental activities they have been involved in during the previous two years?

3. a. Why do faculty strive to learn more about teaching?

   b. What specific activities are faculty involved in that transfer directly to teaching practice?

4. a. Do faculty feel the college encourages instructional skill development?

   b. What does the college provide in the way of instructional skill developmental activities?

**Significance**

This study was undertaken because of the belief that it would add to our current knowledge regarding instructional skills development (ISD) and the value that instructors place on these activities. If instructors value on-site ISD activities, they will have a greater tendency to participate in them. This is important from a practical standpoint, as many colleges and universities now accept that teaching improvement should be a priority for their faculty development programs (Kurfiss and Boice, 1990). If teaching improvement is a priority at colleges, then faculty are more likely to evaluate themselves and their instructional skills, as well as the methods offered to improve these skills. If ISD programs are valued by instructors, institutions will be more prone to sponsor them, instructors will have a greater

likelihood to attend, and education at community colleges should be a richer experience for students.

**Delimitations**

1. This study included one college in Alberta and a specific group of instructors in this college.

2. This study addressed the value of instructional skills development activities as perceived by faculty at this college. It did not address administrator or student values.

**Limitations**

1. The values reported for the instructional skills development activities will reflect the personal perceptions of a specific group of instructors, so may not be generalizable.

2. The results drawn from this study apply to the sample group studied, and may have limited applicability to all faculty at the college or to other colleges.

**Definitions**

For the purpose of this study, the definitions of the terms used are listed below.

- faculty development--has three facets: personal development, instructional skills development, and organizational development
- instructional skills development (ISD)--development of skills directly employed in teaching, such as

objective writing, learning styles, and lesson planning

- personal development--development related to quality of life issues such as stress management, social support, and fitness
- college faculty--all the instructors at a college
- teaching effectiveness--the extent to which an instructor's teaching assists student learning
- personal journal (diary)--my personal thoughts while conducting the study
- participants (respondents)--these two words are used interchangeably, referring to the interviewees
- institutional climate--unique "feeling" or "atmosphere" within an institution, which is a mix of the values, assumptions, goals, and behaviors which exist there

## Outline of the Dissertation

Chapter 1 gives a general introduction to the study and includes the statement of purpose as well as the supporting research questions. The main terms used in the study are then defined. The chapter concludes by discussing the delimitations and limitations of the study, the significance of the study, and an overview of the dissertation.

Chapter 2 presents a review of the literature on ISD and its relationship to faculty development.

Chapter 3 details the methodology of the study, including the philosophic stance taken, data collection and data analysis procedures, as well as measures taken to ensure trustworthiness and confidentiality.

Chapter 4 examines the specific ISD needs of instructors and describes the value they place on ISD.

Chapter 5 explains the reasons why instructors either do or do not become involved in ISD activities and describes the personal value these activities have for them.

Chapter 6 includes the reasons why instructors desire to learn more about teaching and outlines specific instructional skills developmental activities that they were involved in that transferred directly to their teaching practice.

Chapter 7 examines the role of the college in ISD activities. It details instructors' perceptions of the encouragement given by the college towards ISD and also outlines the specific ISD activities provided by the college.

Chapter 8 summarizes the study findings and relates these findings to the literature on college instruction.

Chapter 9 contains a summary of the study, proposes a modified conceptual framework, discusses the major themes which emerged, and gives recommendations for practice and further research.

# CHAPTER 2

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this study was to explore the perceptions that college instructors have towards ISD activities. If college instructors value these kind of activities, they will be more likely to attend them. This will tend to increase their teaching effectiveness, and students should be exposed to better teaching. The literature review examines the history and significance of instructional development as part of faculty development, the role of the college and college administrators in faculty development, the dimensions of faculty development of which ISD is a part, and ISD in terms of the needs that it responds to and values that it has for instructors.

### History and Significance

Faculty development has traditionally been a part of the mandate of post-secondary institutions. As early as 1810, professors at Harvard University were granted sabbatical leaves (Blackburn, Pellino, Boberg, & O'Connell, 1980). Guskey (1988), in his explanation of the reason why sabbatical leaves were granted to faculty members, stated that "[they] were granted to faculty members so that they might renew their competence and refine their academic

skills" (p. 122). Faculty development has expanded a great deal since 1810 so that at the present time it encompasses all aspects of a faculty member's professional life. The following section examines the history of faculty development and the significance it has for faculty members.

**History.** Faculty development as a means of helping faculty become more productive "emerged as a significant movement in higher education during the 1960s" (Menges and Mathis, 1988, p. 255). Bergquist and Phillips (1977) explained that this movement was a result of "Vietnam, student unrest, declining enrollments and financial retrenchment" (p. 3). They believed that the rapidly changing conditions forced institutions to respond with faculty development as a means to address the demands of students for better instruction. Katz and Henry (1988) reported that "more than a majority of universities and colleges have initiated faculty development programs, and special attention has been given to the improvement of teaching" (p. 10). Thus, faculty development programs were designed for a specific purpose. Gaff (1975) explained these purposes as vitality and renewal. Rice (1975) discussed the same purposes as Gaff, but called them vitality and change. It is interesting to note that their descriptions of vitality were similar, and Gaff's description of renewal was similar to Rice's description of change. Vitality was described as the enthusiasm exhibited by faculty, and renewal (change) was described as the ability to adapt to new teaching conditions.

Bergquist and Phillips (1975) explained how assisting instructors to adapt to new teaching conditions requires a different procedure than was used in the past. They stated that before the emergence of faculty development programs in the late 1960s and early 1970s, the operative method to deal with the challenges faced by higher education was to "'change the curriculum,' 'get brighter students,' 'recruit new Ph.D.'s from the best graduate schools,' 'reduce the student/faculty ratio,' 'develop an instructional resources center,' 'establish a new governance system,' [or] 'undertake a comprehensive self-study'" (p. 3). After describing these methods they concluded with the statement that the "lack of past success is particularly disappointing when one considers the amount of money available to colleges and universities in the 1960's" (p. 3). They believed what was needed was a comprehensive model for faculty development. Mathis (1982) described the faculty development models for improving teaching proposed by Bergquist and Phillips (1975, 1977, 1981) in their seminal books *A Handbook for Faculty Development*, Vols. 1, 2, and 3, with the following statement:

> The piecemeal efforts of the past to improve college teaching have not been effective. The hope of advancing the quality of higher education through traditional instructional strategies fails to take into account the necessity for changes in faculty members themselves and the impact of change on their institution. (p. 647)

Bergquist and Phillips (1981) hinted at the dimensions of faculty development discussed later in this chapter when they concluded with "faculty development, then, is a matter

of restoration--of restoring an individual to a right relationship with himself, with students, and with the society of which he is a part" (p. 336). This process of restoration is of primary importance to individuals who wish to become more effective in the classroom.

Weimer (1993) agreed with Bergquist and Phillips about the aims of faculty development, but she argued that before faculty can begin the restorative process, they must dispel the two major myths discussed by Gaff (1975) surrounding effectiveness in the classroom. Weimer (1993) suggested that the first myth that should be debunked is "nobody knows what makes teaching effective" (p. 5). She cited the results of studies done by Sherman (1986) and Feldman (1988) that conclusively showed that effective instruction has very specific components, and these components should be tackled in a faculty development program.

The second myth that must be disputed by faculty was explained by Weimer (1993) as "good teachers are born, not made" (p. 7). By knowing the attributes of effective instruction, faculty can practice them, if they are willing to increase their effectiveness. She took the view that each instructor is different, but it is up to the instructors to find out what they do best, determine their strongest attributes, in an effort to find a style that fits them, and build on those strengths. She believed that if current faculty development programs focus on building up the

strengths that instructors already have, the programs would have more significance for them.

**Significance.** Stone (1981) proposed that all instructors must be involved in development activities, but "the ultimate responsibility for participation in professional growth and development activities rests with the individual" (p. 95). Faculty must realize the significance of maintaining and improving their performance. They must, as asserted by Arreola (1983), perceive faculty development "as being a valuable resource or tool in assisting them to solve problems or achieve goals that both they and the administration consider to be important" (p. 84). Of primary importance to faculty members and the college should be the instruction in the classroom.

Bergquist and Phillips (1975) were very succinct on this point. They declared that "effective faculty development programs should contain elements which have immediate application to the primary function of the faculty member, instruction in the classroom" (p.19). Instruction in the classroom involves several different components. Hirshberg (1992) proposed that there are three areas that all faculty development programs should include. They should include activities that are "meant to help instructors improve instructional techniques, those intended to keep them current in their field, and those designed to promote faculty renewal" (p. 96). This type of program would assist faculty in realizing their potential and in the process increase

their effectiveness and efficiency (Hirshberg, 1992). It only remains to have a program in place that affords faculty the opportunity to be involved.

Centra (1978) in his 1976 study of involvement by faculty in faculty development activities, found the greatest participation rate by faculty was in activities which were on-campus. The inference he made was that institutions should sponsor a multitude of these activities. This was extended by O'Banion (1982) when he stated that institutions must make "adequate funding . . . available to carry out the activities" (p. 21). These activities encompass a multitude of dimensions.

## Dimensions of Faculty Development

The dimensions of faculty development cover a wide spectrum of activities to meet a number of objectives. Crow, Milton, Moomaw, and O'Connell (1976) reported that faculty development must involve "the total development of the faculty member--as a person, as a professional, and as a member of the academic community" (p. 3). Mathis (1982) agreed with this position, but stated it more succinctly with the statement "faculty development . . . refers to the recent movement in postsecondary education toward more attention to the total development of faculty members" (p. 646).

The total development of faculty members would entail a variety of activities. O'Banion (1982) described a partial list of these activities that included analysis of teaching

methods, how to impact the institutional climate, credit courses, off-campus activities, and professional development planning "to help staff formalize objectives for professional and sometimes personal development" (p. 20). The types of activities were subject to a number of factors. Bergquist and Phillips (1975) described the four main factors as "course content, the preferred teaching style of the faculty member, the preferred learning styles of the students, and the educational environment" (p. 9). All of these factors must be considered when examining the categories of faculty development activities.

Nelson and Siegel (1980) in their discussion of the classification of faculty development activities provided four categories. They listed the categories as "professional development, instructional development, curricular change [and] organizational change" (p. 7).

In a similar vein, Gaff (1975) categorized faculty development into three approaches and called them "faculty development, instructional development, and organizational development" (p. 8). He further explained that "each approach tends to focus attention on different areas, strive for different goals, draw from different intellectual traditions, and involve different kinds of activities" (p. 8). Bergquist and Phillips (1977) explained how Gaff's (1975) approaches were related to Watson and Johnson's (1972) belief that to effect a change it must occur in the areas of structure, process and attitude. Bergquist and Phillips

(1977) demonstrated that faculty development has related activities in the dimensions of "personal development (attitude), instructional development (process) and organizational development (structure)" (p. 6). They expanded this by describing that instructional development must be supplemented with strategies that take account of the personal beliefs and values of faculty members, as well as the organization of the institution.

**Organizational Development**

The organization of an institution must not only be understood by faculty members, but it must be designed to assist them to become an involved part of that institution. There are many activities designed to accommodate this. These could include team-building, goal setting, job redesigning, conflict management, decision-making, communication and management training (Bergquist & Philips, 1975; Gaff, 1975). All of these activities are designed to make the faculty member a more effective part of the institution. This is a necessity, according to Hammons (1983), as there is an "assumption that each faculty member will be around in the future" (p. 76). It is to the advantage of the institution to make faculty members aware of the institutional mission and secure their commitment to it, and at the same time make them more effective and efficient. He continued by explaining that there are three factors influencing faculty members' performance. They are the

individual faculty member's ability and motivation, and the institutional climate. The institutional climate must enhance personal ability and motivation.

**Personal Development**

There are a great many personal factors that impinge on the ability of faculty members to teach effectively. These should be addressed in a faculty development program. Blackburn et al. (1986) studied "quality of life" indicators for faculty, and the relationship between job related stress and strain, and personal and social support and fitness. They concluded that faculty with higher self-esteem and more social support would have a higher quality of life. This is important from a practical standpoint, as Melendez and de Guzman (1983) pointed out that stress within the academic workplace can lead to burnout.

Stress and burnout were discussed extensively by Seldin (1987). He proposed a number of short and long term coping strategies, as well as stress management techniques. He believed that they should be part of a general faculty development program. Bergquist and Phillips (1977) had earlier proposed that activities such as life planning, personal growth workshops, and supportive counseling would assist faculty to achieve their potential. They also believed that these activities should be part of a broad program involving the three dimensions of faculty development.

**Instructional Development**

Instructional development is a part of faculty development. Gaff (1975) clarified the distinction between the two when he wrote, "Faculty development emphasizes the improvement of teaching for faculty, instructional development emphasizes the improvement of learning for students" (p. 47). His description of faculty development included those activities previously discussed as organizational development and personal development. He argued that there are specific requirements for instructional development. He suggested that "knowing what to do and doing it are two different things. What is needed . . . is training in the development of specific instructional skills" (p. 34).

Eble and McKeachie (1985) studied over 30 American faculty development programs. Their analysis showed that an institution with a climate that encourages faculty development will offer a multitude of activities, particularly in the area of instructional skills. Kort (1992) described one such instructional skills program called the *Instructional Skills Workshop* (ISW). The ISWs began in British Columbia in 1978, and have now spread to many American states as well as a number of foreign countries. It is an intensive 24-hour workshop offering participants the opportunity to present mini-lessons and receive nonthreatening feedback on their delivery and content. It

usually encompasses a specific theme, such as Kolb's (1984) learning cycle. The structure of the ISWs is such that it engenders a great deal of trust among the participants. This trust encourages instructors to try innovative teaching techniques in the protected environment of a small group over a four-day period. Kort (1992) reported that it had "garnered enthusiastic response from new and experienced teachers" (p. 64). She believed that this was "due primarily to the large emphasis on faculty ownership" (p. 66). There are many similar success stories in the field of instructional skill development. They all show that faculty members are interested in developing their skills when the proper opportunity avails itself.

## Instructional Skills Development

An analysis of ISD practices used by institutions illustrates the needs of faculty members and the values that they place on this type of activity.

### Needs

The Group for Human Development in Higher Education (1974) consisted of a group of scholars who were concerned with the quality of teaching in postsecondary institutions. They wrote a monograph which outlined teaching as the major component of faculty development. They believed that reforms were needed to improve the overall quality of instruction in all institutions. Many institutions had faculty development

programs, but were unsure of the effectiveness of these programs. Centra (1978) conducted a study that included 1,044 American postsecondary institutions, in order to determine the involvement and effectiveness of their faculty development programs. His data provided proof that instructional skill development practices were effective in improving instruction, and faculty members are more willing to get involved in these practices if they "are not only run for the faculty, but by the faculty as well" (p. 154).

Centra's (1978) study supported Mathis's (1982) contention that the central focus of faculty development programs must be the improvement of teaching. Many methods for doing this have been proposed. Meyers and Jones (1993) shifted this focus toward the actual skill requirements of teachers. Speaking as faculty members, they wrote, "We will not be good teachers by using approaches that make us uncomfortable, and . . . at the same time, many of us need to expand our teaching skills" (p. 155). They further stated:

> The simple fact is that changing one's style of teaching and modifying settled methods is at best a difficult task. For changing the ways we teach reaches deeper than merely adopting new teaching strategies. It touches our very identity as teachers. But if we are willing to work at it, the rewards are forthcoming. (p. 158)

They then suggested utilization of mentors, or other skilled colleagues in each faculty member's personal attempt at adapting teaching styles to fit new teaching situations.

Adapting new teaching styles by each faculty member requires that they be actively involved in the process, and

see institutional support for this difficult process. Gaff (1975) showed that institutions that have established policies for broadening the participation of faculty members in instructional skill development activities are concerned with examining and improving teaching. He made a strong case for expansion of budget allocations for these activities, to make more activities available, and to signify to faculty members that it is important and they should become involved and stay involved.

Learning how to use the proper instructional skills for a particular teaching situation is a never-ending change process. Ramsden (1992) explained the requirements for skill development, and how long it takes to master this process.

> Like conceptual development in students, these processes of changing understanding will be gradual and hesitant. Lecturers will pass through cycles of experiment, error, and progress towards more complete comprehension. As we noted … the processes are also continuing ones. No one can ever know enough about how to teach. We shall hope that lecturers come to understand how little they know about teaching, and how their authority rests not on dogmatic assurance, but rather on their knowledge of how little they know. (p. 249)

Weimer (1990a) made a similar observation when she declared teaching "deserves continuing consideration because, once fixed, there are no guarantees that it will stay that way and because, like many other activities, it can always be done better" (p. 42). She gave a five-step cyclical procedure to use in this ongoing process. First, develop instructional awareness; second, gather information; third, make choices about change; fourth, incorporate new

strategies; fifth, assess the effectiveness. The fifth step actually incorporates the other four, by encouraging the repetition of the cycle. The key to this process, however, is the first step. Faculty members must develop an awareness of their instructional techniques. They must "encounter themselves as teachers" (p. 36). They must look at what they do, how they do it, and the value it has for them.

**Values**

The teaching methods faculty members use to teach classes will continually evolve. As Weimer (1993) pointed out, "It is not something to get figured out once for all and then teach happily ever after" (p. 26). She believed "you need to think of teaching as an adventure" (p. 26), and always be willing to try new things. Instructors must be enthusiastic about looking at alternative techniques and trying them. You should seek innovations in skills and curriculum. This can be unnerving as Bergquist (1975) explained that innovation in teaching "or course design often requires a certain amount of risk taking on the part of the innovator" (p. 5) because, as explained by Hammons, (1983) "faculty, like the rest of us, don't do things they feel uncomfortable doing" (p. 79). Ramsden (1992) proposed that risk taking is easier to rationalize if you realize the value it has for students. He stated, "Teaching should only be considered in relation to learning" (p. 265), and it is important to "realize now that this is the only basis on

which you should try to understand the detail of teaching methods and curriculum design" (p. 265).

The benefits that students obtain from new instructional strategies were described in a study by Jabker and Halinski (1978). The study was designed to determine the formal and informal rewards that faculty members obtained from participating in an instructional development program. In the results of the study was the statement "informal rewards of personal satisfaction, improved teaching, and greater student benefits were cited without qualification as positive outcomes" (p. 321). Although students benefit from instructors that have participated in instructional skill development activities, some instructors are still somewhat reticent about becoming involved. Gaff (1975) offered an insight into the involvement by faculty members in instructional skill development. "When offered opportunities to improve their performance, substantial numbers of faculty will accept the offer. Although all persons, including faculty, resist change, they are also motivated toward growth and improvement" (p.17). It is important to understand exactly what motivates the involvement of faculty members. Bergquist (1977) contended that "intrinsic interest rather than extrinsic demand is what leads individuals to seek improvement" (p. 5).

This intrinsic interest was recognized by Jabker and Halanski (1978), as they believed "instructional improvement is a professional obligation" (p. 326). This was extended by

Weimer (1990a) when she concluded "participation in activities aimed at improving instructional competence should be the exclusive responsibility of the faculty member" (p. 203). Erickson (1984) made a similar observation in this statement:

> The quality of my teaching is determined by the quality of myself and of my teaching efforts, by my mastery of my subject, by continued study and research, by everlasting diligence in searching for more effective ways of arranging and presenting knowledge and ideas, and by sensitivity to my effectiveness as a teacher. (p. 141)

The suggestion is that faculty members must look at their own values. Raths, Harmin, and Simon (1966) provided criteria for valuing teaching and ISD. The criteria demonstrate that valuing must be a continuous process wherein, after consideration of various alternatives, the value is freely chosen, is prized and cherished, publicly affirmed and repeated. Faculty members must determine the value that ISD has for them.

**Institutional Role**

The institutions have a clear role to play in ISD. There must be a culture within the institution which will nurture all faculty towards faculty development. Gaff (1975) stated that:

> The responsibility for establishing, testing, and maintaining a comprehensive professional development program, including the establishment of policies, the allocation of fiscal resources, the securing of professional expertise, and the provision of opportunities for on-campus and off-campus experiences, rests with the institution. (p. 104)

The institution must take on this responsibility to create an internal culture which recognizes the need and value of ISD activities, as this will "affect the daily lives of faculty members" (Tierney & Rhoads, 1994, p. 15).

**Conceptual Framework**

The perceptions of college instructors towards the three facets of faculty development and in particular their ISD activities is not only affected by their ISD needs and the values they place on ISD, but also by all the relationships they have with those around them. These relationships are shown in Figure 1.

Instructors have expectations towards instructional development that they place upon themselves. While personal expectations are of the utmost importance, they are often affected by the expectations of the department they work in. Some department initiatives can force the implementation of a new teaching style on instructors. This would necessitate instructional development on the part of each instructor. Often the instructional style is affected by peers. When a respected colleague tries a new style and is successful with it, there is an inducement to become involved. The institutional attitude towards instructional development will also affect an instructor's willingness to become involved. The more positive the college environment, the more positive will be the instructors' perceptions towards instructional skills development.

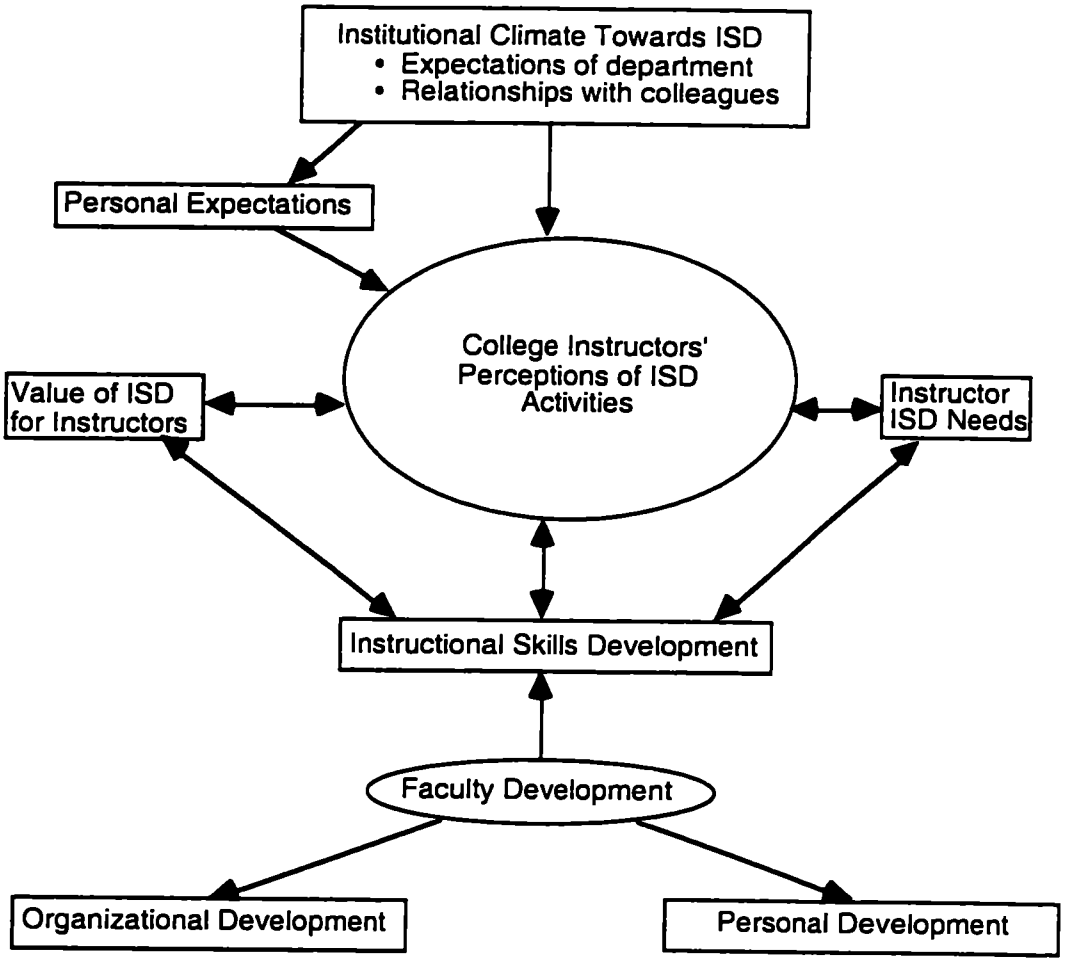


**Figure 1**

**Relationships Affecting College Instructors' Perceptions of ISD**

The relationships that instructors have with other instructors, the departmental expectations, their own expectations, and the institutional climate all play a part in shaping their attitudes and practices regarding ISD.

**Summary**

While faculty development has existed at postsecondary institutions since the early 1800s, it has become more specific in its aims in the last 30 years. The primary reason for this has been student demands for better instruction. Faculty development programs have taken on a holistic approach in an attempt to foster better teaching. They focus on personal development, instructional development, and organizational development in their attempts to nurture the total development of the faculty member.

ISD is a subset of faculty development. The emphasis is on the strategies designed to enhance the learning for students. In a study by Centra (1978), it was shown that ISD training was effective in improving instruction, and that many faculty members have become involved, not only in institution-sponsored programs, but also in their own personal pursuit of teaching excellence. The involvement of faculty members in faculty development is encouraged if the institutional culture supports these activities. What remains to be done is to determine the value that faculty members place on ISD activities.

# CHAPTER 3

# RESEARCH DESIGN

## Introduction

This study was conducted within the naturalistic paradigm. The approach was, therefore, qualitative and interpretive in nature. This chapter presents the philosophic stance which backs the study method, the actual methodology utilized, the data collection techniques and data analysis procedures, and concludes with the measures used to ensure trustworthiness of the study's findings.

## Philosophical Stance

As the purpose of the study was to explore the perceptions that faculty members have about instructional skill developmental activities, it was necessary to find out how respondents perceived the experiences they have had. How do they view them? What value do they place on them? What knowledge did they gain from them? Did these experiences change their teaching behavior? These are important questions which assisted me in understanding the realities of their experiences. I tried to see the events as they saw them and this necessitated a qualitative study (Owens, 1982). As Owens explained, I must get "a rich sense of understanding events and of having insight as to their meaning or, more

likely, meanings" (p. 17). This allowed me, as Merrian (1988) put it, to find out "how people make sense of their lives, what they experience, [and] how they interpret these experiences" (p. 19). In order for me to understand these experiences, I was prepared to do as Connelly and Clandinin (1990) suggested: you must "follow your nose" (p. 9). I was prepared to allow the respondents' experiences to direct my inquiry, while at the same time subtly help them find a direction for their explanation of their experiences.

Lincoln (1989) was clear on this process. She described the qualitative inquiry process as being one of asking questions, which previously "could not be asked because they could not be framed sensibly using the conventional inquiry model" (p. 114). This is of the utmost importance for me as the researcher. In order to to explore the relevance of each situation, I had to be able to "enter into the participant's world; to gain a strong picture of it, while remaining aware of what aspects of it are particular and special" (Measor, 1985, p. 77). Glaser and Strauss (1966) believed this approach allowed "'important concepts, basic categories and significant hypotheses' to emerge and avoided the danger that the data may be forced to fit predetermined categories" (p. 57). A positivist orientation would not allow the latitude required to take me either where the story goes or to "feel" the richness of the respondents' experiences.

Guba and Lincoln (1982) were succinct on this point when they stated that "qualitative methods are richer and can deal

with phenomena not easily translatable into numbers" (p. 244). To understand the richness of the respondents' experiences and the relevance these have within the context of their lives, I personally gathered the data. Within this philosophic stance, I agreed with Guba and Lincoln (1982) "that qualitative methods are the methods normally preferred by humans using themselves as primary data collection instruments . . . . And (if the reader will forgive what is not intended as a pun) natural in this case" (p. 244). That is, this was a naturalistic inquiry. This allowed me, as McCall and Simmons (1969) posited, to "maximize discovery and description" (p. 1).

## Method

Merriam (1988) defined a research design as "a plan for assembling, organizing, and integrating information (data), and it results in a specific end product (research findings)" (p. 6). She further explained that the type of research design to choose was dependent on three questions. The questions are "1. The nature of the research question . . . . 2. The amount of control . . . . 3. The desired end product" (p. 9). The questions I asked are "how" and "why" type questions; I had little control of variables; and the desired end product was a "thick description". As this is the philosophic stance I took, I chose a research design and procedures which would fit within it.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) explained Holsti's (1969) procedures for an interpretive study. They stated that, first, there should be a strict set of rules and regulations followed, but "they need not be formulated until the end of the inquiry" (p. 337). Second, the data that are included can be determined at the end as well, as long as the same rules are applied throughout. Third, as there is no theoretical model being followed, there is no necessity to generalize the findings. Guba and Lincoln (1982) had earlier declared that "without a priori theory or hypotheses, [you] literally are unable to specify a design (except in the broadest sense) in advance" (p. 245).

Part of the problem with research design in the naturalistic paradigm was described by Lincoln (1989), when she elaborated on the "emergent paradigm" (p. 69). She explained Schwartz and Olgilvy's (1979) shift from simple to complex realities wherein it is not possible to isolate one variable, as "diversity and interactivity are inherent in most phenomena and systems" (p.69). That is, I did not look for one particular thing, one particular way. Because I was looking at individual experiences of reality, it followed that I should work within the "[naturalistic] paradigm [which] is better suited (exhibits more fittingness) to human phenomena" (Lincoln, 1989, p. 112).

Owens (1982) described a naturalistic inquiry as the study of human behavior so that people can "be understood through understanding their thoughts, feelings, values,

perceptions, and their actions" (p. 5). I wanted to see the world as the respondents saw it. This necessitated an emergent design plan (Owens, 1982). While I attempted to be as specific as possible, the design was allowed to "unfold" (Guba and Lincoln, 1982; Owens, 1982) as it progressed. Nonetheless, I informed myself about the topic, identified entry questions and listened to the participants' stories throughout.

## Data Collection

The collection of data involved determination of the study site, negotiating entry, selection of participants, data collection techniques and the type of documents that were to be collected, and deciding how the interviews were to be conducted.

### Determination of the Study Site

The first step in data collection is the determination of the study site. The two criteria used to determine the study site were types of college programs offered and college size. I considered that a comprehensive community college, offering a large selection of certificate, diploma and university transfer programs would make possible a more diversified data sample. The determinant for college size was the number of instructors. I did not want the number of instructors to be so small such that an instructor could know every other instructor personally. On the other hand I did

not want it to be so large and impersonal that instructors from one area would never meet and talk with instructors from another area.

The college chosen is located in a large urban center in Western Canada. This city is a bustling center of industry and commerce and has a great deal of ethnic and economic diversity. The college offers up to two years of university transfer study in five baccalaureate programs, the first year of study in five pre-professional programs, and more than 40 certificate and diploma programs. It has about 600 faculty and 32,000 students in credit or credit-related courses, workshops, and seminars.

**Negotiating Entry**

Once the study site was determined, it was necessary to negotiate entry. I contacted the Academic Vice-President at the institution where I wanted to conduct my study. I was then directed to approach the Institutional Research Officer. He was contacted, initially by phone and later by a personal meeting. This was followed by a formal written request in which the study parameters were outlined (Appendix A). Approval was granted to do the study and to make contact with the respondents.

I first extended an invitation to each of the respondents to become involved. A letter was sent (Appendix B) explaining the study and how the participants were chosen. This was followed by a phone call and then a personal

meeting. I wanted to meet them in person so that I could begin to build trust. The hope was that a mutual trust would develop so that there could be a genuine dialogue focusing on their experiences, which would not be affected by the intrusion of a tape recorder.

**Participant Selection**

The participants were selected using a process described by Bogdan and Biklen (1982) as "purposive sampling." The faculty development officer and the academic chairpersons at the selected college were asked to select participants who had been involved in ISD activities, who were knowledgeable about certain aspects of ISD, or were recognized by their peers as instructional improvement seekers. If there appeared to be a group not represented, I asked the participants already involved to suggest others, in a process described by Glesne and Peshkin (1992) as "snowball sampling" (p. 27). All of the instructors who were asked to participate in the study agreed to become involved.

Three participants were selected from each of the four main college divisions, so as to ensure representation from many different disciplines. There was an attempt within the selected group of 12 to equalize the number of males and females. The interview cohort is shown in Table 1.

**Table 1**

**Code Name, Gender, and Experience of Interview Cohort**

| Code Name | Male / Female | Years teaching | Years at Present College |
|---|---|---|---|
| J-1 | F | 14 | 13 |
| J-2 | M | 23 | 23 |
| J-3 | F | 12 | 12 |
| K-1 | F | 8 | 6 |
| K-2 | M | 14 | 3 |
| K-3 | M | 7 | 7 |
| L-1 | F | 16 | 5 |
| L-2 | M | 22 | 22 |
| L-3 | M | 20 | 20 |
| M-1 | F | 18 | 18 |
| M-2 | M | 14 | 13 |
| M-3 | M | 11 | 11 |

I also tried to strike a balance between those with more than 15 years of teaching, and those with less than 15 years teaching experience. The results are shown in Table 2.

