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ABSTRACT

There is nationwide pressure by the taxpaying public to have teachers be accountable for what they are trying to teach. Massive inservice education programs may become necessary for school districts to equip teachers to cope with this change. Staff development in many school districts often consists of a lecture or speech by some "expert" on instructional problems. A better path is the use of systematic instructional techniques and methods on instructional problems. Since universities usually do not have well-planned programs that have been developed with the training of inservice teachers in mind, it would be advantageous for school districts to use programs that have been developed and validated through funding from the U.S. Office of Education. There is an excellent program available in many areas of the country that was developed by the National Media Institutes Consortium under a contract with the U.S. Office of Education. The program is a five-day intensive training institute that makes use of simulation, games, media, discussions, and programmed materials to train teachers in the use of a systematic approach to curriculum development. (JA)

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PROMOTING SYSTEMATIC INSTRUCTION THROUGH IN-SERVICE EDUCATION

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There is nationwide pressure by the taxpaying public to have teachers be accountable for what they are trying to teach. Within the profession, there is a mounting frustration because most teachers have not been trained to operate in this manner. Therefore, massive inservice education programs may become a necessity for school districts to equip teachers to cope with this change.

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Inservice education to help teachers grow and become current in their field is a persistent problem faced by most school districts. Although many systems have staff development offices, many times actual staff development consists of a lecture or speech by some "expert" on instructional problems. Marciene S. Mattleman expresses what happens in this form of inservice education as follows, "The audience is amused, stimulated, and acquires an idea or two (while watching the clock), but what remains?"¹ She indicates that a staff development planner should be as accountable for what happens to the teacher as a result of development as the teacher is for their students' performance. Using a hit and miss approach of a lecture now and then will not really make a difference.

The use of systematic instructional techniques and methods seems to be the most popular trend in education today. The use of systematic approaches are relatively new in that most teachers now in teaching have not been trained using these tools and techniques. Yet, according to Marjorie Prentice they are a very important part of our challenge in education. She says, "That systematic development of instructional alternatives can be a viable component of future education seems evident. The challenge remains that to develop the potential we must learn how to use systematic tools and techniques better to optimize the process of learning for each educational participant."²

Even if every teacher who comes out of a higher education institution in the next ten years was well trained in the use of systematic approaches to instruction, they could probably have very little effect on the total instruction process in the school. If there are ninety teachers in a school and five to ten teachers are replaced each year, it could take a minimum of ten years before a majority of the staff would be using systems approaches in their instruction. Therefore, the answer seems to lie in an effective program of inservice education.

What paths for inservice education programs are open to school districts who are sold on having teachers use a systematic approach to their instructional problems? One obvious method would be to have their staffs develop inservice training programs that really are effective in helping teachers learn to use systematic tools and techniques. This would take a great deal of time, effort, expertise, and money. Also, universities do not usually have well planned programs that have been developed with training of inservice teachers in mind. Therefore, it would probably be advantageous to use programs that have been developed and validated through funding from the U.S. Office of Education. The advantage of this approach includes the use of some materials that have been developed over a period of time with adequate funding so that the inservice training experience can be a profitable one. This makes a great deal more sense than attempting to duplicate existing programs.

There is an excellent program available in many areas of the country that was developed by the National Media Institutes Consortium under a contract with the U.S. Office of Education.³ This program is a five day intensive training institute that makes use of simulation games, media, discussions and programmed materials to train teachers in the use of a systematic approach to curriculum development. The strong points of this institute are the outstanding media and games that are used, and the fact that a group of teachers can actually take a problem of their own choosing and work through a systematic method of solving the problem. Tentative plans of action may already be started by the time participants leave this institute. More important, each participant gets a good training in the use of a systems approach to problem solving that carries over to future ventures in curriculum planning.

The above institute is not a panacea for all the problems that may be involved in retraining teachers in the use of systematic approaches to curriculum development. It does, however, represent a good starting point for school systems who are looking for good inservice programs to help its teachers meet present demands for systematic instruction.

For information about the availability of this institute, interested school systems can contact one of the four universities who were involved in the development of the program. They will be able to indicate what teams are available in an area near the school district that can conduct this institute. The universities and locations that may be contacted

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for this information are: Instructional Development and Technology, Syracuse University; Instructional Media Center, Michigan State University; The Department of Instructional Technology, University of Southern California at Los Angeles; and The United States International University in San Diego.

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