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ABSTRACT

          Educational consultants charged by a school district
with instituting and overseeing an ongoing experimental program in
writing across the curriculum can expect that veteran faculty members
will be unwilling to change their teaching styles. A "soft sell" is
necessary with reluctant faculty. Senior faculty members who are
properly motivated are able to articulate more complex problems and
assignments, employing more interactive and postactive teaching
methods. With the site principal's support, consultants should
familiarize themselves with the faculty members and determine the
informal leaders, as their support is critically important.
Consultants should give the greatest possible consideration to
faculty insights, ideas, and opinions but should try to maintain the
focus of the program. Throughout the process the consultant should
seek out interested parties and endeavor to form an interested
nucleus of supportive individuals. Consultants should use one of
several models to assess at any point the extent to which the faculty
has internalized the content of the program. Consultants could also
develop a content specific evaluation process. While it is desirable
that related programs be implemented correctly from the standpoint of
content, it is also necessary for this to be done with as much
sensitivity as possible for the needs of all parties concerned.
(Contains 53 references.) (RS)

How to Develop a Program for Writing across the Curriculum
with an Established Faculty in a Period of Retrenchment
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If an educational consultant were assigned to a high
school and charged by the school district with instituting and
overseeing an ongoing experimental program in writing across
the curriculum, that consultant would certainly hope to find
a willing faculty that would be reasonably responsive to his
or her suggestions. But the consultant would also know that
such a reception would be unlikely. Certain tenured faculty
members will probably be unwilling to change the way they do
things under the best of circumstances (Van Dalen and Meyer,
1966; Gagne, 1977; Jones and Hayes, 1980; Ward, 1991). And
in a period of financial cutbacks, when more is expected of
a reduced faculty who have less and less to work with, such
reluctance will probably be even more pronounced (Kursh, 1971).

The Rand Studies (Berman and McLaughlin, 1975; 1978; 1980)
have shown that "soft sell" is necessary with a reluctant
faculty. Direct confrontation will only result in further
entrenchment of defensive attitudes and a stonewalling resistance
to attempts to produce change. This approach is consistent
with the work of Piaget (Pulaski, 1971). In this vein, Berman
and McLaughlin (1976) have indicated that teachers with five
years or more experience rarely change their teaching styles.
If they are to be motivated to do so, they need to share in
the decision-making process and participate in determining course
content and curricular development. This, too, must be handled
with subtlety.

More recently Swanson, O'Connor and Cooney (1990) and Moore
(1990, 1993) have found that the experiences of veteran faculty
members can empower them since they often have more depth of
knowledge than do their more junior colleagues. Thus senior
faculty members who are properly motivated are able to articulate
more complex problems and assignments, employing more interactive
and postactive teaching methods, while integrating issues from
a variety of domains. Getzels (1982) and Feiman-Nemser and
Buchmann (1986) have also found that junior faculty members
generally lack the range and vision of their more experienced
counterparts who, in turn, should be able to provide direction,
encouragement, and nurturing whenever it may be appropriate
to do so.

Of course it is important to have a clear vision of what
should be done and of how to go about doing it. Glatthorn (1981)
has developed an insightful model for coordinating a schoolwide
writing improvement effort integrating eight important areas
of academic concern including chapters on evaluating a school's
writing program, planning and implementing a staff development

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program, working with parents to improve student writing, and
improving the administrator's own writing. His approach provides
many excellent insights and recommendations. And, as he makes
clear, psychological and political interactions must be given
the fullest possible consideration.

    In their earlier cited works, 8erman and McLaughlin (1979),
as well as Loucks (1983) and Hunter (1984), have indicated that
the attitude and supportiveness of the site principal is crucial.
Consequently, the consultant would be well advised to begin
by discussing both relevant ideas and the context of the culture
of the particular high school community with this person. In
approaching such an administrator, the consultant should try
to be as candid as possible given that individual's manifest
values. The consultant would usually expect that such a person
would be favorably disposed to the idea of related improvements,
especially within a climate associated with declining test scores
(Hord, Thurber, and Hall, 1981). The consultant should try
to win the site principal's support by communicating the
genuineness of his desire to help everyone concerned together
with the qualifications he has that serve to authenticate his
ability to make positive contributions. He should suggest how
the principal could facilitate his efforts, as one would hope
that key administrative personnel would be disposed to do
(Glatthorn, 1981; Cook, 1985; McLeod and Soven, 1991).