**Table 2**

**Years of Teaching Experience by Gender**

| Male/ Female | Number | Years of teaching experience (Range) | Years of teaching experience (mean) | Years of teaching experience (median) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| F | 5 | 8 - 18 | 13.6 | 14 |
| M | 7 | 7 - 23 | 15.6 | 14 |
| Total | 12 | 7 - 23 | 14.8 | 14 |

I believe that the sampling methods which were utilized gave me a sufficiently diverse group of instructors as recommended by Glesne and Peshkin (1992).

**Data-collection Techniques**

The three data-collection techniques used were a personal journal, documents, and interviews.

**Personal Journal.** A personal journal was maintained to assist me with data analysis by serving as a means to gather my own personal perceptions of the inquiry as it proceeded. Guba and Lincoln (1981), Owens (1982) and Winter (1989) have all described the necessary elements to be included in a personal journal kept during an inquiry. I incorporated several of these suggested elements in my journal.

Initially the journal was quite objective, listing the contacts I made, the participants selected, and other "mechanical" events, such as accounts of my interviews. The journal then became more subjective, as I recorded my impressions of these same events. As soon as possible after an interview, I tape recorded my perceptions and feelings, transcribed them, and included them in the journal.

In the journal I also noted possible themes and coding structures for use in data analysis as the study progressed. I used a small portable recorder so that immediate thoughts and perceptions could be recorded, as well as those things which were "holes" to be filled, or those things that were unexpected or surprised me. The recordings from this tape were also transcribed and entered into the journal weekly. Guba and Lincoln (1982) explained that the aim of a journal

is not only to assist with analysis but also to provide an audit trail.

**Documents.** The respondents were asked for notes that they made during ISD activities, lesson plans, or any other written documentation that they felt was pertinent. This assisted with not only the analysis of data, but also reminded me of relevant events in the experiences of the participants (Owens, 1982; Winter, 1989). It also supplied background for some interview questions.

A document study was undertaken to gather rich background information on the ISD activities occurring within the institution studied, and to gain an overview of the institutional climate, without directly intruding on individuals (Lawler, Nadler and Cammann, 1980). Reviews were conducted of the professional development newsletter and the minutes of the college professional development committee for the previous three years. The institutional strategic plan was analyzed in those areas dealing with instruction, teaching and learning. A number of direct observations were also made. For several months, I was allowed to attend the professional development committee meetings. In addition, I attended professional development days and workshops presented by the professional development committee or other instructors. Personal thoughts, insights, comments and findings were recorded in the journal as soon as possible after each event.

**Interviews.** Dexter (1970) asserted that interviews are one of the major techniques employed by social scientists, and they were the primary data-gathering technique. There was one interview with each respondent, and they varied from one hour and 15 minutes to one hour and 45 minutes. They were recorded and transcribed. Immediately following the interviews, potential categories were identified and entered into the journal.

The interviews were not structured; rather they took the form of an open-ended discussion between two concerned participants. I attempted to stay away from "danger zones." These surfaced, or became evident to me during the initial invitation, or in the early discussions utilizing "safe" questions. The college had instituted larger class sizes and increased workloads in some programs and one program had gone to complete Problem Based Learning. These issues were a "sore spot" for some instructors and I attempted to steer away from these topics. The first question was quite broad in an attempt to gather general information about instructional skill development and to set the respondents at ease. The initial question dealt with faculty development in general and allowed the interviewees to talk about the areas they were comfortable discussing. In most cases they had thought about the topic ahead of time and had specific things they wanted to mention. Three of the interviewees had made brief notes of items they wanted to speak about. The

response to the opening question was used to "direct" the discussion to those areas I wanted them to talk about.

The interview guide (Appendix C) had questions designed to elicit responses to the specific research questions. Interviewees were asked to discuss their instructional development needs, the general and specific value they placed on activities they were involved in, why they did or did not participate, and what the college provided for them. The funnel technique explained by Owens (1982) was also used. After general area questions, there were questions for checking information (verification), some probing questions, and then those meant to confirm my initial understanding. I also used a checklist of the specific questions I wanted to get responses to, to ensure that I did not miss any key points (Appendix C).

My training as a facilitator trainer, together with my training and experience in the operation of a volunteer crisis line, were invaluable in this study. It is of the utmost importance to gain the respondents' impressions and not direct their ideas to where you personally think they should go. In all cases, the respondents were extremely open with their comments. As I had talked to them each at least twice on the phone, and at least once in person, there was a rapport built on the mutual grounds of interest in learners and learning.

## Data Analysis

Data analysis was begun at the same time as data collection. Glaser (1978) took the view that the researcher should collect and analyze the data himself. This I found to be very worthwhile. I had made a conscious decision to transcribe the interviews myself. Transcribing was begun as soon as possible after the interview. I had to listen to the tapes over and over while transcribing, as my typing prowess leaves something to be desired. Hearing the same thing several times over reminded me of events, nuances in language, laughter and reflective pauses which added to the understanding of what was being said. Each of these in their own way added to my understanding of their perceptions regarding their experiences. Specific understandings and events were entered into the journal.

The procedures used for coding the data were a combination of the strategies suggested by Connelly and Clandinin (1990), Measor (1985), Weber (1986), and Winter (1989). The transcriptions of interviews were analyzed to find overall instructional development themes, potential categories of responses, or patterns of thought for the meanings that participants gave to events they had experienced. I did as Owens (1982) suggested. At the beginning of the inquiry, about 80% of the time was spent on data collection and 20% on data analysis. As the study progressed, more time was spent on analysis and less time on collection. This process allowed for checking and verifying

data as the study proceeded through the conceptual funnel previously described (Owens, 1982).

The procedures utilized for data analysis followed closely the processes outlined by Winter (1989) and Glesne and Peshkin (1992). As the study progressed the "fat data" were sorted into generic categories, called analytic files by Glesne and Peshkin (1992). The four files that I used were labelled Instructional Skill Development, Participation, Teaching, and College Climate. The journal and my interpretations aided in this process. Towards the end of the inquiry, these files were coded. Glesne and Peshkin (1992) defined coding as "a progressive process of sorting and defining and defining and sorting" (p. 133).

Coding was done on the computer. The interviews were coded twice. The first time they were coded, I found the method I used was inappropriate for sorting. The coded sections were generally too broad and the coded sections of transcript too long to allow for analysis of individual ideas. The interviews were then recoded into smaller sections of transcript. I used a total of 34 individual codes. Each code was given a code word or words, and the code explanation was listed in the journal. As I had gone back to full-time instructing, the coding took nearly six months. The code explanations in the journal were a valuable tool to refer to while I was coding the interviews into the computer.

In the beginning of this process, the major code clumps were individually coded into fewer categories. These coded sections were then combined and resorted until "the story" began to emerge. This sorting involved taking the data from a number of codes and placing them in the same file. The contents of the file would then be interpreted to determine if there was an emergent pattern. The use of the computer allowed me to "try" any number of code comparisons. The process of sorting and rereading the files created, while extremely time-consuming, allowed me to compare the contents of various code categories. In the final analysis, 28 of the 34 codes were included in one of the ten categories as listed in Table 3 following.

Two of the codes applied to more than one category. The code teaching transfer applied to the category Value of Instructional Skill Development Activities and also to Transfer to Teaching. In some cases the interviewees discussed the fact that instructional skill development activities had value for them but they did not specify exactly how it applied to their teaching practice. These coded sections were included in the category of Value of Instructional Skill Development Activities. In other cases they specified exactly how they used the new information in their classes. That is, they gave a specific example of how they used the new information in their teaching practice. They were in essence saying it had value for them because it

did transfer to their instructional practices. These sections were placed in the category Transfer to Teaching.

The second code that qualified for several categories was "faculty work together." Instructors discussed how they felt a need to work with other instructors which fits in the category Faculty Needs. They also talked extensively of how they valued working with other instructors. This fitted in the category of General Value of Instructional Skill Development. As well they also mentioned examples of specific activities they worked together on. That is, working with other faculty allowed them to see "the Value of Instructional Skill Development Activities."

The other four codes were not used in the analysis. The reason for this is explained in Chapter 4.

I believe the processes used allowed me to develop what Owens (1982) described as a "thick description" (p. 15). The "thick description" was placed in the fourth of a series of binders. The first binder contained a complete copy of the approved interview transcripts. Binder Two contained the coded sections of the interviews with the individual sections grouped into the 34 original codes. Included with each section of transcript was information that stated exactly where and in what interview the coded sections were taken from. The third binder included the coded data after it was grouped into the ten categories listed in Table 3.

**Table 3**

**List of Codes Placed in Each Category**

| Category | Codes |
|---|---|
| Faculty Needs | discipline knowledge, needs, personal needs, feedback from students, technology, faculty work together |
| General Value of Instructional Skill Development | personal value, usefulness, value, faculty work together |
| Participation Reasons | participation always, participation why, participation yes |
| Non-participation Reasons | non-participation reasons, participation no |
| Value of Instructional Skill Development Activities | teaching transfer, faculty work together |
| Learn More About Teaching | teaching fun, personal development, teaching profession, teaching try, teaching, bag of tricks, teaching change |
| Transfer to Teaching | teaching transfer |
| College Climate | college climate, college encourage |
| College Provide | college support |
| Faculty Development Office | faculty development, participation what, things done, visiting other classes |

The data within each category were then arranged into an order which created the "story" for that category. This was placed in Binder Four. Included with the data was the original analysis code assigned to it as well as the interviewee code. This was used to determine when an instructor commented in a similar way to another instructor. The code was also used to cross reference with Binder Two to find the exact section of an interview that was being quoted. Once the exact section of the interview was determined, this section was read from Binder One, along with the discussion which preceded it and that which followed it, to ensure the quote was taken in the context in which I was using it. Binder Four with the ordered coded sections of transcripts was used to write the four analysis chapters.

**Trustworthiness**

Four major criteria are used to assess the trustworthiness of study findings. Guba and Lincoln (1982) summarized them as truth value, applicability, consistency, and neutrality. They then listed the "four analogous terms within the naturalistic paradigm . . . [as] credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability" (p. 246).

**Credibility.** In order to ensure the believability of the analysis and interpretation, several methods were used. I spent as much time as possible with the respondents to build up a trusting relationship, allowed them to check the transcripts as well as the interpretations, and utilized

triangulation as much as possible. Instructors' transcripts were compared to my recorded perceptions from my journal and to the documents given to me by the instructors. The perceptions were also compared to the College Strategic Plan, the professional development newsletters, the minutes of the college professional development committee, and my observations from attending professional development committee meetings, professional development days and workshops.

Initially I sent out personal letters (Appendix A) to the interviewees, talked to each of them at least twice on the phone, and met with each of them personally at least once before the actual interview. I had also had informal discussions with many of them at the professional development workshops or committee meetings I attended. Each of these things in their own way helped to develop a mutual trust.

A letter was sent to the interviewees notifying them that the transcripts were coming and giving them their code name as I had them listed on the interviews (Table 1). They were given the codes listed in Table 1 to ensure anonymity. The interview transcripts were sent to them with a covering letter and a page of questions which related to the study (Appendix E) encouraging them to add, change or modify the transcripts, or add any written comments. There were four questions that related to the four main study questions that they were invited to respond to. Changes noted on the transcripts or comments from the question page were added to

the data. Five of the interviewees added written comments at the end of their interview transcripts. Sometimes they forgot to mention something during the interview, so they appreciated the chance to add it after. An example of an added written comment is the statement: "There are several opportunities to learn about the Internet and how to use it. Also, all faculty can take up to $300 in courses a year, credit or non-credit at the college." These written comments were added to the data and included in the analysis. The interpretations were sent to the interviewees with a cover letter (Appendix H) allowing them to again comment.

The interview transcripts, comments on interviews, documents, personal thoughts and the journal all in their own way helped create the story of instructor perceptions of instructional skills development activities.

**Transferability.** Transferability is more likely if there is, as noted by Goertz (1973), a great deal of information, or "thick description", about a very specific group of respondents. If this is done, then "working hypotheses from that context might be transferable to a second and similar context" (Guba and Lincoln, 1982, p. 248).

In carrying out this research, it is not my intent that the findings be transferred to other contexts, nor, as stated by Bogdan and Biklen (1982), "does qualitative research suggest that there would be a consistency of action in other situations" (p. 49). My primary concern was to obtain

meaningful insights into this specific group of instructors at this one college.

**Dependability.** Due to the nature of naturalistic inquiry, it is unusual to replicate studies. Dependability comes, therefore, from maintaining an accurate record (audit trail) of the methodological steps and decisions made, so that the reader will believe that "good" process was followed.

All significant events, thoughts and processes were duly recorded into my journal. The journal was then used extensively during the analysis, and the subsequent writing of the final report.

**Confirmability.** Within the naturalistic paradigm, the data are confirmed utilizing triangulation and the use of journal and data clusters to ensure that the interpretations were reasonable.

The original interview transcripts were returned to the respondents to check their validity. The document analysis was used as background for the interviews. This also ensured that the researcher and the interviewees had a common base of knowledge of the college and its instructor development programs. Finally, the respondents were sent a copy of the findings chapters to review and comment on (Appendix H).

It should be mentioned that half of the interviewees responded to the findings chapters. They were sent the chapters of the dissertation along with a response sheet

(Appendix H). They did not suggest a single change. A sample of their comments are:

- You accurately represent the content as well as the spirit of my remarks.
- I am proud of this college as reflected in your paper.
- It's valuable to find out other peoples' perceptions of faculty development activities.
- You certainly sampled a good cross-section of people across the divisions.
- It's always interesting reading things close to your heart.
- So much said seemed familiar that I may have said it or I just agree.
- It looks great to me.
- Looks good to me.

These comments, in no way solicited, were comforting to me, in that I represented the respondents fairly. This encouraged me to believe in the trustworthiness of the study findings.

**Ethical Considerations**

Of utmost importance in any inquiry is the necessity to respect and safeguard the rights of the respondents. This is sometimes done formally by application of a Code of Ethics. Glesne and Peshkin (1992) quoted a section of the Code of Ethics for the Council of the American Anthropological Association. In part, this Code states that when people do research, the "paramount responsibility is to those they study. When there is a conflict of interest, these individuals must come first" (p. 111).

Glesne and Peshkin (1992) and Winter (1989) listed procedures to safeguard the ethical concerns involved in naturalistic inquiry. The University of Alberta also has Standards of Conduct for Ethics in Research. Everything was done to ensure that the study observed these standards.

Initially the University Ethics in Research form was completed and submitted for approval. After the respondents were selected, they were sent a letter explaining the study and asking for their cooperation (Appendix B). This letter explained that they could opt out at any time. Before the interviews began, the respondents were asked to sign an informed consent form (Appendix F). At the interviews, the 12-point "cover story" (Glesne and Peshkin, 1992, p. 32) was read to all respondents (Appendix G). The respondents were given the opportunity to examine the tape transcripts and the interpretations, and to "opt out" at any point. They were also given the chance to add, change or remove sections of the interviews or parts of the interpretations. My advisor was also approached for advice and checking of procedures. Through it all, I realized it was my responsibility to uphold the ethical principles and maintain the confidentiality of the respondents.

## Chapter Summary

Many colleges offer ISD activities for their instructors, as the colleges have teaching excellence as part of their mission. A naturalistic inquiry was undertaken to

explore the perceptions that instructors at the college selected for this study have towards similar activities.

Through the data-collection and data-analysis procedures outlined, I developed a thick description of their experiences. Owens (1982) explained this as "synthesizing, integration, and relating [of] observations in such a way as to 'take the reader there'" (p. 15). It is hoped that the reader will gain an understanding of college instructors' perceptions of ISD activities and the effect these activities have on "la raison d'être" of the colleges -- the students.

# CHAPTER 4

## FACULTY NEEDS FOR INSTRUCTIONAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

The literature review described the historical development of faculty development in postsecondary institutions with an emphasis on one of the subsets of faculty development called ISD. The purpose of this study was to examine college instructors' perceptions of ISD. The researcher assessed faculty ISD needs, presented the reasons why instructors participate in ISD activities, analyzed why instructors strive to learn more about teaching, and described the effect of the college climate on ISD within the college.

An analysis of the data gathered from the sample of instructors at the college selected for this study showed that instructors described not only their ISD needs but usually also identified why they had those needs. The needs covered the gamut of having no prior instructional knowledge and wanting to learn everything about teaching, to individual needs such as classroom assessment techniques or a specific computer program. Most instructors also discussed the value they placed on instructional skill development.

The preliminary analysis determined that there was no substantial difference for data related to four of the codes applied to the data. No significant difference was discerned

between male and female comments or between instructors with less than 15 years experience and instructors with more than 15 years experience. Consequently, the analysis does not reflect gender or experience considerations.

To assist the reader in following the analysis, pseudonyms were given to the respondents. To give the context of their work environment, a sample of some of the program offerings by the college division that they were in is listed in Table 4.

As the analysis found no significant gender differences, and to ensure anonymity, the pseudonyms are non-gender names or nicknames and the pronoun "he" is used throughout the analysis, unless it is part of a direct quotation.

This chapter examines the general and specific ISD needs of instructors and the value that they placed on ISD.

**Table 4**

**Pseudonyms and Divisional Offerings**

| Pseudonyms | Division Offerings |
|---|---|
| Drew | Humanities, Social Sciences, and Natural Sciences University Transfer in Arts and Science |
| Darc | |
| Dan | |
| Ed | Management Studies, Accounting, Advertising, Public Relations, Legal Assistant, Office Administration, Travel Consultant |
| Fred | |
| Ted | |
| Mel | Music, Journalism, Woodshop, Audiovisual Communication, Native Communication, Drama, Art |
| Max | |
| Morgan | |
| Les | Nursing, Rehabilitation Practitioner, Youth Care Worker, Social Work, Massage Therapy, Early Childhood Development, Teacher Assistant |
| Chris | |
| Jess | |

**General Needs**

The respondents reported many ISD needs in the interviews. An analysis of their comments showed that they ranged from definitive needs which were stated in specific terms to statements covering teaching in general. Instructors discussed their overall needs in a variety of ways. Often these needs surfaced early in their first teaching appointment.

In the eyes of several instructors, their instructional skill development needs became apparent as soon as they started teaching. Les expressed his personal concern about his initial lack of teaching skills in this way:

> When I came in, I had never taught before in my life. So, I mean, we are starting at a base of zero here . . . and so I taught the way I had been taught at university which was the prof stood up, and we had a textbook, and they gave a whole bunch of material, and you wrote it all down, and it was regurgitated from the professor through the exam back to the students and back and forth. And what I discovered was that I was doing a whole lot of theory about [my subject], and I realized about three weeks in that the students, although they really liked me a lot, weren't getting anything out of it at all. And so I gave them a kind of a quiz on what we had taken so far, and everybody just bombed it. I mean they didn't have a clue. And it wasn't them; it was the way I was presenting it. . . . I also have to tell you, Art, for that first three weeks I never allowed the students to ask a question. I didn't break, I didn't ever say, "Any questions?" I taught for the full time, right to the end, because I was absolutely terrified. What would I do if they asked me a question and I couldn't answer it? And, I mean, I knew my area, and what I didn't know was how to instruct . . . and just not really having a clue of what I was doing.

This same sentiment was echoed somewhat more succinctly by Mel who stated: "I would have loved it, like I said, to have

been taught how to teach before I was thrown into the classroom."

Jess described the position of first-year instructors in a similar manner. He also gave a time frame for when new instructors should have the opportunity to pursue instructional skill development.

> There are an awful lot of folks around here, I think, who would benefit more if they had more encouragement to do some training. Especially in the early days when they are new. In the first two or three years, you really do need some kind of guidance and support in developing your teaching skills. And that's the time when they most need it and they are least likely to get it because they are just so busy trying to get a handle on the content of the course and they don't have enough time to really look at their teaching skills. Once you can start to let go a little bit of the material, and start to look at your own teaching style, is when you can start working on that. And that, in my observation, usually happens after you have been here two or three years.

At the other end of the teaching experience spectrum are instructors who have taught for a number of years. Concerns were expressed by several respondents that some instructors have not changed their instructional methods over time. Drew commented: "They think that they have been teaching a long time and they think that they have been successful, and they probably have been, but they just haven't explored other ways of doing it."

In a similar vein Ed reflected on his own situation. He described his instructional skill development needs in terms of not wanting to be like other instructors who he felt were regressing in terms of their instructional skills. He believed that he was on the edge of falling back to a

traditional mode of instruction and truly wanted to learn more about newer instructional methods.

> Actually in terms of where I am right now, I think I'm at a point where I need to push my boundaries, my own boundaries, personally. Either that or I change careers. And that's because, I think, I don't want to get to where I see some others and I say the old guard, because we are sort of [pause] anybody that's under [a certain age] here, is seen as being sort of a new wave, bringing in new ideas. And I'm thinking of one or two that are older than that, and I see them [pause] I don't see them growing as much. In fact, I see them regressing, some of them. And I think, I don't want to get like that and I don't think I am, but there is something flagging in the back of my mind that is saying, now is the time to set in place, or put in motion, the mechanisms or the processes that will not allow you to become like that. So that is where I think I am, on this precipice.

This same idea was more directly stated by Chris. "I've really decided I want to do more going to workshops around teaching." This was emphasized by Max who believed that the methods you use must be sound. "How can we make life for our students, our customers, better, more stimulating, more educationally valid, etc., etc.?"

The broad field of adult education was also addressed. Jess indicated the importance of learning about teaching adults. "I also thought that if I was doing adult education, I probably should learn some of the theory as well." Later in the interview, he more clearly identified when the need arose. He had been given a teaching assignment wherein he was teaching teachers how to teach adults. "And I was there, teaching experienced teachers how to teach adults. So that was my first exposure to the theory because I had to read the stuff before I could teach it."

Nearly half of the respondents discussed the issue of the changing theories in education, and the necessity this created for instructors to update their skills. Ed posited: "Like anything else, teaching continues to evolve." Dan agreed with this point and hinted at a problem. "People are already feeling that things are changing. I think that they are going to struggle just a little bit." Darc confirmed this fact and suggested a solution. "Right, and give a broader perspective, that's the trend today, you have to stay with it, keep yourself updated."

**Specific Needs**

A broad spectrum of specific needs surfaced in the interviews. The verbalization of these needs by some interviewees was quite direct and to the point, while others stated their need more indirectly. The comments mentioned by respondents, when taken in context during the interviews, showed a number of underlying specific needs. These ranged from a desire to socialize and discuss instructional issues to the specific requirement to use new technologies. In between these two extremes was a kaleidoscope of needs including keeping up in their discipline, listening to student concerns about instruction, needing time to reflect on needs, finding resources for specific courses, learning classroom assessment techniques, understanding individual student needs and learning how to teach skills.

**The Need to Talk With Other Instructors**

One of the strongest needs that surfaced during the interviews was the need for instructors to talk to other instructors. Over three quarters of the respondents expressed this need. Several were unsure why they felt this need, while others listed specific concerns that they wished to discuss with others.

Max reflected on the need to get together with other instructors socially. He was not sure why he required this, but he reported that it did not happen very much and he felt an instructional loss because of it.

> I don't know -- at the college, we used to do more social things, the faculty used to do more social things in the guise of faculty development. And I always thought that those were good, again the self thing perhaps. Maybe that's pretty selfish, that's a different sort of self. But, I mean if you get together socially over a beer or a glass of wine or something with a bunch of college teachers, on a fairly regular basis, and they are from a wide variety of disciplines, you just sit around and invariably, I mean you know, they start talking about the college. What else do they have in common? They start talking about it. And what comes out of that is they start sharing ideas about experiences, really, what happened to them in classes and stuff like that. We seem to have gotten away from that in our college . . . . But we see each other, the whole group sees each other maybe like once a year socially, maybe twice. I'm not sure that that has anything to do with instructional development but I always thought it did somehow.

Les pointed out what happened in discussions with other instructors. "Mostly we just shared information back and forth . . . . The other thing I did was, I talked with a lot of my colleagues, many of whom had been teaching for a long, long time . . . . We talk as instructors." A third

instructor mentioned an example in his explanation of what can be achieved by talking to others. Chris explained:

> You know, I mean, one of the things this one [discipline] instructor said is, we have office hours and no-one ever shows up, you know, you are like the Maytag repairman, because the students don't want to bother you. But if you go to the cafeteria and sit at a table for an hour, you will have students all over you, the whole hour you know. That whole approach of really looking at some of the things we do that aren't useful, and then we kind of blame the students. Instead of saying, you know, this isn't a useful way to do it. So we had lots of interesting kinds of discussion.

The reasons for wanting to have a discussion with other instructors usually centered around the solving of instructional problems. Ed posited: "If I am experiencing a difficulty and saying, look, this is a difficult concept area that I have every time that I come to it. You know, come in, and tell me what your take is on it." At times, what an instructor requires is to find a colleague who has dealt with the problems you are having. Ted explained: "What you really like is . . . to find those faculty members who are just kind of doing it. Right. They are just kind of doing it." Jess indicated how this could occur:

> There is a network here, and we tend to seek each other out around things we want to work on collaboratively . . . . So we are going to be working together in the fall and try to coordinate some of our initiatives here because we have been very fragmented.

Later, in the same interview, he described how he dealt with a different instructional issue. "I am starting to work with [him] and people like that, to see how we can address that issue. So you seek these people out, you know. You just talk over coffee, or you meet at a conference somewhere."

While the majority of the instructors who were interviewed were willing to discuss instructional matters with their colleagues, some approached the issue with a little trepidation. The fact that some instructors are unwilling to completely share their expertise was put quite bluntly by Les. "Some of the others are a bit more territorial about what they share." Mel expressed his personal reason for not sharing. He expressed some initial personal embarrassment over the excitement he felt when learning how to teach:

> I didn't want to share, I couldn't. I knew if I started talking with my friends there [within department], and eventually I did. But at first I didn't want to share with them how excited I was [pause] like how neat it was, this thing about talking about how you are teaching and different ways of adult learning.

However, the majority of instructors were very willing to share resources and offer suggestions.

**The Importance of Listening to Students**

Finding ways to identify individual instructional skill development needs was deemed crucial by a number of instructors. Several believed that the best determinant of individual instructional needs was the students they dealt with. Les attested, "I think it is so important to have the feedback from the students. I need to know that what I am teaching them is making sense." This was echoed by a second instructor who believed that you should check with your students when you try a new instructional method to determine if it was effective:

> What I have found useful is to go to the students regularly. That is the best place to find out how the learning is happening, what is going on. Now you don't just go and do everything they tell you, but also you create some ideas, you bring in some things, you try things out, but you check with the students, to say, 'Has this been effective?' Rather than using your own gauge of saying, 'Well, I like that, you know, that was a great lecture.'

This was discussed at some length by Ed in his explanation of how he determined his instructional development needs:

> I don't know if you have heard this before, but you probably have, because I can't be different than anybody else, but I guess, you talk about workshops, seminars, courses, books, all of that stuff is out there, but one of the best sources to learn from is from your students. You must hear them, and I'm not talking about the whiners, I never listen to them [laugh], but the ones who will say, you know, what I really like about that lecture, I liked this, because you did this. Do you know what would help, do you know what would be really good for me, is when you do that segment is to add this part into it or add something else into it. . . . Well you think about it, you have 40 students in a class. I maybe carry five classes, that is close to 200 students. I do that maybe for eight months, well two semesters. That's a lot of people that you come into contact with, and you had better listen to them. And I think that is why I am still here, is because that's one of the skills that I have is that I do this. So, yes, that is probably one of the best sources.

Ed believed that the students will suggest things that you can do to improve your instruction. A specific example of a need identified by Max was related to a computer program. He conceded, "I need Microsoft Word on my computer because if most of the students use it, I better know a little bit about it."

**Discipline Knowledge: Its Importance and Limitations**

Discipline knowledge was brought into focus by more than half of the respondents during the interviews. For some, it was the reason they were hired; for others, discipline knowledge was not enough to qualify them to teach.

The principal basis for hiring instructors was emphasized by Les. He asserted, "Most of us were hired, not because we were instructors; we were hired because we had expertise." Chris further commented:

> I think a lot of people, not necessarily see it [knowledge of the discipline] as more important or less important, but they see it as their strength. This is what I am bringing to my role as a teacher -- my discipline expertise rather than my teaching expertise.

Nearly half of the respondents who discussed discipline knowledge felt that knowledge or experience in their discipline was not enough. In the words of Les, "I became very aware, very early on, that to have particular expertise in an area didn't mean that I was in any way qualified to instruct in it." Chris's concern was that relying solely on expertise in an area could lead to problems:

> But the whole idea of being an expert which is really like when you come into teaching that's kind of your shield. You know, this is why I am up here, and you are down there kind of thing. But I think that as you teach longer and longer, if you still try to do that, you realize what a charade it is because your experience becomes less and less valuable. And I think unless you make the shift into, what I really need to do is become a better teacher, not a better expert, or try to convince people that I'm an expert. But I think you get . . . caught in a trap of not realizing that or not believing that and trying to rely on expertise.

What could be done to alleviate this concern was summed up by Fred:

> We often make the assumption that when you know something, you can teach it. That's not true. Some very, very good people in their discipline are very ineffective in the classroom because it involves a different set of skills, and unless they are prepared to acquire those skills, they are not going to be effective in the classroom.

**The Need for Time**

A specific need of more than half of the respondents was time; time to work on an instructional skill, time to think, or time to look for help. Drew addressed the issue of the length of time for instructional workshops in this way:

> An hour or an hour and a half on a topic often, not that we can't learn from it, I mean it depends where your own strengths are as an instructor. If it is an area where you are already fairly strong, then an hour and a half, maybe a lot of new information for somebody new, or somebody with a weakness in that area, but it isn't enough depth if you already feel good about that area.

Another time issue was the need for quiet time to reflect on how you instruct. Mel suggested as follows:

> Above all you need your station time, you need empty space, empty mental space. I mean it's a Buddhist thing but you need that empty space . . . . It's a small part, and that's a pat answer that you are coming up with, but [pause] but there is not enough credit given, there is not enough value to me placed on thinking. Quiet thinking time.

Drew summed up a problem that could arise because of the time constraints. He expressed his concern in this way: "Sometimes I would like to have more time than I do to think up ways of doing things or approaching things. Sometimes the time squeezes and I go back to the way I did it before." The issue of time was a very personal one for Dan who said, "I think that there hasn't been that opportunity to sort of sit

back and see what is it I want to do for myself." Not having enough time to seek assistance was a need that Morgan felt all instructors had. He observed, "I don't know if any of us have time to stand up and look around even, to see if there is anybody out there to help us."

**Knowledge of the New Learning Technologies**

Nearly half of the respondents discussed technological advances, particularly with regard to the use of the computer. The following statement by Darc was indicative of the comments:

> It's becoming a little frightening at times to keep up with everything that comes our way. You know, the whole internet thing, the information highway and all of that. And I am just sort of sitting back right now and saying this is as far as I want to go in two years. I am not sure if I really want to [pause] . So it's a little frightening at times to stay on top of everything, you know, every year, the software is upgraded for you, 5.1 to 6.0, and 6.1 and so on. It's just a rapid pace, you know, the business we are in.

Respondents reported that computer skills were necessary to teach better. Max summed up this need when he stated:

> One that I am really behind on is computer skill. You know we all need that, and the bloody technology changes so much. Now that's where just straight forward, going and doing professional development is valuable. That is not personal development. I don't want to personally develop myself so that I can run a computer better, but I want to develop skills so that I can teach better, and use it in my own work better.

The general belief was that computer skills were necessary for teaching in our modern society.

