

Implementing and Sustaining a Successful Faculty Development Initiative in a College of Education

Gail Ring

University of Florida, College of Education
Gainesville, Florida, USA

Sebnum Cilesiz

University of Florida, College of Education
Gainesville, Florida, USA

Naglaa Ali

University of Florida, College of Education
Gainesville, Florida, USA

Mnchu Chen

University of Florida, College of Education
Gainesville, Florida, USA

Abstract. This presentation outlines a three-level model of faculty development: workshops, support mechanisms, and consultations, and dissemination.

Beginning in the fall of 2000, the College of Education at the University of Florida recognized the importance of promoting technology integration throughout the college. Committed to doing more than simply paying lip service to the idea, the college hired an Assistant Director of Technology to develop and implement a faculty development program throughout the college. The first year began slowly, most of the faculty members had little or no motivation to attend these workshops, and consequently our faculty development initiative did not have a wide audience. However, the audience we had during this first year provided diffusion to the wider audience in the college and in this second year the program has expanded considerably. We believe that successful faculty development must include a variety of components such as workshops, continued support (physical and virtual), and individual consultations. We approach faculty development as a three tiered model (figure 1).

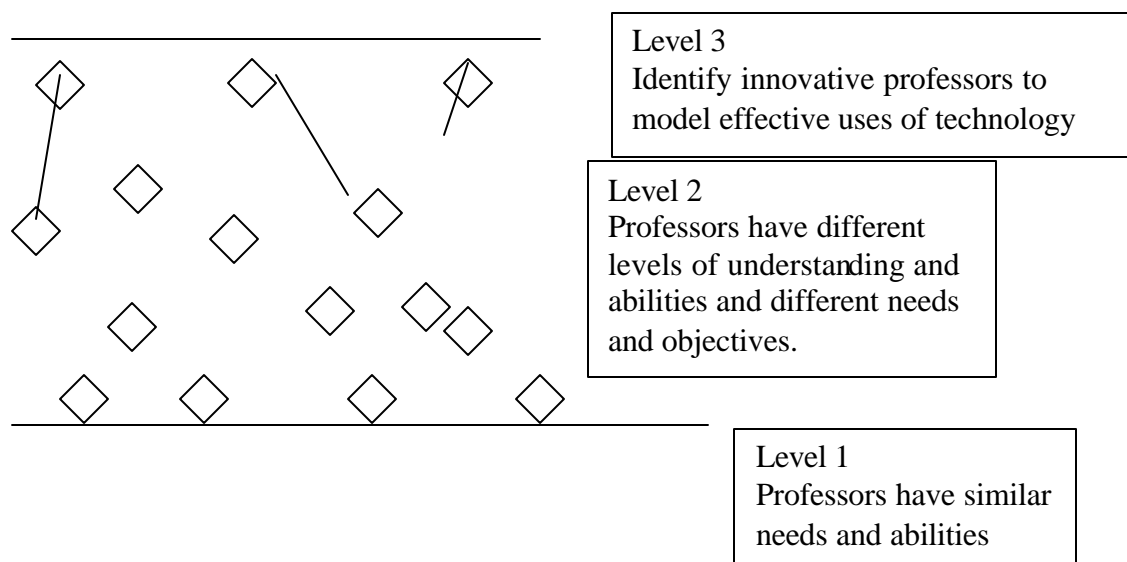


Figure 1: three levels of faculty development

Workshops

Workshops (Level 1) are broken into individual modules rather than as a step-by-step cookbook-type approach to technology training. Workshops begin with a brief brainstorming session where participants are questioned about their particular objectives for the workshop. This approach makes each workshop context specific for the group of faculty in attendance, and consequently everyone leaves the

workshop feeling like they "got their monies worth." In addition, at the end of the workshop we probe further to determine which concepts should be expanded into online support elements. Each workshop is high energy where each person is both a participant and a contributor.

Support

In addition to these workshops we have an online support center which includes the workshop handouts as PDF downloads, tutorials that serve as prompts for concepts that might be forgotten after the workshop has ended, and frequently asked questions. We have learned that handouts, online tidbits, and downloadable documents contribute to the self-sustaining element of faculty development in the college.

Consultations

Once the faculty has gotten the basics from the introductory workshops, they may request additional time with a consultant (level 2). This element of our faculty development initiative has been very successful. When the consultants work with faculty the following issues are considered:

Context - All consultations occur in the professor's office using their computer and software.

Student teaching Teacher - Student consultants must remember that in this environment they are the experts and as such must understand how to effectively use their expertise to instruct their professors, through probing, modeling, patience, and practice.

Learner's goals - Prior to beginning a consultation the consultant discusses the professor's short-term and long-term goals. In addition, the consultant questions the professor to ascertain their current level of understanding.

As the consultants spend time with faculty a bond quickly develops between student technology consultant and faculty. This bond is dependent upon mutual trust and respect, and once developed, student and professor work together on many projects over time.

Faculty Modeling

The third level of our faculty development program is faculty modeling effective use of technology. We have found that once they learn how to use the technology, faculty are extremely innovative ideas for technology integration. Through college and university wide poster sessions we hope to share our faculties innovative uses of technology within the college of education community as well as the university community. It is our belief that faculty sharing ideas, strategies and techniques with other faculty motivate other faculty members to integrate technology in their teaching and research.