    With the site principal's support, the consultant should
attempt to familiarize himself with the faculty members and
to determine the informal leaders, as their support is critically
important (Mann, 1978). Some faculty concerns can be
anticipated, such as doubts about time that may be lost from
other curricular pursuits, fear that students may be overwhelmed
by proposed new writing requirements, and personal
apprehensiveness about teachers' own abilities when it comes
to handling such student writing activities. The consultant
should be prepared to confront such matters directly and as
reassuringly as is possible within the bounds of honesty
(Cappuccilli, 1982; Davis, 1984; Slater, 1988; Couch, 1989).
The consultant should also try to spend informal time with the
faculty in order to build a sense of trust and to establish
a context of shared effort which can be used to effect mutually
agreed upon positive change (Pine, 1980; Robertson, 1981).
Failure to do so can result in resentments and conflicts as
well as opposition to the whole idea of writing across the
curriculum. Such attitudes may come with surprisingly entrenched
rigidity as well as with resolute determination to avoid such
programs in the future (Claypool, 1980; Cornell and Klooster,
1990).

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The consultant should give the greatest possible
consideration to faculty insights, ideas, and opinions but should
try to maintain the focus of the program on its ultimate purpose
at all times (Guskey, 1986; White, 1991). In doing so, he should
attempt to keep his recommendations as close as possible to
the operational modes that were already being used by those
teachers with a view toward helping them to do better that which
they were already doing (Joyce and Weil, 1980).

With this kind of approach the consultant should attempt
to offset defensive attitudes by alleviating feelings of
insecurity and inadequacy (Blau, 1988). Teachers need classroom
strategies that work easily (Joyce and Showers, 1980; 1982;
1983; Miller, 1983). In this context the consultant might ask
the faculty to complete a survey indicating the kinds of writing
they actually assign in their classrooms (Joyce, McNair, Diaz
and McKibben, 1976; Boice, 1990). He could ask teachers to
indicate the kinds of writing products they like to assign to
their students--i.e. library reports, essay exams, research
papers, poems, stories, essays, etc. (Rubin and Kirby, 1982).
He could then demonstrate that writing techniques such as graphic
organizers, clustering, and learning logs, can be used to make
their jobs easier while helping students to learn content more
effectively (Donlan, 1982). Parents also need to be involved
as constructively as possible in encouraging student writing
and endeavoring to create home atmospheres which can enable
students to work both competently and creatively (Glatthorn,
1981).

Throughout the process the consultant should seek out
interested parties and endeavor to form an interested nucleus
of supportive individuals, endeavoring at all times to
communicate his desire to help them while cultivating their
desire to work with him (Boiarsky, 1985). Three or four months
down the line he should have faculty meetings, using teachers
from the school site and coordinating presentations by as many
members of the faculty as possible (Binko and Neubert, 1984).
At that time the consultant should have a great many reinforcing
supplementary materials for distribution (Barnes, 1981). The
consultant may employ a concerns-based questionnaire (Hall and
Loucks, 1978), endeavoring to find the next group of teachers
he would be working with. He should use as team members those
people who have already established themselves as such and he
should use staff development sessions for those teachers who
want them (Sparks, et al, 1985). Throughout the entire process
the consultant could use the models developed by Loucks and
Melle (1982) and Hall and Loucks (1977; 1978), and especially
Hall and Loucks concerns-based model (1978), to be able to assess
at any point the extent to which the faculty has internalized
the content.

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Another possibility for assessment would involve developing
a procedure to evaluate the program's efficiency. In developing
such a procedure the consultant could draw heavily from the
research of Cooper and Odell (1977), who have considered
holistic, primary trait, analytic scales, and peer grading with
thoroughness and conciseness. The consultant could employ their
research in developing a content specific evaluation process.
Ultimately, a factor rating system would probably be used with
factor weighting employed to emphasize the relative importance
of those aspects of the program that were deemed to be most
important.

The issue of writing across the curriculum is vital to
the development of an articulate, well rounded, competent
citizenry. While it is desirable that related programs be
implemented and carried out correctly from a standpoint of
content, it is also necessary for this to be done with as much
sensitivity as possible for the needs of all parties concerned.
Otherwise, an extraordinary national opportunity may be
needlessly compromised. However, if these matters can be handled
both wisely and well, then the potential is quite promising
not only for the long-term growth of our students but for the
enduring benefit of our educational systems as well.

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