**Other Specific Needs**

There were many other areas of specific need mentioned by the interviewees, covering a wide range of topics: curriculum information, voice control, cooperative learning, Master Student Program (an orientation program extended over one term covering life and study skills offered in over half the colleges and universities in North America), teaching of skills, classroom assessment techniques (CATS) and specific instructional problems. A sample of interviewee comments follows:

> I was hoping for a whole bundle of information [at the orientation for new instructors] on the curriculum, what I was expected to cover, achieve in these particular courses I was teaching. What people had taught before, what the resources were, how to handle things. (Mel)

> I did encounter new things where I had to deal with them. So, there have been things that I've had to learn because of even just moving here in terms of the class size. Dealing with crowd control, which is one thing when they are all grownups. In a class that size, how to get your voice to carry through it all. (Dan)

> The other activity that I have been involved with to some extent is the Master Student area and I would like to learn more about that whole area because I think that the skills that the students can acquire from the Master Student can help them, as students. (Fred)

> But that's required us really to learn more about cooperative learning, to do more, not only research but also discussion. And to really look at how do we teach. (Chris)

> I think that the [college faculty development] program that has been presented is good, and I don't want to be denigrating that, because I know that most of the education in this institution does follow that mainstream path and all that stuff is needed. I think what is needed over here, and I suspect not just in my program, is maybe a workshop on how to teach skills. (Morgan)

Two instructors mentioned the CAT (Classroom Assessment Technique) Team. This "team" was a group of instructors who were using the book *Classroom Assessment Techniques* (Cross and Angelo, 1993) as a basis for assessing the effectiveness of their teaching. They had only started learning about these, and there was a great deal more to learn according to Fred who stated: "When we look at the classroom assessment techniques, in the time that I have been involved, we have barely scratched the surface. There is a tremendous amount there; I would certainly like to continue with that activity." Les discussed how the CAT Team dealt with teaching concerns:

> I know that the people that are on the present CAT team that get together and share ideas, they cover just about every faculty in the college. We've got instructional assistants, and Business Management Studies, University Transfer, Community Services and Nursing. I don't think that there is any area that isn't represented. And that wasn't by design, that's just people who are keen in all those areas and were saying 'Hey, let's get together and talk about how we teach. What we teach and how we teach.'

In some cases, the need to solve a particular instructional problem can lead to the identification of a myriad of other instructional needs. Ed described such a specific problem:

> That was the year we had quite a rash of cheating in the classrooms. And it seemed like it was just a certain [group of students], like they, this is the two year program, so we had this core of students in year one, then they moved into year two and of course the same behaviors, you know. And we didn't act on it quickly enough and I think it's because we didn't always know that others were experiencing the same things in the classroom. You don't always have coffee with people. And then, gradually information filtered out and we started to realize that we were all experiencing some of

> these same problems. And we had to figure out a way to deal with that issue from an instructional point of view.

Later he added that dealing with that one specific need led to meetings to deal with a host of other instructional problems:

> I think more people came with problems, and then would say, 'Well, you know, what do you do with a student who is sleeping in class, who comes to class and sleeps?' Everybody has different responses, everything from [pause] well, anyways, but I think that's more of what it was, as opposed to a wish list. I think it was people who went there with their own list of concerns, and said, 'OK, this is what is troubling me in the classroom these days.'

## Value of Instructional Skills Development

The value instructional skill development has for instructors was addressed both individually and for faculty in general during the interviews. All respondents mentioned the value of instructional skill development. Slightly less than half discussed the intrinsic value instructional skill development has for them personally, while the remainder discussed the overall value of instructional skill development, usually in relation to all instructors.

### Learn, Change and Share

To understand the value that instructional skill development has for them, several respondents believed it was necessary to release themselves from their traditional teaching style and be willing to take on new ways of instructing. Before this could occur, they had to first

believe that instructional skill development will enhance the quality of their teaching. How does one enhance teaching? Will attendance at faculty development meetings lead to better instruction? The effectiveness of instruction was compared to the productivity of a multinational corporation by Max. He had concerns about instruction not improving if faculty only went to these meetings if they felt they had to attend:

> I bet that an analytical company like IBM probably could tell you if they would, they might not, but if they would and if they could, no, they could if they would, tell you. I bet they know how the productivity of their people is affected by a combination of all of these things you talked about. We are talking about instructional development, because our business is instruction; they are talking about production level, because their business is production and management and marketing and all those kinds of things that make a company tip [i.e. profit of loss]. I bet they could tell you pretty objectively how much that affects the production of their workers, of their staff, to the dollar. In terms of production. I don't know how they measure that but it's probably easier to measure something like that in terms of sales, in terms of marketing, in terms of stuff like that, than it is in college. That kind of stuff is hard to measure. How do you measure the effectiveness of a teacher and relate that to [pause] certainly not linear. If they turn out to be the people that went to all the faculty development meetings because they felt they should, and they didn't get anything out of it, there is going to be a negative correlation there. Their teaching is not going to get any better by going to those meetings. And how do you measure better [instruction]?

For nearly half of the interviewees, better instruction involved the issue of letting go of their old instructional methods and embracing new ones. This was not particularly easy for some. Naming traditional instructional styles as "sacred cows," Chris described acceptance of new methods as a struggle. He expressed his concern: "It really required

everyone . . . to really look at a lot of those issues, and to really give up stuff that was kind of sacred cows and all that kind of stuff, that we really had to struggle with." In the eyes of Ed these traditional methods, these "sacred cows," were referred to as values. He believed that you did not necessarily have to change instructional behaviors (values) but you had to accept the fact that there could be alternate methods:

> I guess that there is a different way to do things. That maybe the way you have been doing things for the last 20 years, which is the same way all the time is no longer appropriate, because we have these different values. You can't, maybe you don't change your values, but maybe you look for a way to at least accept the other's values even if you don't agree with them.

At a later point he expressed how this acceptance of alternate instructional values not only influenced him, but gave him a direction for the future.

> I have had students . . . come to me after the semester and say to me: 'I thought [your subject] was going to be a real drag but I just enjoyed it so much. You just made it so interesting.' And I mean I feel like I've been given the biggest prize because somebody has said that. So I figure then, what I set out to do, I tried to use anything I could get my hands on. It didn't matter what it is, any skill I can possibly use and it worked, and they learned, and I learned that it works. That to me is where it starts. You have to be willing to learn.

This was emphasized by Mel who was not only willing to learn, but wanted to learn and became excited when he found out that there was information and help available on learning how to teach. He stated, "I was given a book on teaching and I had never seen a book on teaching, like a book that actually addressed going into the classroom." He became

excited upon realizing that there were books written on how to teach. As a discipline specialist he had not previously seen a book on teaching. Others found valuable instructional help from other sources. Typical of many comments on where one could access suitable instructional help was the statement by Ed: "There is always the in house activities, the faculty development, which I think are well suited. They seem to be [pause] they target specific areas and I think they are timely for instructors." If an instructor values the learning of instructional behaviors, there was help available in the multi-faceted guise of faculty development.

Faculty development had value for the interviewees in many ways. For some a workshop presenter determined the net worth of that workshop; for others it was meeting other instructors so that resources or ideas could be shared.

The individual leading an instructional skill development activity could have a negative impact on instructors. Drew clarified how this could occur. He explained:

> I have gone to the odd one where I didn't think that there was enough depth, and sometimes I think that it was the person leading it, and sometimes I think they are trying to cover too much in too short a time, to really make too much of an impact for those of us that are teaching more.

For the majority of interviewees a presenter could make a positive impact. Chris described a workshop he had been to. He stated: "I went to that and I found that to be really exciting. The presenter was just really excellent, you know, really top notch."

On many occasions the value derived from the activity stemmed from more than just the presenter; it was meeting other participants and the interaction created between all the participants. Drew described a workshop he had attended. He declared:

> It was offered as an all day workshop during faculty development week two or three years ago. And I like the idea of being in an all day thing because you can do more than scratch the surface and there is a commitment, and the leaders were particularly good, and it brought people from all different areas of the college together.

Ed added how sharing information could change instructional behavior. He noted: "That to me was a really good tool, to share information, to learn from others, and maybe even to change some behaviors, instructionally speaking."

The process of sharing information often occurred after an initial meeting. This was valuable to many respondents. This theme of sharing was apparent in many of the statements made. For Ed, when the presenters were in-house volunteers they created an atmosphere of approachability. He observed: "The people that volunteer for the college for those kinds of things, are usually quite open and friendly, and approachable, and willing to share and you know, 'Call me any time.'" Often after a workshop, armed with some new information, the interviewees were more open about seeking others to talk to. Ted explained:

> So after that, I went and kind of went on a little mission and found out what other people are doing and jeez, wouldn't you know, people have been doing it forever. Like, one person would have, one page, and so then I would share, 'Do you know this, this and this?' And they would go, 'Wow, where did you get that from?' .

> . . And so the next thing you know is, we kind of have this circle thing going.

Sometimes the sharing between instructors was mainly one way, but this was particularly valued. Ted had a friend who had a complete comprehension of a particular instructional situation. He described:

> He knows all that. He understands all of that. But he understands more than that, and so he has really taken me by the hand and I consider him a very close friend now. We have, hopefully, a mutual respect. I certainly respect him and what he does.

Les confirmed the respect he had for one of his colleagues. He posited: "She shares ideas with me all the time, and she is really good to work with."

In the majority of cases there was mutual value in sharing ideas. The value obtained from sharing ideas and resources, one instructor to another, is exemplified by the following two comments.

> She and I both use the same set of tapes when we are teaching . . . . And I once had the tape out and forgot to take it back, and got a little memo from the LRC. I phoned her to apologize, and we had a great yak on the phone about how she uses it and how I do it. She had some new ideas of stuff that I could use and I was aware of another source that she could use, so I mean, Art, that's just informally over the phone. (Les)

> So he and I share back and forth. He has given me some terrific ideas and I think I've given him some. And sort of, to do that kind of collaborative teaching is fabulous, with somebody who is open and willing to share. I mean that's really neat. I hope that we are learning from each other. (Mel)

Respondents valued the acceptance of new instructional techniques, a willingness to learn them, and a readiness to share resources and ideas with other instructors.

**General and Specific Value**

The value in sharing information often went beyond faculty development meetings or between individuals. It often began in meetings called for a specific purpose unrelated to faculty development. It could have been a program meeting, a retreat or a general college meeting. Fred explained his perspective on the value of such meetings. He stated:

> It is a good vehicle for discussion, especially at an institution this size. And through that I have been able to discuss with people from many subject areas. It's good in that way. You get to know people but you also know that you have a common interest. It doesn't matter if it is Finance or English. You still have that common thread, instruction, and that has been very good.

This was echoed by Chris. He discussed the workings of a group which involved two programs which met to discuss instructional issues. He observed:

> We did lots of fun things but also some really useful things with that group, around a whole variety of different kinds of motivational things, cooperative learning things, you know, student-instructor kinds of, not just strategies and some of the things we do stupidly.

The value derived from a program retreat was emphasized by Ed. He felt that it broke down the barriers between the various subject area specialists in the program.

> We had a program retreat which I participated in. And that I found to be really useful, even more so than seminars, workshops and so on. Because we have 10, or 11, we have more than that now, we have 17 instructors, but at that time we had 10 or 11 instructors and everybody had their little area that they worked in. It becomes, I think, quite functionalized in that way. You know, I do [my subject], and they do [their subject] and whatever. You don't really connect, except that you may have the same troublesome student, and the same level. But that was really useful I thought. One, we were

> distanced from the college, so we had to live with each other and two, we were there long enough that it really broke down the barriers that sometimes occur over time. You know, you get locked into your own little area and you don't always break out of it. So I found that to be a really useful tool, the retreat experience.

Later in the interview he returned to the topic of the program retreat. He reiterated the bond which was created and the enthusiasm over instructional issues the retreat engendered, on an ongoing basis:

> I guess that one of the objectives was that we would go there and form a bond. That we would be this cohesive group, so that later on when we came back, that process was still being facilitated. And it was, we were really energized when we came back, which is quite typical of when you go away on retreats that turn out to be good. But we had come out with some real specific things in June that we went, well many of us were gone for the summer and then we came back in September and we were still excited about applying them and learning them.

The inherent ongoing value of sharing instructional development between departments was emphasized during one interview. Because of the individuals facilitating an interdepartmental event and the active involvement of all instructors from both departments, the time lapse over the summer did not detract from the value of the activity. Max explained:

> One of my really good friends was a facilitator for a lot of workshops. And he set up a thing where his program and our program got together last summer and did a series of workshops together, on quality management things but from the idea of education. And even some of our diehard will-never-go-to-faculty-development-workshop people, came. Because it was a department kind of activity, and because of the guy that was facilitating it, they knew him, because he had been doing these empowerment things, and he worked with me and that helped. Damned if they didn't really get a lot out of it. I think that helped. That was a good thing, that kind of, where you had two, I mean we were two different departments and different campuses that had

> absolutely, on the surface, nothing in common . . . . You would think that we don't have a lot in common. It turned out that we have a tremendous amount in common, in terms of educational, in terms of instructional development things in common. You know, the same kind of people, the same kind of problems, the same kind of how to deal with curriculum, how to deal with stress, how to deal with problem students, and stuff like that. It was really good. We did those every week for about three or four weeks last summer. It was really good. And then you go away, I don't think we did anything, but that stuff percolated back into when we got together in the fall. You know we had been on holidays, come back, and started having our weekly staff meetings again. Every now and then, some of those little things would come up, 'Oh you remember when so and so said something about something.' We could apply that here.

This activity was set up by two instructors who knew each other and had a skill they could pass on. This occurred on other occasions as well. Two instructors could have an effect on all of the faculty. An interviewee highlighted this point with reference to a new method of getting students involved in group work in the classroom. Les related:

> It was just such a neat way to do it. And we had some of the college staff who already know how to do this stuff and were facilitating in the groups and sort of helping us work it through. But there is a case where one thing, another person [personal name] and I took it that particular time, and then we stressed it at this faculty planning day, and so now all of us are all going to learn how to do it. So that's an example where you can start in a very small way and it can have an impact for the whole faculty.

Specific activities also occurred within program groups. Meetings called to look at program direction and concerns within the classrooms were considered very valuable. Ed commented:

> We looked at a lot of different things. . . . both from the perspective of where the program was going and then also we looked at issues and concerns that instructors were facing in the classroom with regards to student-related problems, course-related problems or

> difficulties, overloading, sheer numbers in the classroom, how one instructor deals with discipline versus another, different teaching styles and so on. So that, yes, I thought that was great. It was very useful.

Some comments were directed to instructional development in general. The following three statements by three different respondents illustrate a common value. The statements are:

- "I personally think that instructional development is extremely important." (Dan)
- "Basically the same people keep going in for all these training things, they find them very useful." (Chris)
- "Some of them I think are really useful." (Les)

Many interviewees spoke of the value of a specific workshop. While they did not explain why it was useful they believed it had indeed helped them. A cross section of their comments are:

- "I found that very, very useful." (Fred)
- "It was the neatest thing. That was about three years ago. That was incredibly helpful." (Les)
- "And that was just a couple of hours on a Wednesday afternoon or something. That was really helpful." (Darc)

When asked about the value of an instructional development activity, Ted responded: "Yes, yes, it was worth the investment." He then went on to explain that it took time away from his normal work; however, the time used was a good investment in his instructional skills.

Drew believed that putting himself in the place of a student and trying new techniques with other instructors could be a valuable experience. He recounted: "There is all

kinds of theory and trying new things and everything else, but modeling, or having the instructors model the students [as in the Instructional Skills Workshop], some techniques like that, now and then I think are really good."

The value obtained from workshops or activities varied with each activity. Some interviewees took in an many activities as possible and at times found one that was particularly valuable. Drew emphasized this fact.

> I've always got into instructional skill activities, but I think the ones that I have been involved with that probably had the most impact was, I went to a Myers Briggs workshop over three years ago. And to me that was incredible. I found that really valuable in many ways.

Participating in as much ISD as possible can be a method to improve skills. One instructor described briefly the personal approach he took. Jess attested: "It has been a very important focus for me, over the last ten years, to continue to update my skills, develop new skills, and participate in whatever opportunities are being made available to me".

The personal effect various activities have seemed to be an important focus for many of the respondents. This focus appeared to be a major influence on the value gained from any activity. Ted focused on the value the Instructional Skills Workshop had for him. He commented:

> That was great. And I actually am glad that I was involved . . . . It was, when I started, I didn't want to be there. Been there, done that. It was just another one of these. But in the people that we had involved . . . by the end of it, it was excellent. You know, I was able to reflect on some stuff, and things like that.

## Chapter Summary

Instructors have many ISD needs. Several instructors frequently identified the same specific need. They believed there should be more ISD assistance for novice instructors and help to keep updated in new adult education theories. They felt a need to share resources and obtain help from other instructors, and they suggested that if instructors believed they had to go to faculty development activities that it would be counterproductive. The best activities were those that were voluntary. They indicated that students are a good source for information on ISD needs but, in order to tap this resource, instructors must be willing to listen to students. Discipline knowledge in itself was not enough to be a good instructor; there must also be instructional expertise. It was also important to keep up with advances in computer technology. Several remarked that the pressure of time constraints in the college did not permit them to do as much ISD as they felt was necessary. They also had specific course or specific instructional problem needs.

ISD was highly valued by instructors. They stressed that a willingness to change your teaching style is important and that sharing with other instructors can be extremely helpful. The idea was put forward that large faculty development meetings can be a good resource, not only for the information presented but also as a springboard for individuals working together after the meeting. The process

of working within a total program or having a number of programs working together was found to be very valuable as there was the possibility of forming a bond with other instructors and also a greater abundance of ideas and solutions to instructional problems. Program retreats were found to be particularly valuable.

The data analysis presented several general areas of need for instructors. These ranged from the necessity for many beginning college instructors to start from a base of zero and learn everything about teaching, at one end of a continuum, to adult education theories and keeping up with changing times in education, at the other. Interviewees believed that instructors should take in as many ISD activities as possible because they enable instructors to reflect seriously about their instructional practices and to consider improvements in these practices.

# CHAPTER 5

## PARTICIPATION IN INSTRUCTIONAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

The literature review suggested a number of reasons why instructors participate in instructional skill development activities and also suggested reasons why they do not participate. Some instructors are motivated towards growth and development or believe better instructional methods will enhance the possibility of obtaining tenure. For these very different reasons they see value in instructional skill development activities. Others believe that discipline knowledge or traditional instructional styles is all that is required to teach. They are resistant to change their instructional style or learn new methods of teaching and therefore reticent about attending instructional skill development activities.

This chapter examines the reasons why the sample of instructors at the college selected for this study either participated or did not participate in ISD activities. It also discusses the value that this group of instructors obtained from participating in specific activities.

### Reasons for Participation

Instructors mentioned varying degrees of involvement in iISD activities and also listed a variety of reasons for

their attendance. Eight of the 12 instructors interviewed mentioned they always attended. Four instructors went because they enjoyed these activities or because it was "fun." Several went to get ideas or to network with other faculty.

**Some always attend.** Instructors were asked the question: "Have you participated in instructional skill development activities within the last year?" Several instructors representing each of the college divisions were quite emphatic in replying that they always attend. For example, Fred stated: "Yes, yes. I always participate." Ed also mentioned the types of activities he liked to attend:

> One of the things that I like to do is go to the faculty development sessions. . . . There are always the workshops and seminars and all that. All of a sudden something comes up that you are interested in so you go for it.

Darc remembered: "Normally I do go to at least one or two things." Jess indicated that he not only participated in instructional skill development activities but was also a leader for them on occasion. He stated: "I have been involved in those quite often, either as a participant or as a presenter." Max not only attended instructional skill development activities but always made a point of using his college-supplied professional development money. He noted: "I always go to the faculty development workshops. They have two every year. I have always used my faculty development money. I'd steal money from other people if they weren't using it."

One instructor reported that some programs were quite active in promoting skill development workshops. Chris indicated that his program often has ISD activities for all the instructors in his program. He discussed an upcoming workshop.

> We will have an all day workshop. So we do that kind of thing all the time. I think that we are really looking at learning styles and all that. We did a Gregoric thing [learning styles inventory] a few years ago and all the staff did it. The students, we then did it with the students. So we do that stuff pretty regularly.

He was then asked if all programs were as active in sponsoring ISD workshops. He believed that other programs had not made the same commitment to ISD as his program. He stated: "I just don't think it happens as often as it does with our program. I think we really have decided in the last four or five years to really do this regularly. And we have, we have stuck with it."

**Participation is fun for some.** Four instructors mentioned that participation in the varied types of instructional skill development activities was enjoyable for them. Les stated: "I just really like it. I would do a lot more faculty development stuff if I could." Chris agreed with this. When asked why he attended all the ISD activities at the college, he stated: "All that [the ISD activities] was fun." Drew, in agreeing with this, also commented on why certain instructors attended ISD activities. While discussing a specific activity he said: "The people who enjoy doing it most came." He believed that instructors became involved in ISD activities because they personally enjoyed

them. Later in the interview he indicated why he agreed to become involved in a specific activity. "I said that I would be part of this mentorship program. I don't know if that qualifies [as an instructional skill development activity] but that would be fun." The major reason for his becoming involved is that he thought it would be fun.

Darc agreed with the idea that professional development is fun. He talked about a time during his sabbatical year when he took a class in a different language. He stated that "[It was] very enjoyable. I enjoyed those two months probably more than any other part of my sabbatical. Just being in a classroom with adults, in a different language. It was really fun." The reason for participating in faculty development programs for these four instructors was the enjoyment they obtained from being involved.

The interviewees also suggested that non-attendance at ISD activities by instructors was because they did not enjoy them. Drew stated: "I enjoy these sessions when I go to them; maybe if I didn't and maybe some people don't, maybe I wouldn't go and maybe that's why they don't go."

Drew also suggested that some instructors might be told by an administrator to attend ISD workshops. At this time in the interview he was discussing the student evaluations of an instructor. He had been told that there was an instructor who was asked to attend a specific ISD activity because that instructor had low student evaluations. He suspected: "I think one in particular had that concern, maybe it was

recommended by the dean that maybe this would be a good thing and I think it was good for her." Max stated the same position more strongly when he declared that: "Some of them [instructors] go because they are supposed to go."

One instructor felt that all instructors were required to attend workshops. Mel had read the faculty development newsletter announcing two days of instructional development workshops. He explained why he attended:

> So really that was it. It came across my desk and I thought OK, this is faculty development days, they've got two days, a full agenda. It's expected of you to go. I mean obviously they've given off two days to do this so I'll do it.

Darc attended workshops to see what new things he could learn. He stated: "I go sometimes just to see if I can get some ideas." Later on he explained that he preferred to attend workshops in his content area. "That makes, for me, good sense in terms of teaching development, skill development. I think it should be more discipline-focused. That's my point of view rather than generally teaching."

For Dan, instructional improvement was the primary reason for attendance at workshops. He declared: "I personally think that instructional development is extremely important. . . . That's a true commitment for me, the reason for me being here."

**Who attends?** The attendance of certain instructors at ISD activities was discussed by most of the interviewees. Three instructors made similar observations about their colleagues who usually attended these activities. They felt

it was always the same ones. When Max was asked if he participated in these activities he responded: "I do, I go, well yes pretty religiously and a lot of people don't. It's usually the same people that go to them you know. A fairly large percentage of the people never go which I don't understand." In a similar vein Jess not only answered the question but also suggested that he could say exactly which instructors would be in attendance.

> It comes back to this idea that the passionate teachers seek each other out. I can probably come up with a list of the people who I think around the college here are really committed to teaching. And I might miss a few but basically that would be a core of people and probably the same list that [the faculty development officer] gave you, maybe a little longer but there is a [pause]. You know who's around the college here and who takes their teaching seriously. I mean you know that. You know they are the people that get the teaching awards, they are the people who are always working on developing their skills [and] they are the ones you see at faculty development days.

Mel made a similar observation and also suggested certain instructors always attended because they enjoyed the company of others present at the workshop. He said: "I can honestly tell you who will [be at the faculty development workshops]. I can take a list and tick off who will be there because I think they also like the people."

When instructors meet at an instructional development workshop, they are provided with an opportunity to discuss how others are dealing with instructional situations. Max mentioned the benefits of having instructors from different departments in the same workshop. "What I really enjoy in those kinds of things is when I get a mixed group from

different disciplines, so that there is a real cross fertilization of ideas and it's amazing what comes out of that." Later in the interview he returned to the same topic. He was discussing whether or not instructors might have been coerced into attending ISD workshops. He stated: "I don't think it's so much a pressure as a collegiality, a kind of feeling of relationship, teamwork, that kind of thing." He personally did not feel forced into attending and he believed the concept of working together meant you were able to connect with others on instructional issues.

The benefits that could be obtained by working together might depend on the enthusiasm of a specific individual who was involved. Jess described several of the workshops that he was involved in. "If you get someone like me, who gets so fired up around [certain issues], you sort of suck the people in around you. People like to be around an energized person and it's amazing what you can achieve."

**Reasons for Non-participation**

The interviewees suggested a number of reasons for non-participation in ISD activities. The reasons included time considerations, not seeing the need or value of ISD, and even the possibility that some instructors may be scared for various reasons to become involved.

Two interviewees had conflicting viewpoints about the number of instructors that involve themselves in ISD activities. Fred believed that many but not all instructors

took part. With reference to the actual number he stated: "Not all, not all. The opportunity is there and quite a number do get involved but I wouldn't say that all of them do." Mel did not agree that the involvement rate was high. He used a water analogy to express his point. He said the number of instructors that go to ISD activities is

> like a drop in the sea, a drop of water going into the sea. And the impact of how many people access [faculty development]. How many people value it? It's just ridiculous . . . lots don't, most don't. Really even though I was impressed with the high percentage of people that filled the room compared to how many were in the college, there is still a lot that don't.

**Lack of time**. Why do instructors not attend instructional skill development activities? Ten of the 12 respondents mentioned time as a major problem. Four wanted to attend a particular activity but were not available at the time the activity was offered. Two had too much marking to do and felt that was more important. Seven of the interviewees believed that instructors were being loaded down with more committee work, larger classes or an increased instructional workload and there was little time left for instructional development activities.

Four instructors reported that the time when an ISD activity was offered conflicted with their teaching timetables. Mel briefly explained why he could not go to a series of workshops he wanted to attend. He stated: "But the problem was they are usually while you are teaching." Fred mentioned a similar problem. He discussed how he wanted to be involved in an ongoing activity but: "unfortunately this

past year I had a class at their meeting time so I wasn't always able to attend."

Two instructors mentioned the ISD activities which occur during the winter term reading week. Morgan discussed the involvement by instructors during the two days of workshops. He stated: "Most people don't take advantage of it. Especially since in the winter term I believe it is incorporated in [pause] skiing I mean reading week [laugh]. Most people take that time to go away." Les, in agreeing with this point, commented on his own situation. He explained: "My [spouse] and I get away every reading week and I am afraid I am not prepared to put that aside to take two days worth of workshops. So sometimes I miss out on stuff."

The marking of papers was mentioned as taking precedence over attendance at instructional activities by two instructors. Drew discussed the small number of instructors at a workshop he attended. The reason he gave for the low attendance was as follows: "It was late in November and I guess everyone had a lot of marking [to do]." Darc explained why he had not gone to any of the year end ISD activities offered at the college. "I was very, very busy with the courses I was teaching and needed to catch up on my marking. So, no, I didn't go to anything this spring."

The length of an activity was discussed by two respondents who gave conflicting viewpoints. Drew believed workshops should be longer. "Some of the one and a half hour things tend to be a little bit short. You know, I do tend to

like things that go a little bit longer." A contrary position was taken by Les who believed that instructors are not ready to give a full day of their time for an activity. He believed: "As soon as it's a workshop it sounds like you've got to commit from nine to four. You know those kinds of things I think can get in the way for some people."

Time constraints were mentioned by nearly all of the interviewees as impinging on their ability to engage in more ISD activities. Mel indicated a possible reason why some instructors may not attend the two days of workshops set aside by the college for faculty development.

> When you get two days off and no time to do your normal work [pause], you're already, you know some people have got journals stacked that high on what's developed and happening in their area. I can't blame them for choosing to read that. Their students will benefit from that. If you are teaching old material to a state of the art program then you are in big trouble. So I know that it's various reasons why people don't show up.

Dan believed that he did not have the time even to find out what activities he could get involved in. "I truly feel that, like I just don't have enough time to find out what is available out there. So, sometimes you are just sort of doing the best you can." Fred mentioned that, as well as not having the time to go, possibly some instructors already had the skills that were being presented. He suggested: "Perhaps they have gone through similar training, some other talent perhaps [coaching or leadership abilities] or because of time constraints they simply don't have the time at this time."

Time was also a problem for Drew. He wanted to be involved in several ISD activities but felt that there is a

limit to the amount of time he could allocate to them. He said:

> There has been the odd thing that I have been interested in and probably would have joined a group that was involved with it but you know there is just a limit to how many hours and how many meetings [you can give to instructional development].

Later in the interview he discussed some comments made by other instructors who talked about why they would not get involved.

> There is an element of people I think, I hate to say it, maybe they would have always been this way but there is an element because I have heard it of people who say they have cut my salary five per cent, I'm not sitting on any more committees and I'm not going to extra things and certainly if you are running something like a mentorship thing where you are going to get together every month and meet and see people, these people are not going to do it.

In addition to the salary rollback some instructors believed that the college was always requiring instructors to do more work. While Morgan believed faculty development days were valuable, he also suggested that this extra work was the reason why instructors did not attend faculty development days.

> What they don't do is give us any relief for all the other thousand things that they want us to do that are add-ons, not instead of's, but they just keep piling more and more and more paper and work on the people at this institution and they don't give them any time to do it. So what time do these people take? They take faculty development days. So they are not terribly well attended. And they should be because I think they are good. I think that stuff is good. I think that is why it is not well attended.

Not just faculty development days but instructional development in general was targeted by Dan. He believed the workload of instructors prohibited them from taking part in

activities that would enhance their instructional skills. He explained:

> One of the problems that we have in our department is that we have a horrendously heavy workload. And just maintaining our workload has been very difficult and so trying to get away [to development activities] is really difficult so I think that most of us are feeling that we really don't have enough time . . . [and] truly what we are getting right now is a tremendous amount of burnout. . . . So you try and cope with the work you have got and then someone says you should do instructional development on top of it, you know. So it's not that people don't think its important. It's really important and people are really excited about new approaches. But we are being asked to contribute to collaborative governance, curriculum taskforce for the future, and every other committee you could possibly imagine in this college. And then they say, 'Oh, on top of that we want you to develop yourself, personally and also improve your instructional skills.' So I think there is a high commitment to it but I also think there is a reality about what is reasonable. . . . But I think that there is a reality in terms of the environment that you are working in whether or not people have the time to do a lot of professional development and certainly explore instructional strategies or even personal development and also the reality of their job.

As well as the faculty development days and instructional development workshops discussed further in Chapter 7 that are a part of every college, the study college was considering the implementation of an Instructor Development Program. This program would require every instructor to get an instructional credential which required all instructors to take a 32-hour course in instructional skills. Mel believed in the merit of this new program but had several concerns about it. The concerns centred around the input that instructors would have in its development, the comprehensiveness of it and the fear that instructors would balk at becoming involved.

> You know it seems to be a very separate part of faculty development. Seeming to be [pause]. We are having a hard time with it, understanding it and [the faculty development officer] is really trying hard to do what [he] is expected to do, but we don't have [pause]. We are not given the time and we are not given the information process to feed into this to make it a more comprehensive package. Anyways, I think that's my fear is that we are trying to do something really good because I don't see anything wrong with this. . . . But I'd have to say right now that if I was told that I would have to spend 32 hours a year in a course workshop, I'd say, 'Where?' I haven't had a day off yet. You know when am I going to do this? What are you going to take away? . . . I have enormous classes, and it's one to one. And I teach way more than a colleague at the university would have to in terms of numbers, etc. Anyways, I think that people are going to dig in their heels, and that's my fear.

As well as the time commitments to their normal college activities, two interviewees discussed the time requirements to obtain advanced university degrees. Jess was working on a master's degree but soon found that one thing he wanted to do was impossible because of his many involvements in other areas.

> I decided that I wanted to do something last year but one of the things that happened, and you may find this when you get back to work in the fall, I got this tremendous energy up and I came back and I haven't finished my thesis and I already had all this energy for things that I wanted to do differently and I got hopelessly overcommitted. I was in so many things in the fall.

Max was succinct in describing his ability to attend ISD activities when he discussed the time requirements for his studies. He stated: "I haven't done any for a couple of years. I have been doing Ph.D. studies for two years so I don't really have a lot of time to do anything else."

**The claim that ISD activities are not valuable**. A number of instructors had the belief that certain types of ISD

activities did not have value for them or their colleagues. Five of the 12 interviewees believed that some instructors were not interested in certain types of development activities. There were another five instructors who believed there was limited value in attendance at faculty development workshops and four of the ten who discussed this iossue felt that activities would be more worthwhile if they were more discipline focussed.

Les was not interested in the computer classes offered but believed that there were enough other choices of activities for him to make in terms of what to attend. He explained:

> Sometimes there is a lot of very technical stuff that comes across my desk and I am not interested in it. I mean I can use Word Perfect 5.1 but I'm not into surfing the highway and all those. It's sort of not part of where I'm at and that's OK because it is really a big part for some people. And as long as we have lots of variety I think we are OK. . . . Some of them aren't interesting but that's OK. There is enough variety and you can pick and choose.

Fred also discussed reasons why he believed instructors may not attend ISD activities. He stated: "It is unfortunate but again there is a variety of reasons [for nonattendance], one of which is they just may not be interested." Chris had trouble comprehending why many instructors did not avail themselves of the interesting activities offered by the faculty development office.

> I think that there are lots of people who are quite happy, I think, to stay where they are. You mean I can't imagine when they offer some of this stuff, like [the faculty development officer] has offered some interesting things. I can't imagine people not going, you know. But obviously lots of people don't go.

Drew suggested there was a possibility that instructors were not uninterested but rather that they might be introverted and would be uncomfortable participating. He explained:

> In a workshop I found that a real revelation because the introverts are really talked about, you know, those who are always trying to draw them out. Sometimes just leave us alone and let us listen, you know. And I remembered that, that you have to give people an opportunity to participate but you can't assume that if they're not that they are disinterested.

A discipline-focussed activity was mentioned as the preferred type of faculty development by four instructors. Max explained why some instructors might not participate in ISD:

> A lot of them are not that particularly interested in teaching. They are more fundamentally interested in their own subject, their own practice. Which is just fine. And so that if they get two days off, with no teaching to do, they are not going to go to some seminar about teaching. They are going to go and paint or practice or write or stuff like that, I think.

Later in the interview he explained the reasons for non-attendance by instructors. He suggested that non-attendance might be related to the college division they worked in and intimated that they might not be concerned about instructional issues.

> But I think a lot of the people in the arts -- I can't speak for other divisions -- but the people in the arts division because it's tough to make a living as an artist so they are teaching because they have to. And maybe those are the ones that would rather take their faculty day and practice or paint or write or something. They don't care too much about the instructional things and when they do go they complain about it. At least the ones I know do. Oh jeez they always say just about the same thing every time. I've been there five times and I quit going because the truth is they only went twice [laugh] but they say they went five times and it

> was always the same stuff and I didn't get anything out of it so I didn't go back. I think that's the kind of story they give.

Morgan worked in the same division and made a similar observation but had a different way of expressing it. He did not believe the instructional skill development activities and workshops which were offered related to his classroom needs.

> I haven't gone to a lot of them. My experience of those things and this is unfair because I haven't gone to enough of them. But I perceive my field to have different needs in terms of what we do in the classroom and what we expect of students from other programs. My experience of the field of education is that they are very, very good and very, very interested in teaching classes where you can go in and present a little kernel of new information and then have a bunch of people sit around and talk about it with or without a campfire. Right? That's very good and I'm very glad that they can do that [but] that doesn't describe my classes very well.

This same viewpoint was taken by two instructors from another college division. They believed that activities related to the specific classes involved or the discipline an instructor taught in was deemed more important than activities on teaching in general. Darc believed that activities should be discipline specific. He indicated that this would have a greater value for him and others in his area.

> I think many of us are really involved with our disciplines and we would rather spend our time on things that involve our discipline rather than these kind of general sessions about teaching in general, I mean. I find that some of the methods may work but it varies from discipline to discipline, I think. I think if they were more discipline oriented, I think that they would be a little more helpful to me or to my colleagues down the hall.

Drew, an instructor from the same division, also believed that some instructors were more interested in pursuing their own discipline than in learning instructional skills. He felt that more instructors should become involved in learning new teaching techniques by attending instructional development activities. In reply to the question, "Do you think that a lot of instructors attend ISD activities?", he responded:

> I think that there are a number of people who do and there are a number of people who don't. There are people who I guess I would say among those who don't that may pursue a particular interest or area of strength but may not necessarily be in teaching. Maybe in an area of expertise within their subject area or they may be writing papers or doing research or becoming better on the computer which can apply to the course. But in terms of teaching techniques there are some but I would like to see more. I would like to see it more universal.

Max reported that some instructors saw development of themselves professionally to be of primary importance. He suggested that some not only pursued their own discipline but they did so to the exclusion of instructional development.

> If some of my colleagues, the ones that don't go to those and I'm not being too judgmental about that I hope, people that don't go to those practices and those seminars because they are busy doing their own thing. They are doing that because that is what they are fundamentally interested in. And they see that as faculty development. Their faculty development is professional development, sometimes to the exclusion of other things.

Development of professional expertise alone was believed to be a problem by Chris who observed that students know when instructors think their professional expertise is of more

value than teaching expertise. He expressed his concern in this way:

> I mean that becomes kind of one of the equations because they try to use their experience as to what they are doing rather than good teaching. And they [the students] really are very clever about which people are really good teachers, you know, as opposed to people who think their experience is [of the utmost importance]. It's an interesting problem but I think that that would be one of the factors that I would see is that people don't see becoming a better teacher as the thing they need to do. And so they don't go after that and they really hide behind this expertise and it becomes less and less valuable.

While discipline expertise was more important than instructional expertise for some instructors, others felt that you should have the right to choose what you become involved in. Dan stated: "I think people have to have the right to choose what is important for them, and it shouldn't be imposed on them." Somewhat later in the interview he suggested that the college had not surveyed faculty to find an overall need and therefore faculty members had their own method of expressing their needs. He said:

> The problem is that I think that there is no cohesive need that has been identified, you know. Everybody has sort of their own idea of what is important for them. Some people will say, 'I don't need stress management, I need a vacation.' Right?

Drew concurred with this idea. When you are preparing a faculty development program to suit everyone, sometimes you do not present exactly what an individual needs. He stated: "Sometimes when you are training [giving a workshop] to a broad range of people it's harder to hit the mark." It was also suggested that the faculty development program had not changed significantly over time. For Darc the instructional

skills presented were similar to those presented in past years. When asked if he attended instructional development activities, he replied: "I have more in the past but I find that with the years of teaching and having been here for as long as I have that things just start repeating themselves. I'm less enthused about it [now]."

**Some instructors do not see a need.** A number of interviewees suggested a lack of comprehension of instructional needs as a possible reason for nonattendance by faculty at faculty development workshops. Other reasons pertinent to the needs issue included lack of awareness of other instructional methods, not liking their job, or possibly getting turned off by being asked to attend specific activities.

Three respondents discussed why instructors did not seek assistance on instructional issues. Drew expressed his concern about instructors not seeking advice or attending workshops when they had teaching problems. He believed that these instructors "might have been busy. They might have had any one of a million things. But when you ask me about when people have a difficulty with something, do they seek it [help]? I don't think they always do, unfortunately." A similar observation was made by Max. He added that as well as being busy, some instructors either did not care or just were not interested in faculty development.

> They are either too busy or doing other stuff. It's kind of like an I don't care attitude but I don't know why they have them. I could make up a bunch of ideas. Some of them are insecure. Some of them are afraid to

> look at what they do. I don't know. Again, this is from my own perspective but I think that some people are not particularly interested in personal development. They would just rather just let you know the status quo. No changes, you know.

How do you get these seemingly unmotivated instructors to attend instructional development workshops? Mel was a member of the College Faculty Development Committee and he said that he was unsure of how to encourage attendance. He expressed his concern: "That's what we are trying to figure out on Faculty Development. How do we move these people forward? I don't know."

It was suggested by five interviewees that some instructors may not be aware of other instructional methods or were simply not being reached by the instructional development activities that were being offered.

Drew succinctly mentioned that some instructors may not know about other teaching styles. He said: "I think that people aren't aware that there are other methods." Jess expanded on this same problem. He underscored the fact that some instructors are not as good as they should be but he also recognized there was not a large number of instructors who fit into this category. While discussing the question of how to secure more participation by instructors in development activities, he declared:

> I don't know. I'm not sure. I'm not sure. That's a very good question. Because I don't know what happened in the first place. I'm not sure if there was actually any fire there to start with and it just went out or the fire was never there. I don't know. I don't know. That's a very interesting question. How do you encourage people to start to develop [pause]? To acknowledge maybe they are not such good teachers as you

> think they should be and to encourage them to go back and to start to develop their skills. That's very difficult. I don't quite know the answer to that one. . . . They are probably not the majority. The majority here probably don't fall into that category. Perhaps because a lot of them are sessionals and don't have the same degree of commitment or whatever. There are a few just putting in time I'm sure. Every organization has them.

Perhaps some instructors who have been at the college for many years need assistance with instructional development but, according to Chris, are not involved in any of the current activities.

> I think that there is a real group of people who have been here for a long time, that I guess I would see as people who could use some of that stuff [instructional skill development activities] and perhaps aren't being reached at the present.

Chris later discussed the Instructional Skills Workshop (ISW). At these workshops, instructors critique mini-lessons given by other instructors. While he enjoyed this, he felt that it might turn some instructors away from attending again as different people require different forms of encouragement.

> I liked it [ISW]. I like some of that stuff. And I also like that direct kind of feedback. You know somebody might say, 'That is really a dumb thing to do.' Some people, if you say that to them, they will never come back, you know. So that whole process of there is different approaches for different kinds of faculty. And I think that we have a good approach in place right now for people who are motivated but I don't think we yet have reached people who not necessarily aren't motivated but are not yet connected [to the faculty development program].

Fred suggested that there was a different reason for nonattendance. He expressed regret for some instructors who believed they knew all there was to know about teaching and there was no room for instructional improvement. He posited:

"There are probably some who say you know that 'I have done this for ten years already and you can't show me how to do it better.' I feel sorry for those."

Two interviewees suggested that instructors could be asked to attend workshops. They had conflicting viewpoints of what would occur. Drew believed that if you asked an instructor, who normally would not go, to attend a specific workshop, it would have positive results.

> Maybe some of it is people not being directed or earmarked or somebody knocked them on the shoulder and said maybe you would really enjoy this and really benefit from it, a program head or somebody. Maybe they would be more apt to do it. But left totally to their own it's easy not to.

Max, on the other hand, predicted potential negative consequences of asking instuctors to attend: "I don't think you boost them by saying you have to go to faculty development workshops. That would just make them angry. They would go but they would resent it."

As noted earlier the college administration had proposed that instructors be required to obtain an instructional credential. This was a College Board initiative and one instructor believed that there would be resistance to being forced to obtain it just to please the administration. Mel agreed with the principle of getting all instructors credentialed but suggested some negative ramifications when he addressed this issue. He had talked with all full-time instructors in the program about the instructional credential and his report on their views follows:

> They are insulted that they now have to be credentialed. And I can't figure out the best way to do this. I really can't because we have a year to do it. Now we have a year to do it damn well collaboratively where everybody on their own volition decides to get credentialed. And it seems like on one hand I think we ought to be saying, 'You guys, it's the way it is. We haven't done it yet. Everybody else has. It's time to catch up. We've got to do it. Sorry and we really do respect everything you have done so far and we do respect your research and we do respect the time you have put in and what you have learned.' And this is all to placate and, yes, we admit that it's not going to weed out the bad instructors. . . . It's saying just get a credential so we can say you are all qualified teachers. It's not addressing any problems except externally placating a group of people. So we are going to lose [pause]. That's my fear is that we are going to turn even more people away instead of having them buy into it. So I think that it's really a good thing, our emphasis on that but we have got to work harder at making people who are totally burned out there, who have been through a five per cent cutback and are very demoralized, have larger classes than they have ever had, are scrapping for limited money, we are at that base level of relationship that this is mine. And now we all must get credentialed. . . . But I think that the idea of just coming down and saying we don't care if you have been teaching 22 years, you need a credential. I think people will resist it for various reasons; time, insult, demoralized [and] defensive.

While addressing the same issue Chris made a similar point. He said: "I think some of the attitude, unfortunately, is that somehow you need some kind of basic instructional instruction and as even a whiff of that comes out with some of these other messages, people get turned off."

Two interviewees expressed the viewpoint that certain instructors should not be at the college. Dan believed some instructors did not like teaching. He said: "There are lots of people who really don't like their job and they shouldn't be here." Mel attested that some instructors would retire rather than change to newer instructional methods. He

initially used an example of a specific individual and then generalized to include several instructors.

> So what he's doing, he's defensively valuing the old school, the former knowledge as a defense against not having to open up and embrace the new. . . . So I think its a slow thing and I think that there are some people who just aren't going to change and are going to retire.

Drew agreed that some instructors do not have within their make-up the ability to change. In discussing why an instructor might not become involved in activities that might cause a teaching style change, he conceded: "A lot of the personality traits come into focus. Maybe resistance to change or certain rigidity fall right into place or somebody will say that that person is not very enthusiastic when we talk about [instructional skills]."

Why do instructors not want to change? Ed suspected that instructors are scared of change. He was talking about instructors in general when he attested:

> I think that they see their position as a source of power. So to change any of that is threatening. And I think that the other side of it is people basically are fearful of change and being vulnerable and being held up for scrutiny. . . . So I think people don't like to go out on a limb. They become comfortable. Leave me alone and let me do what I have been doing.

Three other instructors also discussed their surmise that some instructors are scared to become involved in ISD activities. Darc did not believe that instructors should be forced to attend workshops because of the anxiety they may have about them. He noted: "I don't think that they can be pushed. And most of them are fearful of it or many of them are fearful of it." Max was somewhat more graphic in his

explanation of the apprehension of certain instructors to go to a workshop that had the words "Instructional Skills" in its name. He put it this way:

> I think a lot of people are scared of instructional development. It sounds like something very difficult, intangible [and] bureaucratic. You know that kind of thing. So I think that maybe what turns off a lot of those types that we talked about earlier, the ones that don't go. They look at that kind of title and they say [pause], 'What's that shit, man [laugh]?'

Although it was a tongue-in-cheek comment, he returned to this statement several times over the course of the interview, explaining each part to ensure that the entire statement was clearly understood.

Chris also discussed the trepidation instructors could face while taking the ISW (Instructional Skills Workshops). As well as explaining why instructors might have misgivings about being involved in instructional development workshops, he also gave a specific personal example.

> I don't know about other people's motivation. I mean I assume there is some fear and worry about you don't want to be discovered as being incompetent and all that kind of thing. . . . But if you have a tough time with it, if you are worried about it, if you are a bit either skeptical or paranoid about it. There is lots of reasons to believe that you're going to be embarrassed or whatever. Or that people who are doing it don't really mean it or that kind of thing. So that's too bad. . . . But there is a whole other group that aren't being touched by it, you know. So, yes, it's kind of scary. Like I have to take a driver's test every two years because I have one of those licenses where you can drive a school bus and a big van. And every time I have to take that stupid test I get anxious for about a month, thinking like if I flunk this test it's going to be really embarrassing. And that's part of the process I think for people taking the Instructional Skills Workshop. To actually have someone critique your teaching when you have been teaching for 10 or 15 or 20 years is really quite difficult.

**Value of ISD Activities**

Most of the respondents in this study participated in ISD activities, not only because they believed instructional development, in general, was important as discussed in the previous chapter, but also because they found the specific activities to be valuable. Some not only enjoyed the discourse among instructors from different disciplines but also were receptive to advice offered on specific instructional issues. There were many changes occurring at the college. In some cases entire programs were modifying their teaching strategies and this necessitated a great deal of faculty instructional development. For one program the change was to convert completely to problem-based learning (PBL). For another program, it was to move towards a more collaborative classroom learning environment. These changes required instructors not only to participate in instructional skill development activities but also to apply the skills they learned. Several interviewees noted the overall value they obtained from working with other instructors during these activities. Others listed some examples of a particular activity they found valuable.

**The value of working together**. Over half of the respondents, representing all of the college divisions, mentioned the advantages accrued by working with and talking to other instructors. These advantages ranged from a sharing

of ideas on teaching in general to suggestions of solutions for specific instructional problems.

Drew mentioned that a number of the instructors in his program had some misgivings about the proper instructional methods to utilize as the program moved towards a more collaborative approach to teaching. As a group they agreed to get together and have a general discussion on the challenge they were facing. He stated: "We all agreed it would be good to have a couple of workshops because obviously a lot of people are not that comfortable with those areas or feeling that good about what they are doing." What happens during this type of open-ended instructional workshop was mentioned by three of the interviewees. Typical of their responses about what occurred at these meetings was a statement by Ed. He explained that the instructors do "a lot of brainstorming and here's what I do in this situation and here's what you could do in that situation and so on." That is, they shared ideas back and forth. While some interviewees suggested the main source of innovative teaching methods was other instructors, Dan suggested there are many other sources of information regarding specific instructional problems, including your own previous experience. He mentioned a discussion he had with other instructors. During that discussion he stated:

> I really think that we need to change because I am not happy with how some of the aspects of the course went or even some of the classes. Like let's maybe change the focus of this topic and how could we do this better. Always looking at how you can do something better. So we took some of the suggestions from the students but

> also speaking with colleagues. And also saying OK, looking at it from our own perspective and saying this doesn't seem to be working. And my experience in the past, because I taught the course at [a university] for a couple of years. And what worked for me there. And, yes, I think that you take it from a lot of places.

On occasion a number of programs would get together for a workshop. While some instructors initially approached these joint meetings with some trepidation, the results were generally positive. Max discussed such a joint meeting. He was surprised at the number of instructional issues the two programs had in common and he was happy about the result. He explained:

> The ideas came. Yes, it worked. And what was amazing was the similarities in the kinds of teaching problems everybody had. Totally different disciplines, same problems. The core was there which reinforces, I guess, what you are doing because it is universal. It's different but still there are a lot of basic core universals.

Over half of the respondents were in programs that would have a program retreat or several workshops over a number of days at the end of a term. In an attempt to make the retreats and workshops less formal and less costly, they were generally facilitated by instructors from within the programs. Instructors would go to the workshops with problems. There was the expectation that as a result of their experience at the workshop they would have solutions to some of them. Ed explained the operation of the workshops and the positive results achieved. He stated:

> I would say that probably the majority of our sessions were handled by ourselves. Like, we would have one instructor that maybe had an expertise or an interest in something who would run a session or just coordinate the discussion. It was fairly flexible and open although we

> did have an agenda. There were certain things that we [wanted to discuss]. We all had a list of, a huge list of things that we wanted to talk about. And we needed more than the three days that we had there to get through them although we also came away with some really good ideas and plans to specifically implement some things. Which is where I think a lot of what you see in this program right now stems from, you know. The course that we have charted.

The majority of respondents gained the most value from a one-to-one talk with an instructor who had a solution to their particular problem. Two examples of how one-to-one assistance is used are proferred here. Les had a problem dealing with the large amount of time it took to grade a specific type of student project. He knew that some other programs had students do a similar project. He explained how a perfunctory discussion with one other instructor could be of enormous assistance. He noted:

> It just made a huge difference. And that was a very casual encounter over coffee one day. Actually I think I went to see him and said, 'Who does this in your program because I'm going crazy.' And he had ideas.

The suggestions turned out to be enormously advantageous for him. Darc had a similar experience. He did not feel pressured to try some new techniques and appreciated someone explaining to him an alternative approach to a particular issue. He explained:

> He hasn't pushed me but he shows me what he does and that's how I got on to some of this stuff. So it's by an example by somebody and he's about my age. And you just see it and say that's great. That sounds like a really good idea. Let me try it.

All of the respondents talked about the innovations that were occurring in their programs and the requisite changes in teaching styles required to accommodate the innovations. The

process of changing teaching style for instructors usually had three facets:

- There had to be a personal acceptance that change must occur.
- There must be room for flexibility to accommodate differences in the preferences and styles of instructors.
- Some instructors are more prone to attempt change strategies than others.

The first point was exemplified by Chris. He explained how hard it is to change but if you do change it can arouse a renewed interest in teaching:

> It has been a real challenge for all of our staff to stop doing what you've been doing and do things differently. You know it really is hard to let go of some of those methods. But it has been very exciting.

Secondly, within the general framework of a major change in teaching style, you must allow instructors to determine their own individual personal style. Dan stated:

> I think that we have to allow some flexibility and some freedom. And so . . . I had to try and balance that sense of OK, we are all going to agree to use a particular strategy but within the framework of that strategy you know how many things do we lay on. And so I think what you do is you try to make it as flexible within that confine as you can.

It was suggested that the capacity for flexibility varies with each individual, as some instructors are more prone to attempting new methods than others. This was aptly explained by Drew when he said:

> I might try something more readily than some people because, getting back to Myers-Briggs, the profile that I wound up being would probably lend me to do that whereas some people might resist something that created change without a fair bit of trying.

**Specific examples**. While some respondents mentioned the general value teaching workshops had for them, others listed specific examples of the benefits they obtained from an instructional skill development activity. Max explained a situation that he found particularly valuable -- an ongoing workshop with a theme of linking every learning activity with a specific objective. Initially, he thought the process was useless but later realized the writing of objectives assisted in the organization of his classes. He attested:

> Everything was objectives. What are your objectives? What are your objectives? And accountability of achievement of objectives. So we wrote objective lists endlessly there for a while. Up the ying yang. But that was good. I mean I started to do that and that reorganized my thinking about how to organize material, how to organize curriculum. So that was useful.

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, some entire programs were changing the instructional methods used in all classes in the program. In one program, the instructional shift was to a more student centered teaching style. The classes were to focus on learner needs as opposed to instructor preferences. Chris explained the teaching style adaptation that instructors were required to make to accommodate these new methods.

> The other thing that we have done that's part of the empowerment thing and it's really been directly affecting our teaching is to really look at collaborative and cooperative learning. And to say to ourselves, I mean that's a real challenge to shift from a teacher-directed learning to a much more student kind of organized and directed and controlled, student-controlled kind of learning.

He then discussed how students in the cooperative learning environments must work in groups for much of the class time.

The grading of group participation was a new challenge for many of the program instructors. Chris explained the reason he did not have difficulty with this new challenge. In describing the processes he used for utilizing and grading cooperative student work he stated:

> They not only get marked on the quality of the assignment [but] also part of their mark is the quality of their teamwork. And a lot of that stuff [how to use and mark group work] came from going to faculty development things.

All the respondents talked about specific instructional issues that they shared information about, assisted someone else with, or received assistance on. A sample of the comments taken from the three interviewees who taught in the same division exhibits the wide ranging areas considered.

Dan mentioned bringing ideas back from conferences to share with others.

> With the problem-based learning . . . what happened is we actually had a gal who was quite innovative and we had heard about problem-based learning. She had gone to a conference and when we do go to conferences we always bring it back. We bring back this great new idea about whatever because we do work very closely together.

Drew explained a workshop in one discipline area which dealt with marking student papers.

> We had a faculty development day during faculty development week where we just had a grading workshop. And we all took a look at a number of papers that were unmarked. Different instructors handed them out and we all graded them and then we looked at how congruent we were and discussed our marking and tried to come together, as best we could, on what marks represent.

Darc had learned how to use a new computer program. He explained:

> [I taught] myself to use a computer package, a graphics package, Powerpoint, to project my lecture notes onto the screen directly off the computer for all my lecture presentations for a particular course. . . . Since it was taught in the computing lab this was a new step for me, to teach [my course] in the computing lab. It was a new, novel experience. And I found it very enjoyable -- very, very stimulating.

Other instructors became interested in the use of the computer program. The interviewer probed: "Have other instructors asked you how to do it?" Darc responded:

> Yes, they sometimes ask. Yes. Because most of the people here in [our] department who are on a regular basis now have new computers and they have that kind of package on their machines. So they come and ask me sometimes.

## Chapter Summary

The respondents in this study identified many reasons for their participation in ISD activities. Eight of the twelve participants went to all the activities they could make time for. Some programs offered more ISD workshops than did others. Nearly half of the participants attended because they enjoyed them and "it was fun." A small number went because they were asked to or because they thought they were supposed to. Every participant noted that their presence at ISD activities was predicated on the assumption that they would obtain useful ideas regarding instruction. ISD was viewed as important by many participants. They also believed that a core of college instructors usually participated in most ISD activities.

Reasons for non-participation in ISD were many and varied. Time was seen as a major obstacle to attendance. The reasons given were as follows:

- The activities were offered at an inopportune time.
- Marking took precedence over time to attend.
- The normal or extra imposed work in the regular college program took too much time.

It was suggested by several of the interviewees that possibly some instructors are not interested in ISD activities, do not see a need for them, or find little value in them. Two respondents believed that instructors should be forced to attend and three stated that some instructors are scared to attend.

Respondents gleaned much value from other instructors, both in one-on-one meetings and in workshops, to assist them with their instructional problems. Often these problems dealt with mandated instructional methodology changes within programs. The facility with which instructors dealt with change varied from instructor to instructor, but it was deemed important that instructors be flexible and open to change.

The study participants discussed many examples of the merit of involvement in instructional skill development activities. Faculty development workshops could be used to brainstorm possible alternatives or to share ideas. Help was obtained primarily from other instructors both in the same and different programs. Changes were always occurring. This necessitated that instructors be willing not only to accept

change but also to be flexible in adopting newer instructional methods.

There were specific instructional issues which required attention as well. Again, respondents received from, or gave assistance to, other instructors on topics ranging from grading to computer usage.

A general theme that emerged was that participants were excited about learning new or innovative teaching methods. The findings of this chapter are appropriately summarized in Mel's comments:

> Coming here was my first real introduction to the idea of examining the way in which you teach [pause] teach! Not just what you teach, not just the kind of negotiations you go on with problem students because that's when you really start becoming aware of how you are teaching. You know you can enjoy the charisma you are feeling when you are in there with a straight A student and everything you say, you know you've got this discourse that you are high on. But you really are grappling with that low-level student that's ticked off too with all this kind of tension that you are dealing with. This was my first introduction to actually having a positive attitude, having a plan, having alternatives, and being self-conscious as a teacher.

The innumerable workshops, meetings and discussions allowed instructors to plan for better instruction. Mel's statements highlight the value that this combination of activities has for improving teaching practice for instructors.

# CHAPTER 6

## WHY INSTRUCTORS STRIVE TO LEARN MORE ABOUT TEACHING

Why do instructors strive to learn more about teaching? The literature review revealed few findings useful in addressing this question. Many interviewees tied the reasons they wanted to learn how to teach better to specific ISD activities they were involved in that affected their instructional practice in the classroom.

This chapter discusses the reasons that interviewees gave for wanting to learn more about teaching. It also includes a sample of the ISD activities they were involved in that transferred directly to their teaching practice.

### Learning More About Teaching

Many reasons were given by the respondents as to why they wanted to learn more about teaching. For many of them their reasons related directly to their philosophy of education. This philosophy dealt with such matters as the diversity of the student population, the determination that they wanted to be good teachers, or their simple enjoyment of teaching and their belief that it was important to keep up-to-date in their instructional methods.

**Applying an Educational Philosophy**

Over half of the respondents, representing all college divisions, offered their own personal educational philosophy. Their comments were unsolicited and usually given in response to a completely different question. They were generally given to provide a personal context for the answer to a seemingly unrelated issue. The philosophy for one instructor involved the teaching style used in all classes. For others, the philosophy called for a more full understanding of the students or themselves.

Ted believed there are two distinct bipolar methods of teaching. You can either take people by the hand and guide them every step of the way or you can allow them to go on their own. If they require assistance you are there to help. He called the two styles "training wheels" and "crash and burn." He believed his preference for the one style created a classroom atmosphere which stimulated an ongoing commitment to learning by students. He was discussing a course that he had not enjoyed taking as a student and was now required to teach.

> I remember taking it as a student and teaching it and being boring and brutal. What a waste of time. Nobody understood when you finished so we had a half an hour discussion about the analogy that I put out. I said 'How do you teach a kid how to ride a bike?' Do you give him his bike and send him out onto the street? I mean sooner or later he will learn or you put training wheels on him and you walk with him, every, every step of every, every mile until he gets it. And so we have a training wheels approach and we have a crash and burn approach. And where one student articulated it perfectly, was skiing in this country has typically been by crash and burn because our parents don't ski. We just go out and put skis on and we figure out how to do

> it. And there have been some very good skiers learn that way. On the other side of the coin, hockey. There isn't a parent in Canada or coach and I'm a hockey coach, that doesn't know the right way to do it. How many times have we told kids playing hockey, 'No, no, you have to do it this way.' Well, thank God, Wayne Gretzky didn't listen because you know he went and stood behind the net when everybody knew that was wrong. So obviously I have some bias in terms of how we do it. . . . The crash and burn thing. The crash and burn style intrigues me in that regard. The training wheels is what we have been doing here for decades. The crash and burn one. I was involved with cooperative education in accounting and that's what I did. And that's a lot of crash and burn, you know. It's a lot of go out and experience it and make sure that you learn from your errors and go from there. I think that's where we are going to make the greatest headway. I don't know what the formal application of crash and burn is but that's where we are going to make the headway. . . . So that's helping me come to grips with what I've done and who I am and how I pull it off. . . . I don't have lesson notes or whatever. Get out of here, man! Because what you are going to do is teach and that's not what we are here for. We've got to go with the flow, we've got to set vision and objectives and walk in there. But what if it doesn't work? I say [laugh], 'Go for coffee, you know. Right.' . . . I just have faith in the people that are sitting there. These are intelligent people. And how can I create an environment for life long and continuous learning if I teach? So that maybe I'm starting just now to develop philosophies about things like that.

About 15 minutes later in the interview Ted returned to the same topic. While discussing the many changes occurring in the college, he suggested that he would like to work with others that had a similar view of instructional style.

> As the environments change that old paradigm [training wheels] becomes irrelevant. So it's not change for the sake of change. It's putting our values and our beliefs on the table and saying, 'Are they still relevant? If they are, keep them. If they're not let them go.' So, away we go. That's maybe my philosophy of what we are doing. And if I can find people that help me do that, if I can find people that turn me on, people that go outside the box [traditional style], never expecting to go back, then away we go. Cool!

One of the instructor interviewees had previously been an administrator. Fred explained his personal philosophy in terms of the type of instructor he would have hired in his previous administrative position. He believed that all instructors required three categories of knowledge. The first two were to know the subject area and know how to teach. The most important of the three, however, was to know that teaching is a human activity. He also intimated that instructors who did not subscribe to the third point should not be teaching.

> I guess one other issue comes from my years in administration. I have recruited a lot of instructors. And I guess early in that experience the question that comes up when you interview these 12 people and you have to make a decision on one of them, what really are we looking for? And I guess there are three main categories that became evident to me: One - they have to know their subject area. If they are going to be teaching math they should know math. If they don't and someone else does, then certainly that someone else will be in a better position. The second important aspect was knowing the content and ability to teach. Can they teach? Do they know something about instruction? Do they know something about the way people learn? Do they know how to sit down and make notes and prepare an instructional plan? And we ask questions specifically to them. I was impressed with some of them. I've interviewed a lot of people. I think that's valid. We ask that of a lot of people, some of them with an educational background. They just sort of wander in with the assumption that if they have done the degree that they know it. The third thing and very important aspect was, does the person really understand and accept that education is a human activity? You are dealing with humans. You are not teaching animals, you are teaching students and the math happens to be what it is that you are teaching to them. And so we try to assess whether the person has an understanding or acceptance of the educational activity as a human activity and realizing who they were working with. They weren't solving equations or they weren't doing balance sheets. They were teaching students how to do equations or how to do balance sheets. And we interviewed somebody with an accounting background. And they didn't see that they

> were dealing with students. They didn't see the importance of the plan for instruction and for learning. Then they probably shouldn't be working at that [teaching].

Although he expressed it somewhat differently, Max also believed in the three areas of knowledge required by instructors. He also added it takes more than professional knowledge to make an instructor. He explained:

> I believe in the holistic kind of person from an educator's point of view, from a personal point of view, and I include my own work in a classroom. When I walk into a classroom, or a seminar or something, it involves every molecule of me, of my brain and mind and my body and my spirit. . . . I am including expertise in my own field. I am including how to teach it but then a third component which I call personal development, people making. I don't know how you describe that. . . . But at the same time, as a teacher I have to be more than just a professional. I know lots of professionals who are absolutely wonderful at what they did in their work and were terrible at teaching. Either they didn't know how to teach or they really couldn't organize their thoughts or they had no empathy with people or I don't know. There is a whole list of those kinds of things I guess. And maybe that would be a list of what would make a good teacher. To me, what makes a good teacher is a combination of a bunch of stuff. Well, it's professional development. I mean knowing your field. Knowing how to teach and then having that other kind of amorphous thing called, you know, being a human being and being someone students can relate to.

Somewhat later in the interview, Max described the circumstances which prompted his first thought about his educational philosophy and what it took to be an instructor. It was during his first teaching experience. It caused him to reflect upon himself and his teaching future. This is how the event was described.

> So they were a very stimulating class about 16 years old, grade 11 and I was scared brainless. I walked in and I had never taught a class. I had never got up and talked in front of anybody before. So I got in there and because I really knew my subject, I found out

> knowing my subject really helped with these guys. Particularly with these guys. But it was stimulating because they started asking questions that I had to really draw on a lot of my experience and my knowledge and stuff. And I came out of there just [pause] it was very stimulating. I was excited about teaching after that because it was such a blast. Like here was a bunch of young kids that were bright and motivated and interesting. So I enjoyed that. So I guess maybe that's where I discovered the idea of teaching and discovered a part of myself that I didn't know about.

For Jess, the important aspect of teaching also involved this human dimension. He was explaining his own life as a student. As a 16-year-old he was told that he "would not benefit from further education." This had a large impact on his life and eventually on his teaching career. He enjoyed working with students who were marginalized or did not "fit the category of normal student." The human aspect for him was called the "emotional context." He liked to push students to speak out, particularly on social issues. He explained at times it was not what students wanted when they took his class but he firmly believed that it created more effective instruction.

> They just wanted to come here and do a few multiple choice exams and pass the course and leave. Right? And I'm saying sorry, I'm not going to do that. What I am going to do is I'm really going to engage with you as an individual and encourage you to engage with your peers and with the material. And you have to take some of the responsibility for your learning in that. And I will be there. I will support you through that process but you have got to take some risks. And, sometimes, people get quite angry in that process. And the anger will turn around onto the instructor. And I think when that happens and this comes back to this whole notion of the classroom as an emotional battleground, I think that we have to be strong as instructors not to take it too personally. . . . I think the main comment, the main observation I would make is that to recognize that instruction takes place within an emotional context. And you can be the most knowledgeable person in the

> world, you can have the best kind of technologies at your disposal in the world but if you don't address the emotional context in which you work, then you will not be as effective as you could be.

This effectiveness was described by Dan as a balancing act. It required the instructor to maintain a healthy learning environment. He felt it was important to have a positive outlook on life and to treat students as people.

> So it's a real balancing act. I think what you do is you try to balance your own mental wellness. I think this is very important because if you don't feel good about yourself and your life, how do you then provide an environment which is healthy for your students? And so I think that you have to balance all of those kinds of things. . . . You balance your life. You're a role model in many ways, professionally, personally and all those other ways. . . . In terms of personal development, instructional development, I have already said this, I think, that you have to feel good about yourself. You have to be mentally well. You have to feel positive about life and about your students as people.

**Learning How to Teach**

In response to the question: "Why do you attend instructional skills activities?", all interviewees discussed the necessity to learn more about how to teach. While they all agreed it was important to learn more about how to teach, there was a host of personal reasons why they felt it was important. Some wanted to be more effective in the classroom. Possibly a class did not go as well as they thought it should and they wanted to know why. Others believed that the diversity of their student population required a multitude of instructional styles. For some it was simply that they did not know how to teach or there was a

"critical event" in their lives that suggested they should learn more about how to instruct.

It was important for several respondents to be as effective as possible while instructing. Fred believed that teaching as a profession was important. In response to the question: "Is teaching important?", he stated: "Yes. If it weren't, then we shouldn't be doing it. I think it is. We are doing it and I think that we have to look at doing it the most effective way possible in order to enhance learning." Later he explained why teaching is important.

> I have always enjoyed teaching. . . . I take the teaching role very, very seriously. And I think that I have known people like that who sort of think that once you have taught, you have taught and there is a finite number of tricks in that bag and once you have them, then there is no need to improve. I don't subscribe to that theory. I think there are always new ways of looking at things and the reason that I participate in those activities is that it makes me more effective in the classroom and that is a growth experience for me and that's why I take them, to be as effective as I possibly can in the classroom.

Some respondents believed that at times it was difficult to help students with their learning. They felt a need to find a better way of presenting material, especially if they had a particular class that had not gone well. Ed explained one such class:

> I was worn out. I was coming out of that class because it was like beating a dead horse, you know. I was trying to get them excited, trying to, you know talking to them. Trying to find out a little bit about them, connect with them on a different level, anything and it wasn't working. And I thought, what is it? What did I miss along the road here? What signpost did I not [see]?

Darc explained that the experience of having a class that does not go well must be accepted as a part of teaching.

> Well, what's the use? I mean I can lecture in my office [laugh]. It would make my life a hell of a lot easier. But, nevertheless, I have to face 150 students every term. And it's still, every time, no matter how long I have done it, the first class, I have butterflies. What is it going to be like? What is the year going to be like? What is the term going to be like? How well are they going to learn? What can I teach them? And how well will they succeed? How will we get along? And sometimes you find that there is just no way, whatever you try, it just doesn't work because the mix isn't there. And you have to accept that and you have to struggle through it for that term.

What is this "mix?" What combinations create it? All interviewees discussed the college's heterogeneous student population. For some it was diversity in backgrounds or learning styles. For others it was the different personalities in a class. They also concurred that it was the instructors' responsibility to adapt to the miscellaneous needs of students. The diversity of student backgrounds was referred to as a challenge by Jess:

> You've got to know what you are there for but you have to be able to deliver that in a way that is going to be meaningful for a diverse classroom of 30 odd students. And in our program we can have anything from someone with a Master's in Divinity right through to someone who barely made a grade eight education. And somehow we have to create a learning environment within that classroom that meets all those diverse interests. And that to me is quite a challenge.

Fred also discussed the diversity of students but from the viewpoint of varying skill levels and learning styles and suggested that the instructor must accommodate them.

> In the college we not only have people with varying skill levels but even for the same concepts they have varying styles and ways of doing things. And you've got to be able to adjust to that. There are ways, different

> ways of doing things. The student might say now that's not how we did it and well they're not wrong. They probably did it in another way and a correct way and you've got to be able to adjust and adapt your instruction to meet their needs too. . . . You've got to constantly be aware of their individual differences and you've got to make adjustments for them.

Ed agreed that it was the instructor's responsibility to adjust his style to meet student needs. However, he believed the diversity existed as individual and class personalities and that your standard instructional skills will not work in certain situations unless they are modified. He stated:

> The skills. You rely too much just on the skills. And you assume that every time that you go into the classroom that the same skills will serve you in the same way. And they won't. Because just as you have a different personality from all 40 students, your classroom also has its own unique personality which is a combination of all of those 40. . . . And so your skills are not going to help you if you don't somehow deal with that and read it. So to me, I can't see it without personality.

Why should an instructor adapt to each student? Chris succinctly said: "Unless the student is engaged in doing what they want to do or doing what is useful for them, it's not going to work." That is, the student will not learn if the instructional style does not attend to their needs.

To determine if student needs have been met, Mel analyzed the positive and negative aspects of each class. He used an analogy wherein he compared the utilization of a different teaching style to moving furniture to a different place in his office. He put it this way:

> So for me, it's been natural to review what I have done every day and think what could I do differently that didn't work today. What happened with this situation? What went wrong here? When did it begin to go wrong? What was my position? Was it defensive? Did I buy into

> this? Did I cause it to happen? And I think about these things. Just the same way I would look at that [gesture to table] and say, now why is that over there? What would happen if I put it right here [gesture to beside desk]? This is all wrong here. I've got to move it over here. This is having a bad thing on this. When they are separate they work okay but when they are together they don't. And that's the same thinking that I am doing. I critique my teaching at the end of each class, especially if there has been something wrong or something right.

It was mentioned by Fred that an instructor must be aware of individual differences in students and accommodate them. He further suggested that the instructor was the one who must make adjustments, not the students.

> It's easy to get in front of a classroom or even working with students in small groups and take one glance at them and say this is how I want to do this in terms of meeting the needs of everybody. Well, it may not because they may not all learn in the same way. And unless you are aware of that and are able to approach things differently with different people, you may find that a quarter of them don't learn then. I guess what they used to say in years gone by was that person can't learn well. That's not the case. That person was not very well taught.

Instructors should understand when they must make adjustments to their teaching style. Jess was very clear in explaining that the first step for an instructor is to realize his shortcomings. He summarized: "A lot of our students in our classrooms are from different cultural backgrounds. And I am feeling fairly inadequate in that area. The starting point of course is to know your inadequacies. It's always the starting point in change."

For Mel, realizing there was a problem and solving it were two different things. He did not understand how he

learned, so he questioned what must be done to instruct others.

> When I had my own class the following year, my full TA, that was my first year of teaching. The thing that hit me the most was the diversity of people, the diversity of their abilities, and how I was to train them to go from this to this. And how to articulate what I knew. I didn't know how to say what I knew and I didn't know how I'd gotten where I was. You know, like how did I learn everything I'd learned. It was through bad teachers, good teachers, my own drive, a whole combination of these. But I couldn't think of any one lesson that somebody had taught where I made a move. It was this gradual thing where I gleaned all of this information that amounted to me in graduate school. And so I had to start thinking about how I was going to move them when I didn't know how I had gotten myself there.

Ted explained what must be done. He described his first teaching experience after being hired part time to teach an evening class. As he had not taught before, he approached the assignment with some trepidation and with a preconceived notion of what was required. He put it this way:

> I had this expectation that a student expects the teacher to know everything. Well, man I studied. So that night I showed up with 25 people in the class. I had to put my papers down because I was shaking so much. I could feel myself sweat so I didn't dare take off my coat because I didn't want these people to see me sweating. When I got home I realized I had sweated so much there was sweat stains on the outside of my coat. The last class of ten, there were three people showed up and one guy fell asleep. That's a true story. Dead cold asleep, three people. And I accepted at that point that what I was doing wasn't teaching. It was awful. Awful experience. So I made it, to use the words of a close friend of mine [personal name], my personal challenge to figure this out. So away we went. One thing led to another and there was a series of very good lucky coincidences to get me to where I'm at today. So that was my critical event.

Because he had a terrible time with his first teaching assignment, he resolved to find out how to teach. This

initial teaching experience became a key point in his life as an instructor.

**The Desire to Change and Try New Things**

All respondents discussed the reasons why they wanted to learn more about teaching. Some were bored teaching the same way all the time. Some wanted to try as many different methods as possible. This required them to change but most did not have a problem with change. The change process was the way in which they grew as instructors. Some instructors were passionate about trying new methods as it gave more flexibility in dealing with varying classroom circumstances.

Teaching the same course the same way became tedious for many of the respondents. They wanted something to change or felt that they had to change. Darc stated that he wanted "something new, something new. I need something new. I get easily bored, you know, and so do my students probably." Morgan cautioned against an instructor teaching the same way year after year. He stated: "If you don't evolve some at least, it gets pretty boring, doing the same things over and over without any new approach. That's pretty sick." In order to relieve boredom Ed was always trying to find new methods of presenting material to his classes. He explained:

> I don't like stagnation. I get bored if I have to do the same thing all the time. And so, in order for me not to fall into that trap regarding a course in particular, I am always constantly researching. I am always looking for different ways to present the same material. I am looking for new exercises to do in class and even maybe looking for ways to relax my own

> expectations so that I can facilitate their expectations or whatever. Whatever it takes.

Interviewees also suggested that, if you didn't change, you were not staying the same but were regressing. Dan said:

> For me, as a teacher, I always feel that you should be moving forward. OK? In other words never, ever would I feel that I could use the same materials year after year after year. That I could use the same exams. You have to be constantly changing and improving because if you are not moving forward, you are sliding backwards.

The ability to move forward, to maintain one's enthusiasm for class, required that you have the instructional resources to use in each instructional situation as it arises. Jess explained: "I think that it was [Steven] Brookefield [who] talks about teachable moments and you grab them as they come out of thin air. And you have to be alert to those."

Respondents discussed the facility of instructors to seize and use the "teachable moments." This entailed creativity, risk-taking, trying new classes and changing one's normal teaching style. It was necessary to be imaginative in your presentations because students in the classes had a variety of learning styles and backgrounds and this could possibly impinge on student learning. Jess stated:

> People come in all shapes and sizes and intellectual capacities and have various distractions in their lives. How do you respond to all those different people? And I think that the reality is, that in any one class there will be a few people that you don't have sitting on the edge of their seats, for whatever reason. They might be worried about their kids at home or something like that. But what I try and do is use a diverse range of techniques. I don't spend much money on instructional, what would you call them, artifacts or things that you use in the classroom. I try to be fairly creative in what I use.

If a class does not go as well as you think it should, then you must try something else. Often this required risk-taking on the part of the instructor. Several interviewees discussed instructional risk-taking in the classroom. Darc explained that his ideas did not necessarily come from faculty development workshops but mainly from his previous experiences. He described his source for ideas this way:

> I think it comes from a number of places. I mean some people come up with it right away maybe. They might get it from a seminar or a workshop but that's not how I was brought up or how I was trained. So over the years with experience, you have tried so many things and you know yourself, in your heart it isn't working. So you have to take some risks.

Dan concurred that there was an element of risk-taking in the classroom but this was necessary to ensure originality in teaching. He explained:

> So we are very dedicated and willing to try new and innovative approaches. . . . I am truly very committed to trying whatever helps in that process to make learning fun and different and innovative. . . . The thing is that it's not always successful. The things you do aren't always successful. I have never had an absolute failure but I have always come away from a class saying it didn't really go as well as I would have liked. How could I change that, you know? But never afraid to try anything new. Heavens, I mean you have to be a risk taker in life.

About half of the respondents did not have a problem with changing and trying new instructional styles. A method used by Darc to continually update himself was teaching different classes. He put it this way:

> Another thing I like and I think it is important for continuous development is, I ask my department head to give me different groups of students every so often. I say if I have taught a group of Commerce students in an English university course for a couple of years, I get tired of it. And so then I switch to Social Workers or

> something like that. They have a different makeup as a class, different interests you know. And this Spring I taught a group of Nursing Students. I had never taught them before. And those are new experiences that really keep you on your toes and they keep you fresh and you gain from it and they bring a different perspective to what they read than the others. So that is important too.

Ed did not have problems with change. He actually found change to be exhilarating but believed some instructors might not accommodate change as well as he did. He expressed his view this way:

> One thing that I don't have a problem with is change. I don't mind change because to me it is exciting. . . . I know that, personality-wise, there are lots of differences and that different people worry about different things. But that again is related to change and their adaptability to it.

Willingness to change and grow had a significant effect on an instructor who initially wanted to retire. Ted was describing a friend who was examining an alternate profession until he became involved in a number of faculty development workshops. Ted described the effect of this as follows:

> [Now] he wants to expand and learn. And retirement started to become with him something that may or may not happen. When I first met him that was his goal. He had had enough. He was an old war horse. He had had enough. He was a traditional faculty [member]. And the only difference between him and traditional faculty at other institutions was he cared so much about the students. You know sometimes he had tears in his eyes. So he's starting to grow. He's starting to get outside the box [traditional style]. He's starting to explore things. He's much more receptive to alternative opinions [teaching styles].

Nearly half of the interviewees contributed similar stories. Darc was exhausted after teaching many years and believed "something new" would allow him to have a better academic year. He said: "Sometimes I'm tired, after this

many years of teaching. And some of these things that we have talked about, they keep me going. And unless I come up with something new in September, I will have a miserable year."

Doing different things added interest to Ed's classes. He stated: "You can pull all kinds of interesting stuff. But Management generically speaking is not the most exciting. So, I mean you have got to put a little life into it."

For Les, changes over time made him more adaptable in the classroom. He noted: "I think you can learn and change and do things differently all the time. And I am a whole lot more flexible, the more I teach."

A number of instructors deemed the ability to change and try new techniques to be extremely important from a student viewpoint. They believed good instructional skills allowed you to meet the needs of all students. Jess believed students were the most important thing for him. He described a meeting he attended.

> I end up talking about budgets and all that kind of stuff. But that's not my passion. I can't get passionate about that kind of stuff the way I do about teaching. So I am very student centered and I think that's how it should be and when I stop being student centered I should probably stop teaching and do something else.

At times a department may agree to use a particular instructional style but there was a degree of freedom which allowed instructors to try any of the teaching strategies they knew.

> When you make a commitment as a faculty to go with a particular teaching strategy, you have to agree to give

> up some of your academic freedom because academic freedom means that you are free to choose your own methodology. Right? Not particularly because when you do a course, you have course objectives and we all know that those course objectives are pretty standard. But we know that our approach to getting the student to meet those objectives is our right to do that any way we see as appropriate. To use our own skills and strengths.

Mastering new methods of teaching, learning new instructional styles, attending workshops and not being afraid to attempt the use of a new skill gave instructors the experience to deal with the diversity of students in any class. Fred explained:

> Being an instructor and being a professional instructor I think that it is important to remain abreast of new developments, new ways of doing things, new ways of thinking about things and I think that adds to that repertoire of skills that an instructor has to have. I think that it allows more options for an instructor in terms of the preparation for delivery of instruction You've got different ways of preparing, different ways of planning for instruction. ISW [Instructional Skills Workshop] is one particular model but there are others and I think that just having that background allows one the flexibility to be able to deal with the varying classroom circumstances.

**Good Instructors Like to Learn**

The good instructors at the college were widely known. They were involved in instructional skill development activities; students in their classes learned from them and liked them. The instructors were personable, and they relished learning themselves. Over half of the interviewees believed that most instructors could be trained to fit into this category.

When Ted was describing a good instructor, he initially gave two specific examples of instructors whose teaching was

good and whose material was relevant to the students. He then spent some time relating what he believed was the opposite to a good instructor. He explained:

> Some people just teach, see, it's just so foreign to where I'm at. Some people just think that their job is to take the textbook, the ten lessons and teach them. Holy Smokes! Whoa, whoa, just wait a sec. In fact, I will even go as far to say, and I don't have any evidence to support this, maybe that might be your research project, some of these people actually believe that everything that they are teaching out of those ten lessons in the textbook, that's the way the world works. Man, in accounting, for example, I've got news for them. Like manual accounting systems and stuff, like whoa! Whoa, just wait a minute. Now that's not to say it's not useful; it's useful because you've got to exercise the mind. One of the things we're doing here is we're training people's minds to work. And so purely academic subjects are valuable in that regard. But to think that our job is to teach from the textbook because it's relevant is sorely misinformed.

Fred explained what should be done to make these instructors more effective. He recalled several discipline specialists that had been hired over the years that were not effective in the classroom. He described not only what should be done but also the steps being taken at the college to alleviate this situation. He stated:

> I might talk about something else for a minute. How I took a workshop I found to be extremely valuable. In my days of being a teacher in education, one of the frustrations that I had was an acceptance which probably helped me reform the framework we had talked about earlier about recruitment. We hired subject area experts, people who knew their field well and were to teach and they weren't very good at it. And I guess when I look back now, we were making the assumption that when you know the content that you can teach it. That's not all. That's a false assumption. And I guess we probably as an institution have some obligation to do some kind of orientation with these people, so that they could take this content that they had prepared and be able to plan and structure it, in a manner that others could learn by. And I guess that's why in this place, we have adopted the ISW's as a vehicle to provide people

> with that second level, that teaching method level, that second concept that I talked about, the instructional planning for people who, that perhaps don't have a lot of experience in teaching but who are interested in growth in that area. I think that's important. And that leads to a greater overall effectiveness to what we do in the classroom.

This step taken by the college to improve instruction through the implementation of the instructional skills workshops was taken to create more effective instructors. There was a concern expressed that not all instructors would be willing to take this step towards improving effectiveness. Chris believed there was a small number who would not improve and they should be let go.

> I think that you kind of have a triage. There is about a third of your group who are going to, in spite of what you do with them, are going to improve. There is about a third of the group that really are waiting for opportunities and it has to be clearly to their advantage to do it. But if in fact you present it correctly or attractively they will go for it. And I don't think that group has really been reached yet. And I think there is another third of the group that you have to in some ways say this is part of your job. And I think about half of that bottom third will improve and the other half you have to get rid of.

Most of the interviewees believed that the majority of instructors would improve their instructional technique over time. For several instructors, however, instructional techniques and discipline knowledge were not enough in themselves to make a good teacher. They expressed another component of a good instructor. Their comments were similar to Max who stated:

> But that kind of reinforced it, I think. That it was good to have, well the kinds of things we were talking about a minute ago. It was good to have knowledge of your subject and knowledge about how to teach. Again there was that other kind of magical undefined element

> called self, that came across. I don't know whether I would go out on a limb far enough to say that's what makes a good teacher. I don't know but I suspect it has something to do with it. The teachers that I think they were good teachers had that element, which is hard to define. Something beyond just strictly the education and methods.

Jess echoed this same idea but also asserted that this human element made for better relations with students. He believed students would learn better if they liked their instructor. He stated: "I feel that people learn best from people they like and respect. And I don't know if that is always true, but I certainly think that's true a lot of the time." He also claimed that students knew who the good instructors were and would offer that information to others. He described the good teachers he had heard about.

> But the real core, the passionate teachers, you know where they are. They are around here. And you hear about them. You hear about them from other students who say I took this course over in Arts and Science and so and so is an excellent teacher.

The process of becoming a good instructor involved learning new things. Half of the respondents discussed the enjoyment they received from acquiring new skills. After taking part in a number of instructional workshops, Chris reflected on his profession and stated his expectation that he would continue to examine new instructional methods. He stated:

> And then as I started to really see myself as a teacher, then I made some shifts to doing some more of the learning transactions. Kind of looking at things. And I think that that is a process that I hopefully won't stop. I mean I find that I learn stuff all the time.

Fred had a previous occupation in the business world. He compared his work in the two occupations and explained why he preferred his present one.

> The two of them involve different skills and doing it in the business office and doing it in the classroom where others are supposed to be learning it, while they have similar content, involve very different skills and if I didn't enjoy the learning part of it, I wouldn't do the teaching.

Again, it was the enjoyment of learning which was important to him. The value gained from learning new methods was more firmly stated by Ed. He believed that his growth as an instructor was directly related to his ongoing commitment to learning. He expressed it this way:

> Oh, growth and learning. I think that when you stop learning, you stop living. And if I had only one reason, I couldn't have any other, I could only pick one reason, it would be so that I would continue to learn. Because the more I learn the better I get. You know, I mean, you could have a big bag of things to draw from and you don't have to use them all or you could have a little and you could use them all, all the time. And to me it's the learning. If I'm willing to learn at my age and can learn, then I can maybe pass that excitement on to my students.

Ted not only described his need for continued learning but also gave an example of knowledge he had acquired which was used to enhance student learning.

> I've got to learn. That's why I am here. I've got to learn about whatever. I've got to learn about the golf swing, I've got to learn about management accounting and performance evaluation, I've got to learn about learning and teaching. Learning styles was a revelation to me; as old hat and mundane as that is, it's still intriguing to me and I still work with every class regardless of what subject it is. We sit down and we pull out some learning styles stuff and have a go at it. Have this discovery because it helps them learn.

The enjoyment derived from acquiring new knowledge was commented on succinctly by Mel. He read the brochure listing the topics for an upcoming series of workshops and described how he felt. He said, "I actually felt really excited when I saw this because I thought I might be able to learn something. This is exciting. I love learning. I love learning and this was a new thing to learn."

**Wanting to Be a Good Teacher**

Respondents from each college division--representing over half of the interviewees--expressed, without prompting, a desire to be a good teacher. There was a host of different reasons for wanting this. The reasons included fear of not doing a good job, self worth, survival in a limited job market or wanting to be the best you could be in an occupation in which you invest a lot of time.

Dan wanted to do the best he could for students. This had an ongoing effect on him for he wondered: "My biggest fear is, will I do a good job?" Chris not only wanted to be the best that he could be, he also wanted to continually enrich his instructional methods. He proffered: "I think I always want to be as good as I can at what I am doing. You know, the whole idea of constantly trying to improve what's happening."

Some instructors believed if you invest a lot of time into your job, there should be some intangible rewards. You

should really enjoy it or it should enhance your sense of self-worth. Jess explained:

> Well, if you going to work for eight hours a day or, like here in this program, ten hours a day, you might as well enjoy it. I have always been a very enthusiastic person in everything I have done and when my enthusiasm goes, I usually leave the job. If you are going to spend eight or ten hours a day in your job, you might as well make it worthwhile. Otherwise, you might as well pack it in and find something else to do or whatever. I could never be a person who just goes through the motions. . . . Passion is the word. You have got to have passion. And if you ain't got the passion, pack it in and go on. I don't know what else you'd do but do something else. Because you are no good to anyone without passion. You can't wing it, you know. Like, your students know. . . . Anyway, passion is the word.

Mel agreed that an investment in time should have some reward. For him this related to his own self-esteem. He discussed his initial thoughts as a beginning instructor.

> Well, I am teaching. It's not so much that I wanted to do it; I never planned to be a teacher. I've always wanted to be a professional and practice my profession. But I have many other hats now so that has a more fuzzy focus now. I had to sit down and think about what I really wanted to do as a teacher. I wanted to be remembered as a fantastic teacher. And I wanted to be remembered as somebody who changed the way the students thought when they look back on their past experiences. Who was your best teacher? I had a goal because I have a big ego as a teacher. It's enormous. I wanted to be remembered as a really good teacher, exciting, one that just made a difference. I mean, going back to the ego, I feel like if I am going to invest this much time, I value my profession so much and I value the things I do outside of my work so much, that if I am going to put this time into work, if I'm going to put the hours into it, it has to be as rewarding. And I have to be as good at it as I am with other things. So again I think it comes down to my own self value in the end. But if I'm going to put all this time into it, it's got to be up to snuff, like my profession is. I've got to be really good.

For Fred the interest he had in his job was important. When he lost that interest, he would seek a new occupation.

He stated: "Well, I guess I'm interested in what I'm doing. I want to do as good a job as I possibly can. When I lose interest in what I am doing I won't be here, I will be doing something else."

Darc's concern was remaining on top of new developments in teaching. For him the continuation of his teaching position depended on it. He did not mind the work involved in learning new techniques because it inspired him. He went on to say:

> It's also survival today. As an older teacher I become very expensive to this organization. With that many years of experience I cost more than many of the others around. And so, if I don't stay up to date and somebody decides that I can't do this, or I can't do that, then I'm out the door. Right? So it's a survival thing too. As long as there is an English course to teach in this institution, no matter in what form, I can teach it [laugh]. It's a necessity but it also rejuvenates you, really gives you new life. Because it's nothing to get stale after so many years, you burn out.
>
> Interviewer: So these new ideas have actually, you said, rejuvenated you?
>
> Darc: Yes. Another thing about changing. I have heard comments like, you have done it before. Yes, I have done it before but not in the same way. OK? You change texts and you change anthologies and you do new stories and you [pause] because otherwise you say one thing over and over again. You become like a machine, like an automaton. And it will show. I mean I could survive that way for a while too but students wouldn't like it very much.

**Enjoyment of Teaching**

A large majority of interviewees mentioned that they enjoyed teaching. They used a number of expressions to describe their enjoyment. Several simply stated they enjoyed teaching while others said they found it rewarding. Two

suggested that being paid was a bonus on top of their enjoyment. For several others, it was what gave them an identity.

Darc intimated the length of time he had taught when he explained that although he was close to retirement he would "carry on for a while [laugh]. Something as rewarding as teaching". In the same vein, Ted described teaching as fun and getting paid for it a bonus. He said:

> I've got to have fun too. . . . So, anyway, that's where we are coming from in the teaching. Teaching is fun. I really enjoy it. . . . The part that I hate is marking. Not because of the learning, but because of the evaluation mode. I've told the dean of [our] Division that he pays me 250 or 300 dollars an hour for marking. I teach for free. . . . Oh, it's a blast, my job, working. My job. Getting my paycheque is just bonus.

Morgan had at one time been an administrator. Reflecting on his return to the classroom, he said, "I have got to tell you that I am thrilled to be teaching again and not administering." For Dan the thrill of teaching matched his outlook on life. He stated:

> I really like to enjoy my job and I think that you can. Teaching should be lots of fun and innovative and challenging and all those other things. Just like everything that you do in life. So it's a personal outlook too.

Not only did Jess describe how much he enjoyed instructing, he also used an example to explain his theory of education.

> Teaching is very important to me. I enjoy teaching and I enjoy learning. And I particularly enjoy working with people who have been written off by the system. I encourage them to get turned on to learning because many of them were turned off a long time ago. That's where I get my excitement from. . . . I guess that's what gets

> me going in the morning, is to see that kind of growth and change. And that's where I get my energy from. There's nothing more stimulating. You must have experienced this as a teacher. You know, walking in there at nine o'clock in the morning and thinking, God, what are we going to do today kind of thing. And an hour later there's a robust discussion going on and the room is exploding with energy and you are right in the middle of all this and you come out absolutely drained but elated as well. And that to me is what education is all about.

Teaching was so important to Max that he identified himself with it. After a particularly inspiring class, a student came up to him and questioned him. He explained what transpired:

> He said: How can you have such incredible enthusiasm for your subject? How can you have all that enthusiasm after doing it, for 20 years? Gee, I said, I don't know. I love it. Its me. It's what I do. It's a projection of myself in the Zen sense. It's who I am.

## Development Activities That Transferred to Teaching

A great many of the ISD activities that the interviewees engaged in had a direct application to their teaching practices. Several found some of the workshops they attended had an impact on their classes immediately. The skills they learned had a direct influence on their students. Often they used a new method the day after learning it. Many found the cooperative teaching styles employed in the seminars to be a good example for their own classrooms. All interviewees gave a number of examples of specific things they learned that improved their instruction. It is beyond the scope of this chapter to discuss them all. Rather, similar items which were mentioned by several respondents will be used to

illustrate the multitude of teaching ideas instructors gleaned from their instructional skill development activities. These examples of activities which had a direct bearing on classroom instruction will be organized according to the following framework:

- General comments
- Collaborative instructional methods
- Specific seminars

**General Comments**

All of the respondents gave examples of the effect that instructional skill development workshops and learning how to teach had on their classes. Many also mentioned personal feelings about newly acquired instructional knowledge. A cross section of their comments will illustrate this.

Mel discussed his feelings after being involved in some ISD activities shortly after he came to the college. He said: "My learning curve went [gesture up with hand] because I went through a whole period of self assessment in my teaching. On my own. Just the curiosity and a pleasure for realizing that what I did with the classroom had an impact." Fred also found workshops he attended made an impression on the learning of his students. He had attended successive workshops on CBE (Competency Based Education) and Student Approaches to Learning. He stated, "I found those two workshops to be excellent in helping the instructor identify how to help the students learn."

Several respondents believed that certain teaching styles could be universally applied but Dan disagreed. He felt that only certain styles will work for each instructor and that "I think that you get an innate sense of what works for you." What worked for Jess was the use of imaginative styles. He explained: "I like to use creative ways. I like to involve students in presentations. I like to give them a lot of rope to go and study things that are important for them." The style that worked for Darc was the use of group work in his class. It tired him out but he still enjoyed doing it. He set up the various groups and allowed them to work. He then described what happened next. "Then I go around and trouble-shoot and look over their shoulders. But I come out of there and I am drawn, my energy is completely drawn, but it feels good."

Nearly half of the respondents believed that their involvement in workshops which were run by a trained facilitator or training as facilitators themselves enhanced their instructional prowess in the classroom. For Drew, it was a reminder of things he previously knew.

> The ISW workshop. I thought that was really good, particularly in reinforcing things I knew from a long time ago, from when I went through teacher training in education. Getting back to the basic points and keeping track of them again.

Ted reported that these skills not only worked well for him in the classroom but also some parts of the skills learned in the workshops were transferable to other parts of his job. He commented:

> I think it [ISW workshop] is going to work perfectly and it has worked perfectly for me in that classroom environment at the post secondary level. I don't know if it is going to work in a professional program but that's not to say that I haven't taken things from that and used it.

Becoming a facilitator could further enhance learning by students. Ed elaborated on an upcoming workshop he was going to attend.

> It is a session, three days. The first three days are just to learn about it and the last two days is facilitator training, similar to the ISW, to become a facilitator. So you don't have to but I am going to do the facilitation thing as well. And that's because, I think, instructionally I can learn more by being taught some specific things relative to this and maybe I can use that in the classroom. In that sense I would be interested in doing that because it, number one, provides me with a new skill which would be the facilitation of it. And number two, it will maybe even provide me with some processes that I can utilize in the classroom with regard to some of the courses that I teach. And maybe I can pass some of those skills on to my students.

About half of the respondents were pursuing continuing education in one form or another. For most it was taking classes at the local university. Several instructors noted that what they were learning in these classes reinforced some of the techniques they were presently using. Drew recounted a conversation he had with his instructor.

> I told her, you know I am really looking for ideas for teaching this on my own but of course you have to go through it yourself to teach it. So she worked specifically with us and it was terrific and you know we kept in contact with her after, so it was good. And it also assured me that what I was doing in my own classroom was OK because it wasn't very different than what she was doing.

Les made a similar observation. Although at the outset he believed he "knew it all", after a university course he

lamented there was much he didn't know. What he found was that although many of the methods were affirmed, there was still much to learn. He elaborated:

> I walked in there thinking, 17 years teaching at the college, I can do this stuff with my eyes closed. I am going to walk out of here with just the best mark. Holy heck! Every single person in the class had taught at the post secondary level. Everybody had a ton of ideas. It turned out I learned and learned and learned and learned. I am still using the little modular books that we had to buy as texts for that because some of the ideas in them were so good. In some ways it was wonderful because it affirmed what I already was doing right. But it also added a ton of ideas about different things that I could do to make things go better. And I mean that was neat. I have lent mine out. I mean I keep tabs on who's got them because I want them back. But that was really neat because I really did think that I knew it all and didn't. And that was OK too.

Jess was more definite in describing the results of his evening continuing education classes at the university. He concluded:

> There is no question that what I liked about teaching here and then going and doing courses, is that I have been able to connect the theory with the practice on a regular basis. Yes, I would go into class and teach on a Tuesday morning sometimes stuff that I had learned at a class on a Monday night. It was that fresh in my mind. So, yes, it has been very useful. I think that my teaching has been enhanced considerably since I started to go back to school and do different things.

**Collaborative Learning**

Nearly all the respondents discussed the use of group work in their teaching. Most had taken workshops on empowerment, collaborative governance or group work in the classroom. They believed that group work allowed students to learn more, develop critical thinking skills and learn respect for each other. As well as these advantages, the

interviewees believed that students enjoyed the classes more as a result of the use of this learning style.

A comprehensive review of empowerment within the classroom was offered by Chris. It was an initiative that his department had decided on several years previous. He recollected:

> I think, one of the things that I got involved in, I think about six years ago now, is this whole collaborative governance and empowerment kind of issue. And we really brought that into our team [department] in terms of how can we implement this with the students. And I think that whole issue of empowerment and really creating a way for students to have more control, not only over their learning but the whole process of being in college, has really made some interesting shifts in how we do things, as a group, as a whole program. And we've done lots of individual things. You know I could go through all the details but I think just the whole thing, that process of saying let's take this as a goal, as a team and we began this about five or six years ago and we have really stayed with that and looked at almost all of our policies, courses, procedures in light of that over several years. And it really has made for some interesting changes in what we do. Some of what we have done has really reduced the amount of, kind of, work the students need to do that really is, I think, just kind of paper-work. And really kind of focused much more on how can we help the students use their energy well and not kind of do stuff that we need that they don't need. You know that kind of thing. So that's been an interesting process. And that's just one of the kind of angles of empowerment that has really has helped us look at how much of this process of learning is really just serving what we want rather than really getting at what is useful for the students. . . . And that's been really an interesting process, where we have seen students perform better, they learn better, they know the material at the end better than they did before. And that whole idea of letting go of the control around, whether it's evaluation or motivation and all those things that instructors do typically. We have all seen this. This is part of what we need to do. The whole idea of trusting students to do what they need to do with it. And it's not perfect but neither was the other system, you know. So it's worked very well.

A department in a different college division had trainers come directly to their department to offer a workshop on a specific type of group learning called Problem Based Learning. It appeared to work well for them. Dan discussed the individual growth that occurred in students, as well as the personal bond between them that resulted. He said:

> They demonstrated the technique and some of the benefits, and we were sold. We felt that was what we were trying to do anyway, is develop critical thinking and have students learning in that way. . . . They pick different things that they are interested in and then they go off and research. And then they come back to the next seminar session and they sit down and they talk about it. It's so amazing. I mean they will cover so many areas, that it's just the growth in the group. Of course, what they learn is group dynamics. They learn communication skills. They learn and you set up the rules. And the rules are respecting each other and you talk about appropriate support and not being demeaning. Like we have all these rules because we have a book and we go through them first. They bond so intensely in that process that they form lifelong friendships. It's just amazing.

Several instructors gave examples of specific group work seminars they had attended. They also discussed why they found them valuable. Drew attended a workshop specifically designed for his discipline. He explained its use.

> I went to one on collaborative writing, on collaborative group work, a couple of years ago and it was a relatively short one. And I do use a fair bit of groups and I'm always looking for ways of teaching that avoids me talking and the students listening. And well, let's see, there were some points that came up that made me refine what I was doing more. So I have definitely used them. There were some things that I kind of thought that I invented and I found out I didn't.

Les was given some handouts at a workshop he had attended a number of years previously. He still found them valuable in certain circumstances. He stated:

> I've got some stuff that I've had for years. If you are in a very large group, how can you do small group stuff in a very large group. You know, you can break the group into an A and a B and things like that that I have hung onto for years. And then I go back to it occasionally when I find that I am stuck. The problem is sometimes I forget that I've got it but I have a file and I just go back and look up and see what is there.

Nearly half of the respondents who mentioned group work in the classroom also mentioned student enjoyment of this method of learning. Darc's comments provide a good example of these views on group work:

> You know it's a matter of letting go. You know they control it and you don't know what happens for two classes. Well, OK, so be it. It's hard for me too, you know, I have to admit. It's very hard. I have to remind myself constantly and I often do it when I am not so well prepared [laugh]. As an escape you know. And sometimes it just works out wonderfully. And former students have mentioned that to me that they really like that. They don't like this old fogey standing there in front all the time and lecturing. And they have compared. Sometimes they have talked to me about others who lecture all the time and they just don't like it. They like to work in groups at times and as often that I can remind myself, I do it all through the course, throughout the course. This is the novel, this is the story, here is the question. Get into little work groups and debate it and then we will come back and get feedback. And then I comment on it. And it works. It works and it takes the burden off of me too.

Seminars offered on the methodology to be used for group work were popular with nearly all of the interviewees. They all discussed students working together instead of being lectured by the instructor for the entire class. They truly believed it was a better way to instruct and would use it whenever possible. Morgan summed up this point. He stated:

"One of the buzz phrases in collaborative instruction is to be the guide on the side and not the sage on the stage and I'm going to do whatever I can do to make it happen that way."

**Specific Applications**

Over three quarters of the respondents mentioned one or more specific examples of how a skill they acquired through an ISD workshop was applied. Several found Myers-Briggs Workshops (personality inventories) to be very valuable. Many talked about technological innovation and the effect it had on their teaching. Several individual specific applications were also mentioned.

Many instructors at the college selected for this study had participated in Myers-Briggs workshops. For some of them, it helped them deal with their peers or people in general. For others it was applied directly to the students in their classes. Drew indicated the effect this workshop had on his ability to deal with people. He noted:

> Well, I've always got into instructional skill activities but I think the ones that I have been involved with that probably had the most impact was, I went to a Myers-Briggs workshop over three years ago. And to me that was incredible. I found that really valuable in many ways. It made a lasting impression and I have come back to that a number of times when dealing with people.

Being able to deal with a particular class situation could depend on your ability to "read" the personality type of your class and respond appropriately. Ed elaborated:

> We [the entire department] participated in the Myers-Briggs. And that was fun [laugh]. I forget what I am now. I know I'm an extrovert but not a real heavy duty one. But it was interesting because you form a perception of people that you work with and you could form a perception about groups of people, i.e. students in classes, and you don't always know if you are on target. But if your perceptions are correct, if you do have a group of students who are [different] this is taking that information now and applying it beyond just your own self. Knowing that. I had a class this year that was total introverts. I mean I had to get in the classroom and mingle and talk about case studies and participate. I don't like to just stand up there and talk and they will be the sponge but that's what they wanted. And so we were in conflict. Not in conflict visibly but need-wise, from the beginning. I had a need to get them to share and they had a need to be quiet and just let me do all the work. I use it that way. I mean I use it with the instructors too. I look at other instructors and say alright I understand. You know I know why that or this is the way they will probably respond in this situation. But definitely with regard to the students because then I can adapt, that's if I catch on quick enough you know. I don't always catch on that quick. But if I catch on quick enough that we are at complete opposites, then I can do something to reduce that polarization.

Nearly half of the respondents discussed the effects of technology on their classes. Instructors had to take workshops, work with other instructors who were familiar with the technology, or learn it themselves. Once they had mastered the technology, they were excited about using it and believed it would benefit their students.

Morgan had learned how to use the MIDI (Musical Instrument Digital Interface) output from his keyboard as an input to his computer. Chords could be stored on the computer and then by reversing the process the chords would be played by the keyboard and controlled by the computer. He described the upcoming term:

> I will be instituting a new technology to my classes. What I have been doing is playing the piano for them and what I am going to do is take this computer and this keyboard into class and get that to do it for me so that I can play with them and talk with them while they play instead of being locked into the piano all the time. Doing things with this technology has been in the back of my mind for several years and I have resisted it because when I play the piano for them it is infinitely flexible. I don't have to have anything prepared. I can just play it and I can just tell them to play A7 for you and I will play A7 and they do what they do and I didn't really have all the hardware and software poop together that I needed to make this work. But I do now. And I still need to prepare some exercises, a disk to do that stuff, but [pause] it can only improve this class. I can't see how there is the possibility of [failing] and if there ever does run into a problem, I can still play the piano. I am quite excited about it as you can see. I'm also hoping that that will allow me to work more with them on an individual basis in that we can all be in the same room and the class can be at one end of the room doing their exercise and I can be at the other end of the room with a person, teaching a thing. So I'm making a lot of changes for next fall. And I can't see how I can miss.

Another use of technology involved a computer and an overhead projector display panel to project computer images onto a screen. Darc--on his own volition and aided somewhat by a colleague--had learned to use a computer presentation display program. Initially he used the program to make overheads but once mastered, he used the computer with a display panel to create a "slick" presentation. He explained:

> The first time I did it the conventional way. I produced these overheads and projected them onto the screen, rather than Powerpoint, you know. I still use this tool and enlarge the fonts and all that. But still you see it's the old way of doing it. It's not making full use of technology. But having this slick lecture presentation, the slides just fade in and fade out, the colors and all of that. It adds some drama to it.

He also noted a personal reward received from students. "They in fact commented in the end that it was refreshing for

them to see an English teacher getting upgraded in computer stuff and so that was very rewarding."

For many instructors, to be innovative means to use technology. Ted initially believed this. His viewpoint changed after a series of meetings at a retreat. He described the events which occurred before, during and after the retreat, between himself and a respected colleague.

> He didn't even have a computer in his office and I couldn't possibly imagine, particularly in the accounting business or in any business, not having a computer. He just didn't see any need for it. . . . On this retreat, the word comes up, innovative. In my mind innovative means technology. And I learned differently up there as we started talking about innovation and what it meant. And we had some small groups working on it and we cycled groups through and we had discussions and the whole works. We even had a beer and talked about it. What I learned was, he's got some very innovative ideas that I could learn from. And I learned. And I learned that innovation isn't technology. And now I was down to see him in early September. He has got a computer in his office. I can send him e-mail. How's that? So there's a huge growth experience. So those sorts of experiences have got to help you in the classroom. If I can talk to a student about being innovative, maybe they think that innovation means technology. And maybe I can help them see that technology is a tool of innovation, it's not innovation.

It is not my intent here to list all the examples given by respondents of instructional skill development activities that transferred to teaching. It is important, however, to show the range of sources utilized by the interviewees to obtain ideas for use in their classrooms. Three sources will be highlighted. They are a university course in public speaking (Drew), a short seminar on concept mapping (Fred) and watching how other instructors teach (Mel). In each

case, they made a dramatic impact on the interviewee and his classes.

- I have gone to some sessions also at the university in public speaking that are given mainly for people who want to work on their own speech in teaching. That's what I found they were geared for. But I have gone to see if I can get some new ideas for my own teaching because there is somebody else doing with instructors what I am doing with students. Not that I can't pick up. I certainly could improve my own voice but sometimes the people who tend to go to these tend to be people who are fairly shy or have difficulty with oral expression. And I went to one this fall, two afternoons, that somebody from the drama department gave and she was excellent and she did exercises that I went right back and applied. And they were just great. . . . Yes, you know and because she is from the drama department she is very physical. So she came in leggings and a long shirt and had us doing all kinds of movements to different kinds of things that we can do with our voice. And it wasn't as easy to project on my class who are mainly business students. But I tried. You know I have done a little bit of it. (Drew)

- Well, one particular one is concept mapping and I use that and the concepts there in a financial math course where we look at various factors involved: compound interest, present value, annuities, amortization. And what I found is that when students put all those things together, when they are going through it for the first time [it's confusing for them]. What I did was develop a map. Actually I did it right in the classroom on the white board. And looked at each of the concepts and identified the characteristics. The students found that they were able to keep these concepts separated and they wouldn't confuse a compound interest question with a sinking fund question. And it worked very well. (Fred)

- When I started to see how the daycare teachers were talking to the children, I started paralleling the way in which they were teaching the children - - allowing them to learn as opposed to just bossing them around, like the way I was teaching. I was doing a lot of bossing around and I wasn't allowing a lot of space for the student to find their way in the city so to speak instead of just following a map or, you know, being told where to go. And I learned a tremendous amount from those daycare teachers, teaching my son. And then I began putting that into my classroom in the way in which I taught my students. (Mel)

The hoped-for result of all ISD activities is the enhancement of learning in the classroom. All respondents agreed that instructors should be willing to learn new techniques and try them in their classrooms. In the majority of cases, the new techniques worked well. Chris provided a comprehensive review of the comments made by many of the respondents, and offered a personal example:

> You know, some of those things I find that there is lots still to learn. Like the Instructional Skills Workshop stuff that I went through. I found that was really interesting to do that post-test kind of stuff right away. It was really something I had not thought of in quite that way. I taught a class right after that, a course, a 45 hour course in six days to 40 people from all over Western Canada. It was a third year university course through the University of Victoria. So they were all in the program and they were all professionals working in the field. And I did that sort of approach of post-test pretty regularly and it was very effective. It was really very exciting. I found that it was a very powerful shift for me; I immediately applied [this approach] and it worked very well.

## Chapter Summary

The interviewees in this study suggested many reasons why they believed that they should find out more about how to teach. For many of them it related to their educational philosophy. These philosophies covered the gamut of using very distinct instructional methods to treating learners as people, regardless of how it was achieved.

One of the interviewees believed learners should be allowed to sink or swim. He called his teaching style "crash and burn." This was disputed by another interviewee who suggested that teaching was "a human activity." The majority

of the interviewees concurred with this second opinion. They believed that the individual learner was of the utmost importance. The respondents had multiple ways of expressing this concept, however. It was described as "people making", "being a human being", the "emotional context" of the classroom or simply "feel positive about life and about your students as people."

When they moved past their philosophy of education, respondents listed specific personal reasons for wanting to be more "effective" in the classroom. Teaching was an important profession for all interviewees.

The diversity in the student population was a concern for many. Learners had varying backgrounds, learning styles, skill levels and personalities. This necessitated adaptations in teaching styles by instructors in order to do the best for each learner.

Respondents were willing to risk-take in trying new methods in order to ensure their teaching did not become boring and to make learning fun, different and innovative.

There was a concerted effort at the study college to encourage instructors to use more group work in classes. Most respondents accepted this mandate as they found innovation and change to be exciting. They believed good instructors are willing to learn new instructional methods. It was considered a natural part of being a teacher. It was generally agreed that there are three components to being a good instructor:

- The first is discipline knowledge. You must not only know your area but also strive to keep up to date in it.
- The second is the knowledge of how to teach. This required a constant revisiting of your instructional methods and accommodation of requisite changes in them.
- The third aspect was considered to be the most important by several respondents. There must be a personal element, both in yourself and the way you treat students. You must go beyond the discipline knowledge and the methods; you must respect students as people.

All interviewees wanted to be good teachers. Several even expressed some anxiety at the possibility they would not do a good job. They wanted to be the best they could be in their chosen profession.

All respondents enjoyed teaching. It was even suggested that getting paid to teach was "a bonus."

There were many examples of ISD activities that transferred directly to teaching. Learning how to facilitate group work gave instructors skills that were directly applicable to the classroom. Studies towards advanced degrees or continuing education were also deemed valuable. Instructors were not only surprised that they could learn more but also found new instructional methods that they immediately used.

Nearly all the respondents emphasized a desire to include more classroom group work in their teaching. Their ability to use this method was often the result of a workshop on collaborative learning, empowerment or cooperative learning. When using this method, they found students enjoyed classes more, learned more, and had a better understanding of the material.

Many examples were offered of ISD activities that transferred directly to teaching practice. These ranged from the use of a Myers-Briggs workshop in analyzing students to the rapid development of technology and its application in education. The key issue, however, is that instructors should be willing to learn and apply new teaching strategies.

# CHAPTER 7

# ROLE OF THE COLLEGE IN INSTRUCTIONAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

The literature review presented the role that a college should take in ISD. There must be a culture within the institution which encourages faculty towards instructional improvement. This is a responsibility each institution must take upon itself. Each instructor must feel invited to become a better teacher.

This chapter examines the perceptions reported by the sample of instructors at the study college towards institutional support for faculty development. It details respondent feelings towards the college instructional development climate and gives examples of faculty development opportunities provided by the college. It also examines the role of the faculty development office in improving instruction and gives examples of the many activities participated in by the interviewees.

## College Climate

The environment within an institution can affect faculty attitudes towards ISD in many ways. At the study college there was a positive climate; most respondents suggested that the administration created an ethos which encouraged

improvement of instruction. Interviewees believed there was a positive faculty development environment not only within the total college but within individual departments as well. This positive environment promoted discourse among instructors and a collaborative approach to development. Faculty became involved in many activities because they believed the college supported them in their drive to become better teachers.

**Good Environment**

Over two thirds of the respondents believed the institution created an environment that encouraged instructors to become better teachers. They were asked the question: "Is the milieu or the culture within this institution supportive of instructional improvement?" Drew responded: "It's pretty good. I think so. Yes." Les concurred. "The college has done some really good things in this area [instructional development]." Mel suggested the college environment had an effect on him from when he first started working there. He stated: "It was the culture here actually affected me a long time ago and affected my teaching." Jess was a little more specific about the support the college gave to teaching. He posited:

> If I thought for a moment that the institution didn't value adult education, then I don't think that I could stay here. I really couldn't. I know there are people here in senior positions who probably are preoccupied with things other than adult education, like budgets and money and various other things. But I get a sense that when it comes down to it, that there is basically a

> commitment at the college here to teaching adults. And I feel very energized by that.

Support was also given by the college to try new instructional methods. Ted discussed the institutional attitude when he used a new approach for his classes. He described the college milieu: "So that's what we are talking about. The administration creates the environment where if you've got a good idea, go with it."

The positive atmosphere usually permeated to individual departments as well. Drew was sure about the milieu in his department but believed he could not speak for the entire college. He stated: " My department is really good that way. I don't know that that is so across the college." Max made a similar observation about his own department. He also suggested the atmosphere was good enough to have a positive effect on instructors who would not normally become involved in instructional development activities. He explained:

> I hadn't thought about that but maybe, you know, just allowing things. It's kind of like the old horse to water kind of thing. Like you just make it available and then, if it sits there long enough and maybe they will get curious about it. It will start to stimulate their imagination or their interest or something. And you are still going to have the resisters. I mean I am going to do this workshop and the guys that don't ever go to faculty development are going to come to this meeting tomorrow. And they will participate and they will get something out of it. But I don't think they will really have their whole heart and soul in it. They will do it because it is in our own little group and they will feel comfortable with that. And so they might get something out of it, just by being in a good environment.

All respondents discussed their willingness to share ideas. Typical of their comments was the following by Drew.

"People will talk about what they are doing here, in the hallways or in their offices." Several respondents believed the college climate encouraged this open sharing of information. Les indicated:

> And I don't think all of that is just me. I mean some of that is me because I look for it and because I am willing to share and I am sure willing to hear from other people. But I think that there is an atmosphere in the college that promotes that.

Empowerment was a key issue for several respondents. Chris advocated instructors must empower students if they expect to be empowered themselves:

> We really looked very hard at it and we still do. That you can't expect people above you to act differently than you treat the people below you. You know, that often what we do with the students is mirrored by what the dean does to us, you know. And that unless we shift our approach to the students, we really can't legitimately expect a shift the other way. So I think that that's been one of our major kind of developmental activities that's been ongoing. And I think it's been successful. It's really helped us as a team [department] to stop complaining.

This was elaborated on by Max. He described a task oriented administrative structure as a pyramid and empowerment of instructors as a circle. He believed instructors would be more conducive to new methodologies if they made the suggestion themselves:

> If it's laid down, you know, the business thing, with the pyramid. The CEO says BAH. And everybody says it but they resent it. Well, that doesn't work as well as if it's more of a circle or a pyramid. It's collapsed. It works better. So if the idea comes up, well you know very well if you think that you thought of something, you are going to be much more committed to it than if you think somebody laid it on your head. And if that's the truth and if you did think of it or it came out of the circle, there's going to be, it seems to me, there is more of a push or a motivation to do something about

> it. And people will be more involved and more interested.

An example of an idea coming out of the circle was offered by Ted. He described a new program which had been conceived by a group of instructors. This program was going to use a completely non-traditional instructional style. The short period of time which elapsed between the conception and implementation of this new program was described as "bizarre." He presented the sequence of events.

> I actually missed the dinner meeting. Who was there? Anyways, it was on a napkin and it was, when I first heard of it, come on! Money back guarantee was of course the come on! So then it just kind of went around full circle. First, the department chair said why not and the dean said why not. The reason he said why not is because the crunch was just here and we've got to do something. The traditional isn't going to work. We've got to try something new. Let's go with it and before you knew it, it's a go. And I thought, well, because I am very involved with the Society of Management Accountants, I am a huge proponent of the Management Accounting and the CMA designation, I am going to be connected with this thing anyway. So I got involved with it. So away we went. I mean it is bizarre. It's just bizarre how fast it happened. Yup, done. . . . Just, yup, yup.

The administration at the study college empowered the group of instructors to go ahead with this new program. The manner in which ideas from instructors were dealt with was also mentioned by Ed. When explaining administrative attitudes to new ideas, he said they were "very open, very open. The leadership style is very approachable and very participative."

At the study college, instructors were encouraged to become better teachers. They shared ideas and they were empowered to try new things. Jess summed up the net effect

these practices had on the college climate. He declared: "There's an ethos, an adult education ethos I guess I would call that. It's a supportive environment."

**Student-centered Teaching**

Over half of the respondents mentioned a collaborative approach to teaching and the fact that the study college had a commitment to instructional training in this regard. Ted was succinct on this point: "I know that the institution is staying true to its core values of collaborative governance and student centredness." Jess believed that this commitment to develop student centeredness in instructors was a "grass roots" undertaking:

> That didn't come from the top down, incidentally. And that's another thing, you can have a climate which can foster a commitment to develop adult teaching skills and I think we have got that here. It's not a very oppressive bureaucracy, although we certainly are a bureaucracy. There is a climate here which allows people to start to do things collaboratively with each other.

Other respondents suggested that a collaborative approach in the classroom is a good instructional style. For example, Chris presented this story:

> I brought it into our team [program] and they got excited about it. They got mad about it at first, thinking it's another one of those stupid things that the college wants to do. But gradually we made it work for us. And it worked well and it still works well.

Mel reiterated this, albeit from a separate viewpoint. "Here at the college we promote collaboration but it isn't always practiced. It's sort of like you do this and do it damn well collaboratively."

There was an overall agreement amongst the respondents that the institution desired good instruction. Chris declared: "I guess generally I would say that there is really a lot of support for people becoming better instructors across the college." This point was elaborated by Jess.

> As far as the college is concerned, I have always felt there was a climate of support for faculty to develop their skills. You know, I could go out and complain about the organization not doing this, that and the other but the people that I am around most of the time are very energized and are very enthusiastic about teaching adults. And the system does not usually get in their way and sometimes supports them. I think the fact that the college was able to retain its funding for its faculty development office in the last cutbacks suggests that, at the senior level, that there is a commitment to training. The fact that they have introduced a mentorship program suggests that there is some sort of commitment to training. So I think certainly that, at a general level, there is a lot of support for people here to be good educators.

Instructors as a group were held in high regard in terms of their instructional prowess. Max commented on the total faculty when he stated: "They are all really good professionals; they are committed to education. It's really good. These kind of [faculty development] meetings, this kind of communication has gotten better, it has stimulated that -- teaching." Les concisely made this same point. "They are very, very committed faculty."

The majority of interviewees believed there was overall institutional support for instructional improvement. There were, however, two dissenting comments towards the college administration. Chris suggested the administration should not be advocating what they have not done themselves:

> The other problem is that the administrators here don't teach. Most of them never have taught or if they have taught, they might have taught for a year. Most of them have never taught in a community college, including all the deans. I mean four years ago we went through and there wasn't a single dean who had ever taught in a community college. Six deans, you know. So it becomes a real problem. Deans are rarely seen in a classroom, if ever. I have literally only seen my dean at a Christmas party. It's an interesting problem, you know. So I think that there is not a believability around some of the "Let's all work on our instructional skills kind of thing." So I think it's a problem. So I think on one level there is a lot of promoting instructional development and I think that a lot of people have responded to it well. But I think that the people who are cynical or are worried about their own ability to be good instructors have lots of reasons to say, "You know you are really not walking the walk and talking the talk yourself."

On the other hand, Mel suggested there could be potential negative consequences of too much of an emphasis on teaching and too little support for research. He elaborated that this was a detriment to the college as some instructors may leave because of it. He stated:

> I think there is another truth towards the culture that is important too. There are some people that work here but they are not happy with this place. They are not happy with the values and they don't feel a part of it. And in this college it's mostly people who would say, "I am an intellectual." That means you can't fit into this college. And it's one of the problems that the college has made. By not at the same time as promoting quality teaching, it hasn't promoted up to date research. And I am very critical of that because I think that's how they lose people. If you say and I've heard our VP say this, 'My understanding of our college is that the most important thing here is that we value teaching. . . .' Our college doesn't value that [research]. And so those people are left out.

## College Support for Faculty Development

All respondents discussed the support given by the college to faculty development. Ted suggested that the faculty as a whole are very involved in faculty development: "Overall, the community at [our] community college, they are involved in lots of stuff." Involvement by faculty in instructional development activities did not appear to be forced. Max suggested: "There's no pressure there. There is nobody sitting there with a pad and pencil, you know, checking off your name if you showed up at a faculty development workshop or you didn't." College support for faculty development was evident whether it was for a college-sponsored faculty development event or a personal choice. Drew explained: "They [college administration] have been very supportive in terms of faculty development, or people doing things on their own initiative." When the question was asked of interviewees: "Does the college support instructional development?", a typical response would be Darc's when he emphatically said: "They do, they definitely do."

## Opportunities Provided by the College

The study college provided a great many instructional development opportunities for faculty. It supported a wide scope of activities ranging from instructional sessions to videos, literature and books. Instructors could access the faculty development workshops or pursue their own

professional development, with funds provided by the college for short term courses or sabbaticals.

A large majority of the respondents -- representing all the college divisions -- mentioned the support the institution has given to all forms of faculty development. This was concisely stated by Chris: "I think that if you are interested in improving your instructional skills, the college is full of opportunities." Ed further explained the wealth of possibilities which were available. He delineated the instructional development possibilities when he described what was available.

> I think that you would not have the ISW, you wouldn't have the Myers Briggs coming in, you wouldn't have faculty development money that can be applied not just to specific sessions but to whatever you want, videos or literature or books. You wouldn't have all that or even guest speakers, for that matter, if the culture said no, we are not open to that.

Morgan firmly believed that the college was totally committed to instructional improvement. He explained why he believed this.

> I think [our] college does a really good job of indicating to staff that professional development in general and instructional development in general is a really good thing. It's the only thing that I know of that they give us a break for. They give us a day, two days sometimes to go and do this stuff, where we don't have to teach a class. It is supported better than anything else in the institution by administration and they give us that time.

It appeared to Chris that the college support for instructional development came from the board of governors. He pointed out that "There are several board members who are quite committed to faculty development and instructional

expertise being increased. I think that the college has put a lot of energy into faculty development." The general consensus of the interviewees was that there was, indeed, a great deal of support for the recipients of instruction, the students. Fred explained: "I feel good about the support that this college provides or the opportunities it provides for the support of teaching activities. The focus here is on teaching. The focus here is on the learning, on the students."

The study college not only gave moral support but also assisted instructors financially. Dan explained: "We have developmental funds available within each division. And how each department uses those funds is discretionary. There is a division allocation and then there are individual allocations." In addition to the individual professional development monetary allocation, Drew expanded: " All faculty can take up to $300 in courses a year -- credit or non-credit -- at the college." Ed concurred with this statement. He described a series of college courses he had taken and the support given to him by the college. He noted: "They have paid for it. And they have supported it. It's not just one or two courses I have taken. It has been going on now for a year or so."

As well as the divisional, individual and course allocations, the college offered money for other specific purposes. Drew indicated: "On the other hand, they do have special funds available." He later offered a specific

example of the use of these special funds. "Full-time people can get course release and eventually sabbaticals to learn and do new things, which helps professionally." An example of the sabbaticals granted the previous year was mentioned by Mel. He explained: "More people need training in terms of computers. Two of our sabbaticals [pause] three went towards computers because that gets money. I'm going to learn internet. I'm going to find out everything about internet. You know that's heavily promoted and supported." Although it was acknowledged that the granting of sabbaticals was a good thing, Max was disappointed at the number offered at the college compared to the universities. He was also disappointed that he may not get another one. He reflected:

> I think that colleges and universities should give a little more or put their money more where their mouth is. I think that there should be more funding for it. I think that there should be more funding for sabbaticals at the colleges. Universities seem to get sabbaticals. I've had one and they all say, 'Well, you will never get another one.' I think they are very important.

The contrast between universities and colleges was also discussed by Fred. In describing the difference between the two, he echoed the viewpoint of most of his interviewee colleagues. Clearly the college supported faculty development in all forms.

> This is a teaching institution and the focus here is on the teaching as opposed to other institutions. For example, universities, where you have I guess, the dual focus of doing research and instruction. Here we are primarily a teaching and instructional institution and the support that is provided and the opportunities that are provided, I guess I would have to say that my experience in a number of colleges that this one is second to none in the opportunities that they provide.

**The Faculty Development Office**

The study college had a faculty development office which oversaw the majority of the instructional development activities occurring at the college. The college supported this office with a special budget. The office was managed by a faculty development committee with representatives from each division as well as the college administration and staffed with a secretary and a faculty development officer. The officer is a full-time faculty member who is seconded from his or her normal instructional position to serve a three-year term. A majority of the respondents discussed the role of the faculty development office and the effectiveness of the present Faculty Development Officer.

The faculty development office was deemed to be of major importance by many of the interviewees. The comments of several respondents were succinctly summed up by Jess. "For me, you know, I think the Faculty Development Office is a key, is pivotal to the work that I do around here." For many of the interviewees, the value of the faculty development office hinged on the effectiveness of the present Faculty Development Officer. Les described the ability of the faculty development office and the faculty development officer to respond to instructor needs.

> I am really glad that we have a faculty development area through administration. I am really glad we have that. I suspect that, like everything else, the success sometimes depends on the person who is doing it and [the present person] has been superb. . . . I don't know the new lady who is coming in, so I don't have any

> impressions yet. And I think that the fact that that department asks for feedback from staff, to say; "OK, what would you be interested in? What is important to you?" And sometimes gives us a list of things to choose from because sometimes you can't just sit there and generate what you need. But if you saw it you would say "ah-ha", that's what I need. You know. And I think it is a really good thing. I mean I think it would be unfortunate to wait for a request to come from the grass roots. Although when requests have come, if there has been a groundswell wanting information, the staff development department does a really good job of responding to that. So I think that that's important if they can do that. I think every really good post-secondary institution ought to have a faculty development function. I think there should be one. And I think it should tap into seeing what the needs are, checking out with faculty what the needs are and then designing things to meet those needs. And I think that is basically what ours has done.

The effectiveness of the Faculty Development Officer went beyond listening to faculty concerns. It extended to the faculty development committee. Chris explained:

> And some of what happened for us is, the faculty development office here -- [the present faculty development officer] -- has been very creative with us, around letting us do things. If you present an idea to her, she'll buy the coffee and doughnuts you know and help you set up a room, and follow up and do all that. So she's always been willing to entertain lots of those kinds of ideas. . . . Faculty development as an office has money for this kind of stuff but again you have to convince the faculty development coordinator, who often has to convince their board, which includes administration that this is an OK thing to do. But I think [the present faculty development officer] has particularly been quite good at encouraging that and supporting that and dealing with those issues in terms of explaining it well up the line so there is no roadblocks to it. And it's been really neat.

As well as this, the faculty development officer served as a role model for other instructors. Jess stated:

> Again, it comes back to the fact that it's not so much the position, it's the person in it. And [the present faculty development officer] has been good. Again, she is a very highly energized person. She is a person who takes her learning seriously. She's taking a year off

> this year to recreate or whatever. I think that someone like [her] is sort of a model for us. She has got high energy. She's nonthreatening and she puts a lot of commitment into her teaching. She sort of brings people together around her. She has the energy around her that stimulates other people.

## Instructional Development Activities

All interviewees mentioned the types of instructional developmental activities they were involved in. The resulting list was a virtual cornucopia of educational opportunities. These included workshops on teaching and learning, talks on collaborative education, attendance at conferences, taking university classes, reading on their own and talking with other instructors. Rather then compile a complete list, a selection of interviewee comments is offered to allow the reader to obtain a comprehension of the wide variety of ISD activities that occurred at the study college and that were participated in by the sample group of instructors.

**Teaching and learning.** Many respondents discussed their participation in workshops offered by others as well as ISD activities they had presented. A number of the interviewees offered workshops on various topics. They found it stimulated them to learn more about a topic when they had to present it. Fred stated: "I did a workshop on math instruction and I did a fair bit of research in preparation for that." A cross section of other workshops offered by the interviewees are:

- I did a session on shifting paradigms in education. (Morgan)

- I have done a lot of stuff with left brain, right brain. I'm not so much into that now. I'm more into relaxation with body movement -- with meditation. (Max)

- I am going to do one on the work of Steven Brookefield and the notion of the classroom as a cultural [pause] whatever his term is, conflict in the classroom. (Jess)

Most of the interviewees participated in many activities. For several, this included training as a facilitator. The comments by Fred are an example of this involvement.

> In the last couple of years that I've been here at the college, I've participated in classroom assessment techniques seminars. I have participated in the ISW and in facilitator training. In addition to that, just last week I participated in the Pacific Institute which I think has tremendous potential for the classroom and I also was certified as a facilitator.

Drew and Ted also found the ISW workshop to be valuable. They commented:

- I think the ISW is really good too. Because with four or five people, you are really going to see a number of techniques explored. (Drew)

- Inside the college, I've taken experiences and tried to find and break the teacher-student mold and get on with some real good learning and do things like Instructional Skill Workshops. Talking, just interviewing and talking with other instructors. Quite frankly, learning by fire. Just going in and trying something one day. (Ted)

There were many other workshops on teaching and learning. A sample of the interviewee comments are:

- I went to one that [a college instructor] was doing on role playing and other techniques. (Drew)

- The odd time I have gone to something on actual techniques that has been really well done. I actually went to one about two years ago, that somebody at the

college did on laughter and humor in the classroom. (Mel)

- Teaching myself to use a computer package, a graphics package, Powerpoint, to project my lecture notes onto the screen, directly off the computer, for all my lecture presentations. (Darc)
- A young fellow talking about competency based-instruction. ((Fred)
- The other thing I looked at was different instructional methods for teaching. (Ted)
- I went to one on faculty development day that was looking at learning styles. (Jess)

The type of activity attended by these instructors was summed by Chris. He said: "I've been involved in lots of different things over the last couple of years, and most of it had to do with looking at teaching as a process. And you know, learning as a process."

**Cooperative learning**. As previously mentioned there was a college mandate to include group work as much as possible in all classes. Over three quarters of the interviewees discussed their involvement in cooperative learning, collaborative learning or student empowerment workshops. Max was involved in several workshops, as a participant and as a presenter. He identified some of his involvement. "We got into that empowerment stuff. And then we got out of that into Total Quality Management. Now I wasn't so much involved in that but the governance thing, I was very involved in that, doing workshops on empowerment." A number of other respondents were also involved in similar workshops. There were, however, many names given to

workshops in this area. Interviewees described them as workshops on:

- QLI, quality learning initiative. And so we want to get a quality focus. (Ted)
- Problem Based Learning. (Dan)
- One of the units there was on collaborative instruction. And that was quite intensive and inspiring. (Max)
- Collaborative governance. (Dan)
- One was Cooperative Learning. And that was quite good. (Chris)

The underlying theme for these activities was expressed by Jess. In describing several workshops he had attended, he believed the intent of them was to help instructors "build cooperation in the classroom. The classroom as a community."

**Conferences and classes.** Most respondents discussed attending conferences and nearly half also mentioned taking courses from a university. A small sample of the diversity in conferences respondents mentioned follows:

- ATA subject area council conference on math instruction. (Fred)
- One of the best things I did was go to Great Teachers [An interactive conference on teaching, where conference attendees all make presentations]. (Mel)
- What I will be doing for the week of the 19th, I will be going to the Pacific Institute. I don't know if you are familiar with that. It's called an investment in excellence. The basic premise is you are here and you want to be here doing this. What is in the way? What is stopping you from getting there? (Ed)
- I talk to my colleagues sometimes. I do the inservice stuff around here. I read stuff. I go to conferences. There was a big adult education conference here not too long ago. I went there. (Jess)

Nearly half of the respondents said they took university courses. For some it was a natural thing to do. Jess mentioned: "I have also participated in the courses offered through the [local university] on a regular basis." He then went on to explain that some of the courses have given him an extra credential. He said: "I went back to school. I went back to [the university] and started to do courses in the Ed Foundations department back in '89 and finished off a grad diploma in Intercultural, International Education." The taking of university courses often led to a degree. For Fred a specific course was all he needed to get a university degree and the course turned out to be valuable for him. He stated:

> Another thing that I have done right around the same time -- I needed a course for an undergraduate degree and I did a reading course on individualized instruction, competency based instruction, with [a professor] in secondary education and the course was flexibly structured. He gave me time over a period of about three months and he assigned readings for me and then we would meet every other week for a couple of hours and we would talk about the readings. And I probably have never done more readings for a course than that one. And I had to do it because he had done all the readings. And we talked about various approaches to instruction and in particular competency based [instruction].

**Other activities.** There were several other activities that the climate of the College encouraged respondents to be involved in, ranging from a recognition that professional reading was important, on the one hand, to personal interests such as teaching dossiers, language learning, or personal profile workshops, on the other hand.

Respondents also appreciated the opportunity to visit other classes and to be mentors to new instructors.

Most interviewees listed professional reading as being valuable. The type of material read was as varied as the interviewees. Fred succinctly stated that he did "a lot of readings on my own." This was expanded on by Ed when he said: "I should have mentioned the reading. That is pretty much of a given, I think. In my opinion you need to continually read what is new and what works and so on." Many of the readings were directed to a single purpose. For Darc this was his own discipline. He demonstrated: "I have spent some time at the [local university] in the library, researching my own area of literature and literary criticism." For others it was a particular author that inspired them. Mel explained:

> I reflected on Edward DeBono. I learned more from him about creativity than I learned in my profession or in any of my university [courses]. Strategies. Nobody ever talked about creativity in university. And how to learn and how do you develop your mental processes? What are your resources for being creative? What are the tactics to get yourself into that condition where you are going to have the most promise? And then, reading him and all of his books and other people. You know following bibliographies taught me more about creativity than I ever learned in university.

For Jess, the internal communication newsletter on professional development was particularly good. He commented: "One source that I do use is the newsletters, particularly the one that comes out of the faculty development office. I have found that very helpful."

Over half of the respondents listed workshops or courses intended for personal growth which they had participated in. Two respondents were involved in studying a foreign language. Darc mentioned that he had "spent two months in Quebec City at the Université Laval to become more fluent in French." For Ed there was an educational advantage as well as the personal growth in learning a new language. He stated:

> One thing I have been doing is taking Japanese [laugh]. And that's because, you know: Number one I think that it's a good language to know. There seems to be many Asians in the Business Division here or in Management Studies and I think that there is going to be more contact. And number two. We also have Japanese students and I also like to be able to break some of those cultural barriers down.

A multitude of other personal workshops were also mentioned. They covered a wide range of topics. A sample of the contents of these workshops is provided by the comments of Ed, Chris and Drew.

- I did one on dossiers. You know personal dossiers and stuff like that. (Ed)
- One of the things we did in the fall was to do a Myers Briggs inventory of all of us. (Chris)
- Instructional media and design is offering three sessions on videoconferencing for 12 instructors in November. I've signed on. There are also several opportunities to learn about the internet and how to use it. (Drew)

Nearly half of the interviewees discussed visiting and observing classes of another instructor. Ted discussed a particular section of a course he had experienced problems teaching. He found out via his students that there was an alternate delivery method he could use. He explained:

> And when you talk to him [another instructor] about how he gets the job done or when you talk to his students, you find out he gets the job done in a unique way. You know, kind of a creative fresh way. So you have lunch with him or you sit in on one of his classes.

He then went on to give a specific example of the value this had for him and the students in the class he visited.

> I needed to know a little about Access data bases. And he [another instructor] just happened to be taking them. So I said, "Do you mind if I come and have a look and see what's on?" So I just sat in the back corner and banged away. Oh, it's fun. It was great. It's good for the students to see that too. It really gave the students in that classroom a lift. I mean they know who I am. It suggested to them that, you know, this is relevant stuff. It's good.

Having someone visit your class was viewed positively by Mel. He described how he dealt with another instructor observing his class.

> I have such an enormous class. And I quite honestly feel that I have learned so much about teaching that I feel really happy to share. And I've learned also how to accept their [other instructors'] presence and dismiss it and just be myself. That's the hardest thing, is just pretending that they are not there. What I do in my mind is they become mentally a student. And then I just talk to them the same way and they become part of the class. I have hordes of visiting students and I did have somebody else in your position sit in on my class and do a critique. And I actually forgot that they were a visitor because there are so many students there. In my mind, I go quick they are a student and then they are not evaluating, they are not looking, they are not critiquing, they are just looking at the work in the class. And then I can be myself.

Les expressed some reservation about visiting other classes. He felt that many instructors view in-class observations as being akin to evaluation and were skeptical to utilize it as a personal instructional development growth tool. He initiated his comments by mentioning the frequency that instructors visited another instructor's classes:

> No, it doesn't happen all that often. My understanding is with the faculty association that unless somebody asks, like if I said to you, "Hey Art, come in and sit in on my class." Or if you asked me and I said sure. But if you ask me and I said no, I'm dealing with a sensitive issue today and I don't want anybody else there. Then, you know, I think the understanding is, is that you have to be invited in or you have to given permission by the instructor to sit in. I know there was talk about peer monitoring, peer observation and it never got off the ground. And I think it died at the faculty association level but I'm not sure. I think that some people would feel really threatened by that. Especially some people who felt that they were being evaluated in some way. . . . Some people feel very territorial. And some people feel very threatened by having somebody else critique their teaching. . . . I think individually it is not a problem at all but as a policy apparently it is frowned on. Because that was one of our options when we were looking at evaluations a number of years ago was peer evaluation or peer observation. That would feel safer. And maybe now that we have a mentoring program going on, maybe if a student was going to sit in and you were mentoring a student and you said 'Come on in and sit.' Or a new instructor and you said 'Come on in and sit in on my Physics class and let's see what you think about this approach.' You know, I mean that might be a nice way to do it. Maybe we will be able to do more of that and do it in a more conscious way, instead of hit and miss the way it happens now.

The mentoring program was mentioned by several instructors. For some it was a cursory statement. For example, Drew said: "I said that I would be part of this mentorship program." Les expanded on this and suggested it would have a definite value for instructors.

> There is going to be a mentoring program. Certain instructors have been asked if they would like to take on this role. And I guess there will be workshops to teach us how to do it and give us ideas and that kind of thing. I think that is a real good way to do it. Again, you learn back and forth all the time.

## Chapter Summary

There was general agreement that the study college played a major role in ISD by providing a good teaching environment which created a positive atmosphere for learning. This positive faculty development environment permeated the college. Instructors worked in a milieu that encouraged them to become better teachers from the minute they were hired by the college.

The ISD culture of the institution was such that instructors were willing to learn and try new approaches to teaching. It was so strong it influenced a high degree of involvement and this in turn created a positive effect on instructors who would not normally become involved in ISD activities.

It encouraged the open sharing of information. This was partly attributable to the college's philosophy of empowerment. Students were empowered by instructors and consequently instructors felt empowered themselves. They were comfortable in not only suggesting but also in trying new methods. As the study college had a commitment to cooperative learning, faculty were encouraged to share ideas on student-centered learning and collaborative teaching.

It was even suggested that there was too strong an emphasis on ISD to the point that teaching was promoted at the expense of research, and possibly some "intellectuals" had left the college because of this emphasis on teaching.

The study college provided more than lip service to faculty development workshops as the college Board of Governors provided time and money for all forms of faculty development. The support started with the Board of Governors, went through the administration to all divisions, departments and instructors. Instructors were given many opportunities to improve their teaching. They were allowed days off to attend ISD workshops, plus they were supported financially to go to conferences or seminars, to buy books or computer software, and allowed to take classes at the college for free. There were also funds available for specific individual projects. These special funds included course release time to study a specific topic as well as full year sabbaticals to learn and try new things.

All faculty development activities on teaching and learning were organized by the faculty development office. This office was supported with a special college budget. It had a faculty development officer, a secretary, as well as funds for special events. The faculty development officer was particularly effective in not only promoting ISD, but also in responding quickly to instructor needs.

Instructors were involved as participants or leaders in many ISD activities. Some of the more prevalent workshops included shifting paradigms in education, ISW (Instructional Skills Workshop), CATS (Classroom Assessment Techniques), computers, and cooperative learning. These activities in

retrospect were a virtual encyclopedia on instructional development.

As well as the standard workshops, instructors took university classes at the local university, did a great deal of professional reading and involved themselves in personal growth activities, such as teaching dossiers, language learning, or personal mental and physical fitness.

# CHAPTER 8

## ANALYSIS OF STUDY FINDINGS

In this chapter, the findings of the study will be assessed in terms of the relevant literature. Results should be matched to those of other scholars, to support, refute or extend their claims. However, as Horan (1991) revealed, there is "a paucity of material" (p. 24) in the literature on the topic of this study. He went on to state, "The dearth of material has necessitated that sources be obtained from outside the area of community colleges" (p. 24). While McKeachie et al. (1986) showed there have been some studies at the college level, the majority of studies were shown by Porter and Brophy (1988) and Brophy (1987) to be at the primary and secondary education levels. Marshood (1995) and Mahaffey and Welsh (1993) both suggested that community college instructors should become more involved in scholarship, while Horan (1991) believed the results of studies on teaching should be the same "regardless of the educational delivery system" (p. 25). Despite Horan's contention, it is my intent to compare my results to the limited number of studies on college instructors only.

This chapter will summarize the study findings and relate the key findings to the literature on college

instructors. The findings are summarized under the four research questions which guided the study.

## Faculty Needs for Instructional Skill Development

The first analysis chapter (Chapter 4) addressed the following two-part question:

1. a. What do faculty believe are their instructional skill development needs?

   b. What value do faculty place on instructional skill development?

### Needs

Respondents mentioned a large number of ISD needs. These needs ranged from the specific needs of individuals to workshops on teaching in general. These needs usually became apparent to instructors at two specific times in their careers; as soon as they started teaching, or later in their careers when they realized that their instructional methods must change to keep up with advancements in teaching styles.

All interviewees discussed a strong need to talk and work with other instructors, usually in relation to the solving of an instructional problem. They tried to find someone who had dealt with a problem similar to the one they were having. The discussions which ensued with regards to the problem quite often led to networking with other instructors in similar circumstances. These steps that the participants went through were exactly as described by Austin

and Baldwin (1991) in a process that they called faculty collaboration.

Respondents emphasized the importance of listening to students. They claimed that students were the best determinant of instructional needs. In making this claim, they were supporting the contention of Paulsen and Feldman (1995) who stated: "Research has shown persistently that feedback from student ratings is of value in improving teaching" (p. 1). Respondents also suggested that these instructional needs could be more important than discipline knowledge. Several interviewees believed they were hired for their discipline knowledge but this, in itself, was not enough to be a good instructor. Effectiveness in the classroom required the ability to teach in addition to discipline knowledge.

All interviewees agreed with Turner and Boice (1989) when they discussed the time constraints of their profession, particularly in relation to the time required for activities other than the classroom. They required time to perform these functions:

- attend workshops
- learn new ways of teaching
- find out how to do an effective presentation
- get help for instructional problems
- meet and talk with other instructors
- think about and reflect on their instructional practice
- learn new technologies

This last item was heavily stressed. New technologies involved computer skills as well as new and innovative audio-visual or multimedia methods of presenting information.

Computer skills were deemed essential--a necessity for all instructors. Ross (1984) was possibly ahead of his time when he described what instructors have to do. "Only those who are excellent teachers and who are constantly striving to improve themselves [keep up with technological advances in education] will survive" (p. 11).

Instructors had a wide range of other instructional skill development needs. Some examples of these were:

- how to employ cooperative learning in the classroom
- the most effective methods to teach study skills
- classroom assessment techniques

**Value Placed on ISD**

All respondents discussed the value of ISD, both for themselves and faculty in general. A determining factor in obtaining value from ISD activities was the willingness of faculty to first "lose" their older, more traditional methods of teaching and then be willing to learn and try new methods. This theme, discussed by Chickering (1991), was prevalent through all of the interviews. Valuable information was obtained from a variety of sources. These included:

- going to instructional skill development workshops
- seeing a good presentation (on any topic)
- departmental or interdepartmental meetings
- program retreats
- meeting and sharing with other instructors

The networking and sharing of resources always continued long after the initial workshop or meeting. Individual development of instructional skill was considered by

respondents to be an investment in their professional practice.

## Participation in Instructional Skills Development Activities

Chapter 5 addressed the second two-part question.

2. a. What reasons do faculty members offer to account for their participation and/or non-participation in instructional skill developmental activities?

   b. What value do faculty members place on instructional skill developmental activities they have been involved in within the previous two years?

### Participation or Non-Participation

Faculty listed many reasons for their involvement in ISD activities. Some attended because they enjoyed them or found them to be "fun." Many attended all activities or at least as much as they could work into their schedules. Several liked activities that were in their content area (discipline focused) while others felt it was better to have general topics and to get people together from different departments. It was generally agreed that the "passionate teachers" would seek each other out. The same enthusiastic teachers could draw others in with their enthusiasm.

Reasons reported for non-participation in ISD activities fell into two categories: faculty did not have the time for them or they did not find them valuable.

Time was considered a major constraint. Often an activity conflicted with an instructor's personal timetable.

Activities might be scheduled when they had a class, during their holiday time or at a busy time of year for them when marking of papers or committee work would take precedence. There were diverse opinions on the optimal length of the workshops. Some believed a one hour workshop was too short to explore a topic in any depth while others felt they could not afford to commit an entire day of their valuable time to one instructional issue. If there was time available it was committed to reading journals in their discipline area in order to stay current in their field, studying for an advanced degree or simply to do the myriad of tasks required of a college instructor.

Respondents suggested that some instructors possibly do not see any value in ISD activities. They have taught the same way for a long time and believed they knew the best way to teach. They were not aware of new teaching styles because they had the conviction that instructional skills do not need to change over time. It was hinted that some did not want to change or were scared of change. Also, instructional skills were secondary to discipline knowledge for some instructors. Instructors might lack motivation to attend instructional development activities that were not content area specific. Added to this is the fact that introverted instructors might be uncomfortable or nervous to participate in an activity that encouraged the discussion of something very personal--what they did in their own classroom.

**Value of ISD Activities**

There was a great deal of personal value gleaned from participation in all types of instructional development activities. Because there are many core universal teaching problems and solutions, instructors would brainstorm and share ideas on instructional issues at workshops or meetings.

They found there was a crossover of skills in many areas. After learning to write objectives they found it easier to organize their curriculum. They could help others learn a computer program once they had learned it themselves. Seeing how groups worked at faculty development events gave them the incentive to use collaborative activities in the classroom.

They tended to place a greater credibility on the ideas of other instructors versus an "outsider expert." Instructional innovations such as cooperative learning or problem based learning imposed in some programs necessitated changes from traditional teaching methodology. Working together helped instructors keep up with the requisite changes but still allowed flexibility for their own personal style. The importance of talking and working with other instructors was emphasized over and over. They agreed with Harnish and Wild (1992) who said: "the opportunity to work with a colleague motivated them to become involved" (p. 24). The greatest value came from these one-on-one talks--there was value in talking about teaching.

## Why Instructors Strive to Learn More About Teaching

Chapter 6 analyzed the third two-part question.

3. a. Why do faculty strive to learn more about teaching?

   b. What specific activities were they involved in that transferred directly to teaching practice?

## Reasons for Learning About Teaching

There are many reasons why instructors strive to learn more about teaching. The major reasons were their philosophy of education, coping with a heterogeneous student population, wanting to learn and try new techniques or the simple desire to be a good instructor.

Although they described their philosophy in several different ways, some instructors had the educational philosophy that it was time to move away from a "training wheels" (traditional) approach to a "crash and burn" approach. This second approach to teaching involved collaborative learning and empowerment. Instructors allowed students to do a lot of learning on their own but were always available to help if needed.

There was nearly a complete consensus on the three attributes of a good instructor. While described in different words, they echoed the attributes stated by Horan (1991) and Easton et al. (1985). Instructors must have expertise in their field and they must know how to teach (which, in turn, means they need to know how students learn). The third attribute was explained as the recognition of education as a human activity wherein you must realize there

is personal development for students, as instructors are "people making." Instructors must create an "emotional context" where students can take risks, realizing the instructor is there for support. This support must be in a positive vein wherein students are treated as equal partners in the education process.

Instructors believe teaching is important so they like to know all there is to know about it. They are particularly motivated if a class does not go well or they have a bad teaching experience. Such events help instructors to realize their own shortcomings in instructing and knowledge of inadequacies can sometimes "force" them to get better. This is particularly true because of the heterogeneous student population. Benshoff (1993), Baker et al. (1990), and Gillett-Karam (1992) all discussed the varied needs of students. Learners in community colleges have a wide diversity of cultural or socioeconomic backgrounds, skill levels and personalities. It is the responsibility of instructors to make adjustments to their teaching style in order to attend to the needs of each student.

The present study confirmed the importance of recognizing and responding to highly diverse student needs. Meeting the needs of each student necessitates that instructors have a large repertoire of teaching skills available. Having these skills allows them to change and improve. Teaching the same way all the time is not only boring but if instructors are not improving they are actually

sliding backwards. They must be creative and risk takers, ready, willing and able to change and try new things. Weimer (1990) describes this as "a steady supply of new ideas" (p. 118). This is not a problem for most instructors because they know, as professionals, they must keep up with developments in teaching. They enjoy learning new skills and as a result will improve over time. They want to be good instructors. They have invested a lot of time into it; they find it rewarding. Striving to be a better instructor gives them an identity. "It's who I am," in the words of one interviewee.

**Activities That Transferred to Teaching**

A large number of ISD activities had an immediate and direct impact either on classes or on the instructor personally. Instructors would do a self-assessment in order to determine what would work or not work for them personally. Sometimes they could connect the instructional theory with practice immediately--trying something in class while it was still fresh in their minds. At other times an activity was a reminder of instructional basics taken years earlier. In both cases teaching was enhanced considerably.

The three areas that were mentioned the most in terms of their application to the classroom were collaborative learning, inventories (personality style or learning style), and computer applications.

Seminars on group work were applied immediately to the classroom. Collaborative learning and student empowerment forced instructors to give up some of their control in the classroom but group work enhanced individual student growth, created personal bonds between them and increased their critical thinking skills. This did not come as a surprise as Gerlach (1994), Butler (1992) and Johnson, Johnson and Smith (1991) all described the advantages of working in groups. Johnson et al. (1991) were very direct when describing the benefits of group work. They analyzed over 600 studies and concluded:

> The more one works in cooperative learning groups, the more that person learns, the better he understands what he is learning, the easier it is to remember what he learns, and the better he feels about himself, the class, and his classmates. (p. vi)

The participants also mentioned that instructor facilitation skills were particularly important in encouraging this type of learning.

Learning styles inventories or personality workshops (Myers-Briggs) assisted the instructors not only to better understand students but also to adapt their instructional style so they could respond appropriately to each individual student need.

There were multiple examples of instructional computer uses. These ranged from personal use to classroom display panels and MIDI (musical instrument digital interface) applications. The value of this was described by Johnston and Joscelyn (1989): "In NCRIPTAL [National Center for

Research to Improve Postsecondary Teaching and Learning] studies of computer use in higher education, faculty report that computers increase student engagement, add realism to instruction, promote skill mastery and understanding of basic principles, augment laboratory experiences, and encourage inferential thinking" (p. 1). The students always found refreshing the changes introduced by the instructors in the study. The instructors themselves, however, had to be willing to learn the new techniques and try them.

## Institutional Support for Faculty Development

Chapter 7 analyzed the fourth two-part question.

4. a. Do faculty feel the college encourages instructional skill development?

   b. What does the college provide in the way of instructional skill developmental activities?

### College Encouragement

"Colleges are not buildings, curricula, and machines. They are relationships and interactions among people. How the interpersonal interaction is structured determines how effective colleges are" (Johnson et al., 1991, p. 115). The study college "forced" these relationships because of the commitment it had to teaching as evidenced by its efforts to create an environment which encouraged improvement of instruction. The supportive atmosphere was such that it had a positive effect on instructors who did not normally become involved in ISD activities. Instructors did not feel forced

to participate, but there was an ethos which encouraged it. They would openly share ideas, emulating the approachable and participative college leadership style. The college culture affected teaching positively; there was support for instructors to try new instructional methods.

There was a clear commitment to student-centered learning. The instructors were energized and enthusiastic professionals, thankful for the climate of support which helped them to develop their skills in this area. As student centeredness permeated the institution, there was a great deal of collaborative work done by instructors towards this end.

**College Support**

The entire study college from board members down were committed to enhancement of instructional expertise. The focus was on support of teaching activities--on learning for the students. This support was evidenced by a great many instructional development activities, even more than mentioned by Alfano (1993). The variety of activities offered was such that instructors believed instructional development was supported better than anything else in the institution.

Instructors were given two days without classes during the term to do instructional development. This was a clear indication to them of the importance placed on instructional development by the college. The college also provided

financial support. Developmental funds were allocated for these activities:

- support of a faculty development office
- divisional professional development
- professional development of each individual faculty member
- sabbaticals
- other special purposes (determined on merit from an application form)

The faculty development money was not restricted in its use. As well as journals, conferences and workshops, it could be applied to videos, literature or computer software. As well as the aforementioned, faculty could take up to $300 worth of credit or non-credit courses at the college.

The majority of faculty development activities were operated by the college supported Faculty Development Office. The office was managed by a Faculty Development Committee and run by an instructor who was seconded from faculty for a three year term. The success of the Faculty Development Office depended to a great extent on the Faculty Development Officer. The present Faculty Development Officer was excellent at recognizing the instructional development needs of instructors and accommodating them. The Officer was also continuously involved in his own professional development and became an excellent role model for faculty.

A full gamut of instructional development activities was offered. They covered all aspects of teaching and learning, cooperative learning in its many forms (empowerment, collaborative learning, governance, Quality Learning Initiative, Problem-based Learning) and the Instructional

Skills Workshops. All of the aforementioned served as a springboard for other activities; they had the incidental benefit of creating a great deal of individual networking.

Faculty also took part in discipline related or instructional development conferences, and were very active in journal reading as well as pursuing personal growth issues. They visited other classes and encouraged other instructors to visit theirs. They were always encouraged to share resources.

The college played a major role in promoting these activities and events by taking a major role in ISD, and by providing money, time and a positive teaching environment. This concurs with LaCelle-Peterson and Finkelstein (1993) who were succinct on the role of the college: "faculty members' success as teachers depends on the support of their institutions" (p. 21).

# CHAPTER 9

# SUMMARY, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This final chapter contains an outline of the study, summarizes the study findings, states the implications of the study findings for our theory development, and proposes recommendations for practice and further research. The concluding section of the dissertation is used to present a personal viewpoint of the findings. In the course of reviewing the study findings, suggestions are advanced for modifications in the conceptual framework.

## Purpose

A substantial body of literature exists on instructional skills development activities (ISD) in general, but very little literature attempts to explain why college instructors became involved in these activities. Therefore the purpose of this study was to explore college instructors' perceptions of ISD activities in an attempt to fill this void in the literature.

The study addressed the value of ISD as perceived by a specific group of instructors at one college, so the results may not be generalizable to other faculty members at that college or to faculty members in other colleges.

## Literature Review

The literature review covered the history and significance of faculty development, identified the dimensions of faculty development, examined the ISD aspect of faculty development, and explored the institutional role in nurturing this aspect of faculty development.

Faculty development had been instituted in the early 1800s in some universities for the purpose of renewing the competence and refining the skills of faculty members. By the 1960s the concept of faculty development had been expanded to encompass three major aspects: organizational development, professional development, and instructional development. As a consequence of this expansion a comprehensive model of faculty development was needed. The literature of the period clearly revealed that instructors can become more effective if they are willing to consider alternative teaching styles. Before this can be achieved, instructors must become involved in faculty development activities.

These activities should cover all three facets of faculty development. The literature reveals that college instructors focus primarily on the third aspect of faculty development--instructional development. ISD programs were found to be effective in improving instruction, particularly if faculty were involved in the operation of these programs.

Authors in this area also reported that an important tenet of instructional development is the ability to change

and adapt to new situations. Changing their instructional style could prove to be beneficial to instructors as well as to their students.

Researchers such as Tierney and Rhoads (1994) and Gaff (1975) have clearly concluded that institutions have a definite role in instructional development--to promote a culture in which instructors are motivated to increase their instructional expertise.

## Research Design

This study was conducted within the naturalistic paradigm and was, therefore, qualitative and interpretive in nature.

A Canadian public college with 209 full-time equivalent faculty members provided the site for the study. A sample of instructors at this college was chosen by purposive sampling. They represented all the major college divisions and were balanced by gender and by years of instructional experience. Instructors were interviewed to determine their needs for ISD and the value they placed on availing themselves of formal opportunities to address these needs. Data were collected by three methods: conducting the interviews, analyzing college documents, and by writing a personal reflective journal.

Data analysis began soon after data collection commenced. Overall themes relevant to instructional development were inferred from the interview transcriptions. Analytic files were created, sections of transcript were

coded, and the coded "clumps" were categorized and then combined and re-sorted until "the story" emerged. This process allowed a "thick description" to be developed.

Trustworthiness of the findings of this qualitative study was addressed by adopting procedures which ensured credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

## Findings

The major findings are presented under the four research questions which guided the study.

**Specific Research Question 1**

a. What do faculty believe are their instructional skills development needs?

Interviewees expressed a great need to talk and work with other instructors. They also believed they should listen to their students as they were the best determinant of their instructional improvement needs. They stated that discipline knowledge alone was not enough to be able to teach. They had to know how to teach, and they must include a personal element in their teaching. They required more time not only for activities outside of the classroom, but also to learn new teaching methodologies and to keep up with technology.

b. What value do faculty place on instructional skills development?

Value was obtained from ISD activities if instructors had the ability to "lose" their traditional methods of

teaching, and were willing to learn and try new methods. They considered the new methods an investment in their profession.

**Specific Research Question 2**

a. What reasons do faculty members offer to account for their participation and/or non-participation in instructional skill developmental activities?

Some interviewees attended ISD activities because they enjoyed them or because they believed they would learn a new instructional style. They also attended because they knew they would meet with other "enthusiastic teachers." Reasons for non-attendance by instructors at ISD activities were that faculty did not find them personally valuable, or they lacked the time for attendance.

b. What value do faculty members place on instructional skill developmental activities they have been involved in within the previous two years?

Direct benefit was gained by observing the transference of instructional skills across disciplines. Collaborative activities in workshops or discussion of cooperative learning in other disciplines "showed" that these methods could work in their own classes. Instructors valued talking about teaching with other instructors.

**Specific Research Question 3**

a. Why do faculty strive to learn more about teaching?

Interviewees stated that their primary reason for learning more about teaching was their personal philosophy of education. They believed teaching is important and they wanted to be the best teachers they could be and they wanted

to be able to instruct the large diversity of students they had in their classes.

b. What specific activities were they involved in that transferred directly to teaching practice?

Many ISD activities transferred directly to teaching practice. The most prevalent were workshops on collaborative learning, learning style inventories, and computer applications.

**Specific Research Question 4**

a. Do faculty feel the college encourages instructional skill development?

Respondents generally believed that the college strongly encouraged ISD activities by creating an environment which supported improvement of instruction.

b. What does the college provide in the way of instructional skill developmental activities?

The college provided multiple forms of support for ISD activities. Instructors were allowed time away from teaching to pursue ISD. The college also provided financial support for an instructional development office as well as for individual ISD activities. The college's major role was creating an environment which encouraged instructors to become involved in ISD activities.

## Interpretation of Findings

At this point, I, as the researcher and writer, feel committed to helping the reader make sense of the study findings. To do this I must step beyond the findings and provide an interpretation which seeks to simplify what has

been found and to suggest the fundamental meaning of these findings. This is a risky process because there are no clear rules for ascribing greater importance to certain findings and lesser importance to others. But I must make these choices or risk losing the reader in a morass of findings with no organizing framework by which to ascribe significance and deeper meaning to what has been found.

Before proceeding I acknowledge that the interpretative framework which follows is based on findings gained from a study of subjects selected because they enjoy reputations within their college as ISD "seekers", committed to the improvement of their teaching skills. It is entirely possible that my framework, which I hope is grounded in the experience of these "seekers", may have less relevance to the experience of their less-committed colleagues. That is a constraint fundamental to the study design which I find as a limitation on what has been found in the study.

An interpretive discussion and interpretive framework is now presented based on the choices I have made. This emphasizes some findings and neglects others, guided largely by an intuitive sense of the individual instructor engaged in a change process directed towards ISD.

## Interpretive Discussion

The change process, as revealed by the study and experienced by individual instructors, has three central themes:

1. Receptivity or openness of the individual instructor to change, which has both individual and institutional dimensions.

2. The instructors' preferred choices for assistance in recognizing the need for change and for acquiring resources (new instructional practices) that would be useful in addressing this need.

3. The importance of feedback from students on the effects of new instructional practices.

Each of these themes is discussed according to the following format. The key findings related to the theme are identified; the relevant findings in the literature are assessed; and the theme is elaborated briefly so as to clarify and explain its dynamic role in the individual change process.

**1. Receptivity or openness of the individual instructor to change.** The findings suggest that instructors' receptivity to change depends largely on their ability to "lose" their older, traditional style of teaching in order to accept a new style. They realize they must divest themselves of these older methods in order to meet the needs of their heterogeneous student population. This clearly supports the findings of Benshoff (1993), Baker et al. (1990), and Gillett-Karan (1992), who all discussed the diversity of cultural backgrounds, skill levels, and personalities of the learners in community colleges today. Interviewees' responses to openness to change, in order to

better cope with this student diversity, supported the findings of Chickering (1991); the study found that instructors' views on the matter closely related to their personal philosophy of education. This philosophy was to a large extent dependent upon the institutional climate.

Interviewees believed that the effectiveness of ISD within a college depends on the relationships and interactions among all people in the college. The study college had an ethos which supported ISD activities and this encouraged all instructors to become involved. This finding concurs with that of LaCelle-Peterson and Finkelstein (1993), who concluded that a supportive college climate (towards ISD) is a necessity to encourage instructors to be receptive to change.

Openness of individual instructors to change is largely dependent on their desire to do what is best for students. This receptivity in turn depends to a considerable extent on the institutional climate which can influence their attitudes towards ISD. This is, however, a dynamic process. Institutional climate affects receptivity, but receptivity to ISD by many instructors affects the institutional climate towards ISD. This study lends no insight as to which occurs first, it simply acknowledges that they work in conjunction with each other.

**2. The instructors preferred choices for assistance in recognizing the need for change, and for acquiring resources that would be useful in addressing**

**this need**. Respondents believed that passionate teachers would seek each other out. They talked to these other instructors in a bid to help discover areas where change was necessary. Interviewees agreed with Harnish and Wild (1992) that new instructional practices were most often acquired from other instructors. Talking, working, and sharing resources with colleagues were deemed to be the best ways to address individual ISD needs.

Recognizing the need for change and acquiring new instructional resources are aspects of a dynamic process which involves other instructors. In this study, respondents determined their needs by focusing on both of these aspects. However, while talking to other instructors, they also acquired the resources that were useful to address instructional needs. Both of these processes occurred simultaneously.

**3. The importance of feedback from students on the effects of new instructional practices**. The use of student feedback was the main method of self-assessment on the effect of new instructional practices. The feedback actually "forced" instructors to become better at responding appropriately to the multiple student needs. Students, on their part, seemed to find new or different teaching methods to be a refreshing change. Interviewees concurred with Paulsen and Feldman (1995) that they should use feedback from students to recognize their own ISD needs.

**Interpretive Framework**

The receptivity or openness of instructors to change occurs within a college climate which is supportive of ISD activities. Instructors must recognize the need for change, acquire resources to meet this need, and adjust their teaching practices based on student feedback, as shown in Figure 2.

A college climate supportive of ISD influences the receptivity of instructors to change. The processes that occur within this openness to change are cyclical, not linear. All three steps are required for change in instructional practice. There is no beginning or end to the cycle. All of the steps occur simultaneously, always affecting the next step in the cycle. Each of the themes is important, but it is the dynamic relationship between them which is at the heart of college instructors' perceptions of ISD activities.

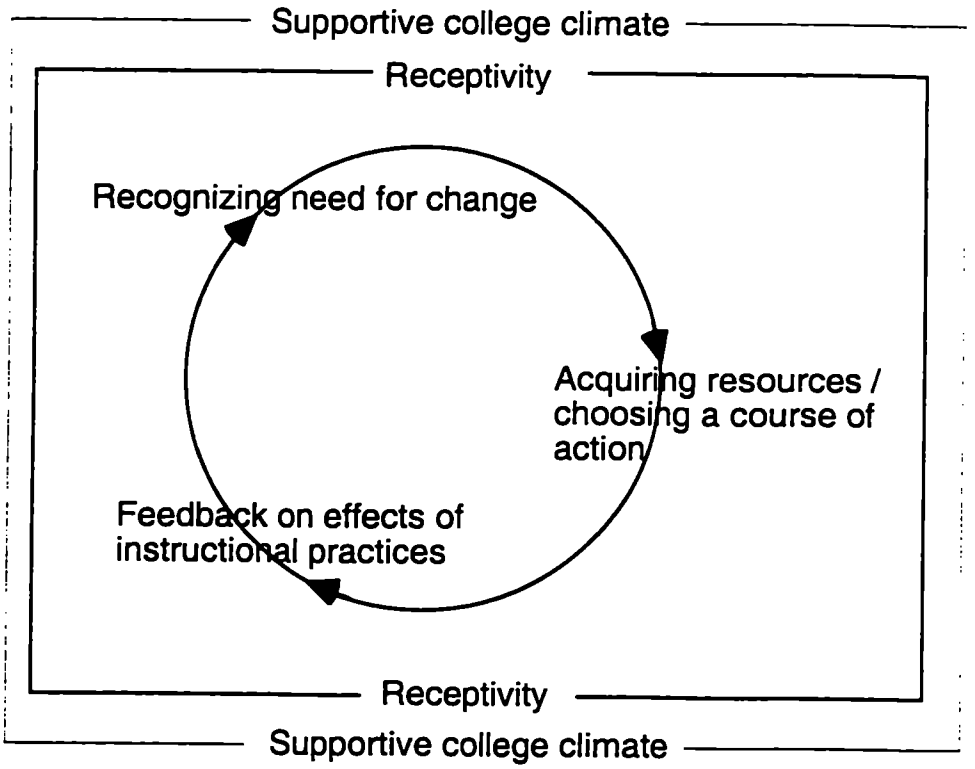


**Figure 2**

**Interpretive Framework of Instructors' Perceptions of ISD Activities**

## Conclusions

The following conclusions which add to our theoretical knowledge of ISD were reached on the basis of the analysis of the data.

1. Institutional climate has a larger effect on ISD than is reported in the literature.

2. Collegial relationships are more important for ISD than is reported in the literature.

3. An individual philosophy of education is very important for ISD. There is little mention of this in the literature.

4. A dynamic relationship exists within the receptivity or openness of instructors to change, which involves their recognition of the need for change, choosing a course of action to meet the need, and adjusting their teaching based on student feedback.

Conclusions reached here must be extended and expanded in the future, possibly by undertaking the further studies suggested in the recommendations section of this chapter.

## Revised Conceptual Framework

Upon reflecting on the conceptual framework offered in Chapter 2 (Figure 1), comparing it to the analysis of the study findings and their relation to the literature offered in Chapter 8, and the major findings and interpretive framework (Figure 2) presented in this chapter, I now offer the following personal perspective of how the study affects

our knowledge of college instructors' perceptions of ISD activities.

The majority of the conceptual framework remains as presented in Chapter 2. There are several notable exceptions however. Faculty development, personal expectations, and departmental expectations are all strongly affected by the institutional climate. The climate permeates all aspects of instructional development. For this reason it is shown as encompassing and pervading the entire framework.

Another shift is the value of collegial relationships. The study showed collegial relationships to have a greater impact on instructors' perceptions than other effects. For this reason it is shown with a thicker box and with a thicker arrow.

A third shift is the effect that an individual philosophy of education has on personal expectations and subsequently on instructor perceptions of ISD.

The last shift is the dynamic relationship which exists within the openness of instructors to change. They must recognize the need for change, acquire instructional resources to change, and use feedback from students to assist them to recognize the effect of current practice and any revisions that may be necessary. These shifts are shown in the revised conceptual framework (Figure 3) which takes account of the findings of this study.

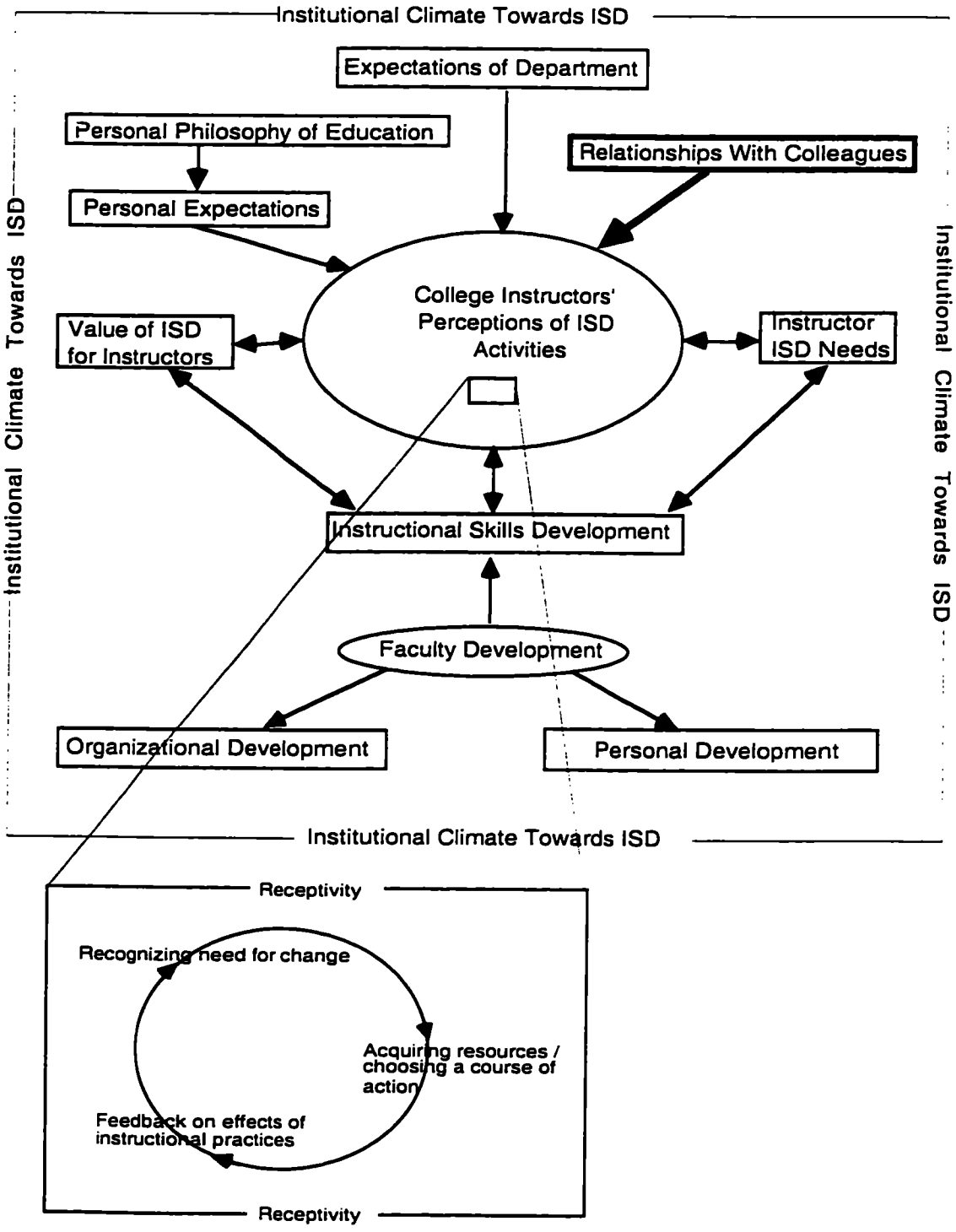


**Figure 3**

**Revised Representation of Relationships Related to Instructors' Perceptions of ISD Activities**

## Recommendations

The findings of this study provide valuable insight into college instructors' perceptions of ISD activities, but they also leave us with some questions. Some recommendations for practice as well as some implications for further research are presented below.

### Suggestions for Practice

The study college should continue what it is doing in a number of areas. New initiatives should be considered in other areas.

The climate at the study college encouraged networking. Working one-on-one with someone who had a similar interest was a key to solving many instructional problems. Instructors continuously shared resources and they found this to be very valuable. They should also continue to participate in a wide range of activities. These activities should be both on discipline-specific and general topics. The college should maintain the positive learning environment it has created for this support of instructional development as well as continue the financial support for ISD. The college could improve in several areas, especially student feedback, development time for instructors, and specific instructional development workshops.

Respondents reported that feedback from students was an excellent method to garner information about ISD needs; however, there was not a standard method of doing this. The

college should institute one of the many available student evaluation questionnaires available on the market today for instructor evaluation and apply it to every class. These questionnaires are normed, so instructors could identify areas in which they should consider improvement. This would assist them in planning their instructional development.

More time should also be allotted for ISD. The main reason given for non-attendance at ISD activities was lack of time. This is a "dicey" issue as it could affect workloads, curriculum development time, and college committee work time.

Workshops on the following themes should be offered:

- change in the workplace
- how to adjust to change in the workplace
- how administrators should deal with recalcitrants (instructors who are opposed to change in teaching style)
- diversity of student learning needs in the classroom
- facilitation workshops to help with collaborative learning

Respondents agreed the workshops would be accepted better by instructors if college instructors themselves, rather than outside experts, presented them.

## Further Research

This study was delimited to a sample of instructors at one college; hence, a multi-college study should be conducted using the same methods to extend our understanding of instructor perceptions towards instructional skill development activities.

The instructors chosen for this study were all motivated towards improvement of instructional skills. A study should

be done to gain insight into how to motivate uninvolved faculty.

The organizational culture of the study college was very supportive of instructional development and this was evidenced by the high percentage of instructors involved. A study should be undertaken at institutions with various levels of support for ISD to determine methods for coping with less supportive college environments.

## Implications

This section deals with the implications that this study has for theory development and the conclusions reached on the basis of data analysis.

### Implications for Theory Development

The study findings supported the conceptual framework (Figure 1, page 27) and the literature on the following points.

Instructors have many ISD needs. They need to work with other instructors and listen to students. They required extra time to acquire new skills and learn new technologies. More value was obtained from ISD activities if instructors had the ability to "lose" their traditional teaching style, and were willing to learn new methods.

Faculty participated in ISD activities because they enjoyed them and found them to be valuable. The main reasons for non-attendance was lack of time. They believed there are

many core teaching problems and solutions which instructors in all program areas experience, and they obtained value by sharing both their problems and solutions with other instructors.

Instructors wanted to learn more about teaching to cope with the diverse student population. Also, department expectations existed regarding the teaching style to be used in particular areas. All of the interviewees wanted to learn more about teaching. Many of the techniques they learned had an immediate impact on their classes. This was particularly true of collaborative learning workshops and computer applications.

Interviewees believed there was strong institutional support for ISD that is required in order for instructors to upgrade their instructional expertise.

The major implications of this study are twofold. First, any model of ISD for college instructors must highlight the importance of a supportive institutional climate toward instructional development. This requires leadership and support from senior management and the college board. Further, a significant financial commitment must accompany the leadership support. Second, the study findings highlight the importance of instructors being committed to instruction and their willingness to develop a personal philosophy of education that embraces alternative instructional styles. This requires a time commitment and sharing of experiences among dedicated college instructors.

## Closing Thoughts

This study showed that the institutional climate for ISD and collegial relationships are much more important to college instructors' perceptions of ISD than is discussed in the literature. Instructors' perceptions of ISD are also very much affected by their personal philosophy of education. A dynamic relationship exists which enables instructors to recognize a need for ISD, acquire the resources for addressing this need, and obtain feedback on the effects of implementing new practices.

This study was a large "stretch" for me. Having worked in the quantitative disciplines of Chemistry, Physics and Mathematics for over 30 years, I was initially somewhat reticent about tackling a major research project qualitatively. After three years of study and analysis I now firmly believe that this form of research has definite application to research projects such as this. When reflecting on my own teaching experience, I realize that I have always found enjoyment in learning more about how to teach. This study clarified for me, and I hope for the reader, the primary variables which affect college instructors' perceptions of instructional skills development activities.

In conclusion, I was pleased with the excellent cooperation afforded me by the participants, and perhaps more

importantly, I was delighted that they shared my love for instruction in a Canadian college setting.

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# APPENDICES

## Appendix A Permission Request

From agagne@gpu.srv.ualberta.caMon May 15 11:30:03 1995
Date: Mon, 15 May 1995 11:14:20 -0600 (MDT)
From: Art Gagne <agagne@gpu.srv.ualberta.ca>
To: [Academic Vice President at Study College]
Subject: Permission to do study

This email is a request for the cooperation of [name of college] in a study entitled "College Instructors' Perceptions of Instructional Skills Development Activities". The proposed study aims to provide data and insights on attitudes and practices of [name of college] instructors towards instructional skill development activities.

This data will be collected by means of personal interviews using "purposive sampling" (spring '95 - fall '95).

It is expected that the study, in addition to providing data for my doctoral dissertation, will be valuable to [name of college] as an information base in planning for instructional skill development within the college. A summary will be forwarded to you personally.

Would you prefer that a hard copy of this request to sent to you or alternately to [the president]?

I have enjoyed my relationship with [name of college] and I am looking forward to getting back there and "talking to" (interviewing) instructors.

Thank you for your time.

tag (Art Gagné) Ph 439-3160(res) 492-4909(off)

## Appendix B First Letter to Interviewees

<<DATA Dissertation:Contact letters 95 05 19>>
**To**
<<first name>> <<last name>>
<<mail>> <<sort>>
[name of college]

**From**
T. A.(Art) Gagné
Doctoral Student
Educational Policy Studies (Educational Administration)
University of Alberta
Phone 439-3160 (res) 492-4909 (office)
email agagne@gpu.srv.ualberta.ca

May 19, 1995

**Re**
COLLEGE INSTRUCTORS' PERCEPTIONS OF INSTRUCTIONAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

Dear <<first name>>;

The subject of instructional skills development is an important concern of colleges, yet relatively little research has been conducted on this topic.

This letter is a request for your cooperation to attempt to partially rectify this situation, by becoming involved in the above named study. The proposed study aims to provide data and insights on the attitudes and practices of college instructors towards instructional skill development activities. It is anticipated that this study in addition to providing the data for my doctoral dissertation, will be valuable to [college], in providing information which could be used in planning future instructional skill development activities.

I propose to collect the data through a semi-structured interview with specific staff chosen by purposive sampling (spring '95 - fall '95). Your name was listed as someone who might not mind discussing instructional skill development activities with me.

I solicit your support by giving me the time (approximately one and one half hour) to interview you on an individual basis. The interview will be taped and transcribed. You will have the opportunity to approve the transcription. You will also have the opportunity to opt out at any time. Please be assured that your responses will be anonymous, and your confidentiality will be protected.

Your time and cooperation in assisting me will be greatly appreciated. I will be contacting you within the next few days to discuss it with you personally. If you have any questions regarding this study, please call or email me at the numbers or address listed above.

A Gagné

## Appendix C Interview Guide

1. What kinds of instructional skills development activities have you been involved in; particularly in the last 2 years? (Note - this includes knowledge acquisition in the discipline, as well as specific teaching related activities) i.e. How do you keep current in your discipline / methodology.

2. Did you seek these out on your own, or were they on campus college sponsored activities?

3. Did you find it (them) useful?

4. Are there any specific things you can remember that transferred directly to your teaching practice? (give examples)

5. Why did you get involved in these activities?

6. Do you feel that you have any skill development needs?

7. Why do you get involved in instructional skills development activities, and were there some that you did not get involved in? (and why)

8. Do you have any notes or handouts on instructional skills development actitvities that you found useful? (or helpful)

9. Do you believe that the college and its administration encourages instructional skills development activities? Why do you think that?

10. What does the college provide in the way of instructional skills development activities? Can you provide examples of this?

11. Do you feel that the institution has a culture that supports instructional skills development?

12. How do you think instructors who do not get involved, could be motivated to become involved?

13. Is there anything else that you would like to add?

## Appendix D Letter Preceding Transcripts

<<DATA Dissertation:Study stuff:Interviewees>><<IF code>>1995 09 26

**To**

<<first name>> <<last name>>
<<mail>> <<sort>>
[name of college]
[Address]
[City]

**From**

T. A. (Art) Gagné
Red Deer College
Box 5005
RED DEER AB T4N 5H5
Phone res (403) 346-9277
off (403) 342-3383 (Red Deer College Switchboard 342-3300)
fax (403) 340-8940

**re**

Interview transcript of data collection for dissertation entitled *College Instructors' Perceptions of Instructional Skills Development Activities*

Dear <<first name>>;

In about one week I will be sending you the transcript of our interview. You will not be identified by name, but by the code **<<code>>**. The names and references to [name of college] have been left in to remind you of what was said. Please be assured that all references to [name of college] and to specific individuals mentioned will not be used in the data analysis.

Please read over the transcript when it arrives and note anything that you would prefer to omit, or to add. Also feel free to add other written comments on any of the interview questions.

Thank you for your cooperation.

T. A. (Art) Gagné<<ENDIF>>

## Appendix E Letter With Transcripts

<<DATA Dissertation:Study stuff:Interviewees>><<IF code>>1995 10 04

**To**

<<code>>
[name of college]
[Address]
[City]

**From**

T. A. (Art) Gagné
Red Deer College
Box 5005
RED DEER AB T4N 5H5
Phone res (403) 346-9277
off (403) 342-3383 (Red Deer College Switchboard 342-3300)
fax (403) 340-8940

**re**

Interview transcript of data collection for dissertation entitled *College Instructors' Perceptions of Instructional Skills Development Activities*

Dear <<code>>;

Enclosed is the transcript of our interview. As previously mentioned the names and references to [name of college] have been left in to remind you of what was said. Please be assured that all references to [name of college] and to specific individuals mentioned will not be used in the data analysis.

Please read the transcript and note anything that you would prefer to omit, or to add. Also feel free to add other written comments on any of the main interview questions, which are listed on the next page.

I have enclosed an addressed envelope for your reply. If you wish to make any changes, add anything, or add written comments to the questions, just note the changes on the transcripts or question sheet, place in the envelope provided and drop in the Provincial Courier mail bag.

If I have not heard from you by 1995 11 03 (Nov 3, 1995), I will consider the transcript approved.

Thank you for your cooperation.

T. A. (Art) Gagné<<ENDIF>>

<<code>>

Please feel free to add written comments to any or all of the questions below.

1. a. What do you believe are your instructional skills development needs?
   b. What value do you place on instructional skills developmental activities?

2. a. What reasons do you have which influences participation and/or non-participation in instructional skills developmental activities?
   b. What reasons do you believe influences participation and/or non-participation in instructional skills developmental activities by other faculty members?
   c. What value do you place on instructional skills developmental activities that you have been involved in within the previous two years?

3. a. Why do you strive to learn more about teaching?
   b. What specific activities were you involved in that transferred directly to teaching practice?

4. a. Do you feel the college encourages instructional skills development?
   b. What does the college provide in the way of instructional skills developmental activities?

## Appendix F Informed Consent Form

### Consent to Participate in the Instructional Skills Development Activities Study

Dear Colleague;

As a follow-up to the letter and telephone conversation in which you provided consent to work with me in my study entitled *College Instructors' Perceptions of Instructional Skills Development Activities*, I am requesting that you acknowledge your consent in written form. Please do so by signing the bottom of this letter. I have provided two copies so that you may keep one for your records.

As participants in this study, you will be asked to engage in a maximum of two interviews. The length of time conducting each interview will vary from 1/2 to 11/2 hours.

You may at any time, withdraw your consent to participate in the study. I assure you that if you decide to opt out of this study you need not fear any form of retribution. Furthermore, all data collected will be treated as confidential - - all names and places will be assigned pseudonyms in all documents which are to be presented at public forums or for publication. You will also be provided with transcripts of interviews so that you can identify any data which you do not wish me to use. Any data that you identify as sensitive will be deleted from the record before any analysis takes place.

Following the conclusion of this study, you will be provided with a copy of the results of the study. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me at 439-3160 (until June 30, 1995), at 346-9277 (after June 30, 1995) or email agagne@gpu.srv.ualberta.ca. At this time, I also wish to thank you for agreeing to work with me in this study. Your contribution is greatly valued.

Sincerely,

T. A. (Art) Gagné

---

I,_____, acknowledge that I give permission to T. A. (Art) Gagné tc include me in the study as described above.

_____ _____

Signature Date

Division _____ Department_____

Years college instructing__ Years at present college ___

## Appendix G Cover Story

The cover story is designed to put the interviewees at ease and to answer the following questions.

1. Who you are.
2. What you are doing.
3. Why you are doing it.
4. What you will do with the results.
5. How the study site and participants were selected.
6. Any possible benefits as well as risks to the participant.
7. The promise of confidentiality and anonymity to participants and site.
8. How often you would like to observe or hope to meet for interviews,
9. How long you expect that day's session to last.
10. requests to record observations and words (by notes, tape recording, or video taping).
11. clarification that you are present not to judge or evaluate, but to understand.
12. clarification that there are no right or wrong answers to your questions, and that they are the experts and teachers.

Good morning (afternoon). My name is Art Gagné, and I am a doctoral student at the University of Alberta and as part of my program I am conducting a study on the attitudes and practices of college instructors towards instructional skills development activities. I have been quite involved in instructional skills development activities for the last several years, and have found that they not only increased my

repertoire of teaching skills, but also increased my enthusiasm for the process of teaching itself. I would like to find out what other instructors experienced with instructional skill development activities in order to see if there is some general themes that could be included in my dissertation.

I did a Field Experience here at [name of college], and was impressed with the dedication of the faculty, so felt it would be a good place to do my study. I asked for the names of instructors who were interested in the process of teaching and your name was given to me. I would like to do an interview of approximately one hour today, and possibly a follow up interview at a later date. I would like to tape record the interview and transcribe it. I will also make some notes as we talk, but they are mainly to remind me of things I would like to come back to if we have a chance. The transcriptions will be sent to you for verification. You have the right to opt out at any point, or to ask that the recorder be turned off.

Everything that is said will be strictly confidential and anonymous, both in terms of people and the institution. I would like you to be as candid as possible, as I would like to understand your attitude about instructional skill development activities. You should also realize that there are no right or wrong answers, as you are the expert in terms of your attitude towards this topic. I would like to think

that you will come to a better understanding of your position on the value of instructional skill development activities by discussing it with me.

Do you have any questions before we begin? OK let us begin.

## Appendix H Verification Letter

1997 04 21

**To**

<<first name>> <<last name>>
<<mail>> <<sort>>
[name of college]
[Address]
[City]

**From**

T. A. (Art) Gagné
Red Deer College
Box 5005
RED DEER AB T4N 5H5
Phone res. (403) 346-9277
off (403) 342-3383
(Red Deer College Switchboard 342-3300)
fax (403) 340-8940
email art.gagne@rdc.ab.ca

**re**

Data analysis chapters (4 - 7) for dissertation entitled *College Instructors' Perceptions of Instructional Skills Development Activities.*

Dear <<first name>>;

First I would like to thank you again for sharing your thoughts and some of your precious time with me. Without your cooperation, I would not have been able to do this study.

I am sorry it has been nearly a year since you heard from me but I have encountered some personal problems which delayed the completion of my dissertation. I have now finished the analysis chapters and they have also undergone a preliminary revision.

As you will recall, the study name was *College Instructors' Perceptions of Instructional Skills Development Activities.* There were four questions which helped guide the study. The analysis chapters each answer one of the subsidiary questions.

The subsidiary questions are:

1. a. What do faculty believe are their instructional skills development needs?
   b. What value do faculty place on instructional skills development?

2. a. What reasons do faculty members offer to account for their participation and/or non-participation in instructional skills development activities?
   b. What value do faculty members place on instructional skills development activities they have been involved in within the previous two years.

3. a. Why do faculty strive to learn more about teaching?
   b. What specific activities were they involved in that transferred directly to teaching practice?

4. a. Do faculty feel the college encourages instructional skills development?
   b. What does the college provide in the way of instructional skills developmental activities?

I have enclosed a draft of the analysis chapters (Chapter 4 - Chapter 7) of my dissertation. It is a great deal to read and I know you are busy, so to save time you might want to just scan the quotations and the summary sections.

Please remember as you go through my interpretations that I can only use information that I collected from the interviews, documents I gathered during the study and a personal reflective journal to arrive at the study findings. The study findings reflect these three sources of information only.

There may be other points that should be included but unless they were shared with me I can not include them. If you feel there are some serious omissions, please let me know.

I have enclosed a response form for your use. You could respond (via provincial courier in the envelope provided), by phone or email with your feedback.

Again many thanks for your help.

T. A. (Art) Gagné<<ENDIF>>

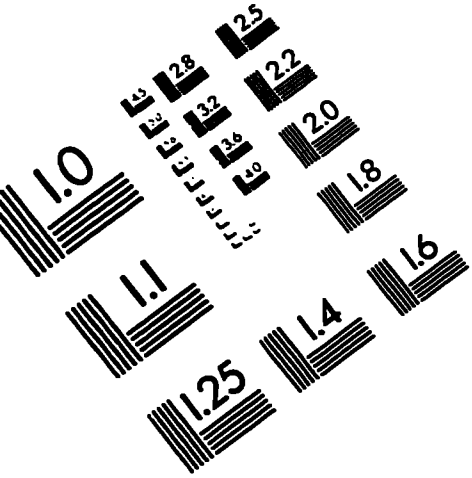
# Analysis Chapters Feedback Form

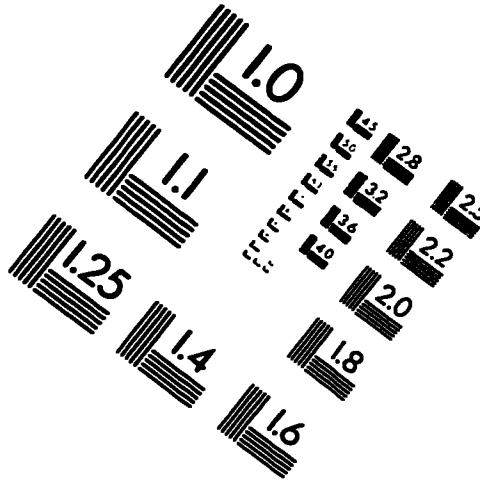
NAME _____

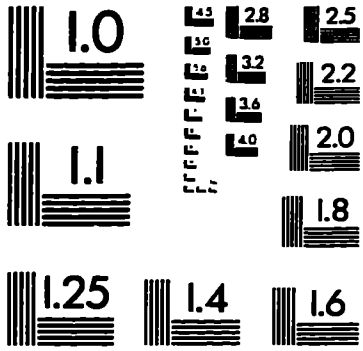
1. I would like to say:

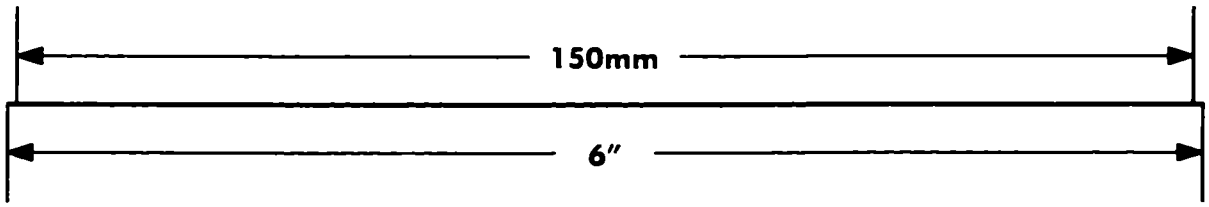
2. I would also like to add:

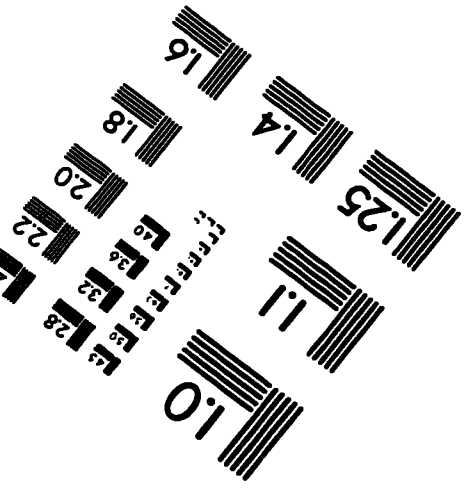
# IMAGE EVALUATION TEST TARGET (QA-3)

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