University Continuing Education Part-time Instructors' Professional Development

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the nature of University Continuing Education (UCE) part-time instructors and their needs with respect to professional development and renewal activities. It also casts light on the kinds of experiences that can shape positive professional development and renewal activities. Survey and focus group methodologies were used to collect data for this study. Analysis of that data indicated that professional development and renewal activities must be understood within the context of practice and the nature of part-time instructors; that these activities may be supported by the principle of "mattering," a critical first step in the provision of a nurturing and supportive work environment for part-time instructors; and that part-time instructors' ownership, articulation, and identification of needs are

RÉSUMÉ

Ce document étudie la nature des instructeurs travaillant à temps partiel et enseignant dans le domaine de l'éducation permanente universitaire (ÉPU) ainsi que leurs besoins en matière d'activités de développement professionnel et de renouvellement. L'auteur dévoile les sortes d'expériences pouvant façonner des activités favorables en développement professionnel et en renouvellement. Le rassemblement des données pour cette étude s'est fait auprès des groupes de consultation ainsi qu'avec des sondages. L'analyse de ces données a indiqué que des activités de développement professionnel et de renouvellement doivent être comprises dans les contextes de la pratique et de la nature des instructeurs travaillant à temps partiel; que ces activités peuvent

important in the provision of high quality programs and professional development and renewal activities.

être appuyées par le principe du "sentiment d'importance face aux autres", une première étape critique dans la fourniture d'un milieu de travail stimulant et positif pour des instructeurs travaillant à temps partiel; et, que la prise en charge, l'articulation et l'identification des besoins de ces instructeurs travaillant à temps partiel sont importants pour offrir des programmes de grande qualité ainsi que des activités de développement professionnel et de renouvellement.

INTRODUCTION

University continuing education (UCE) part-time instructors contribute to the learning of adult students and to the mission of UCE units. Nevertheless, adult educators' concerns about the uneven quality of classroom instruction and student learning often prompt calls for improved classroom teaching and learning through faculty development and renewal activities. These activities may include the provision of teaching techniques and strategies, mentoring programs, peer support teams, access to library resources (including the Internet), and an infrastructure of administrative and clerical supports. Discourse, however, on faculty development and renewal activities is often pre-empted by a reductionistic and linear solution, that is, the belief that the provision of techniques and methods through professional development and renewal activities will improve teaching. This approach assumes that the problem is clearly defined and understood and that the solution lies with improvements in instructors' classroom techniques or methods through professional development and renewal activities (Alfred & Linder, 1992; Bianco-Mathis & Chalofsky, 1996; Boice, 1992; Chandler, 1989).

Despite a lack of understanding of the nature of the teaching faculty, the issues and problems, and the unique practice context, these solutions are often proposed and implemented with predictably minimal success, results, or responses from those for whom the renewal programs were intended (Austin, 2002; Boice, 1992; Swenson, 1997). Although improving classroom teaching may indeed be an accurate assessment, it may be only part of the

solution. Understanding and describing teaching faculty, including UCE part-time instructors, may be an important first step in the process, one that warrants investigation. To date, few if any studies have documented either the nature of UCE part-time instructors or their needs with respect to professional development and renewal activities. This paper reports on the results of research on UCE part-time instructors and casts light on the kinds of experiences that can shape positive professional development and renewal activities.

RELATED LITERATURE

Few studies describe the professional development and renewal activities of UCE part-time instructors who teach non-degree courses/programs. Typically, the body of research on faculty development and/or renewal pertains to full-time faculty members who teach, research, and/or engage in community service in traditional degree faculties and schools at post-secondary institutions. Faculty development and/or renewal is viewed on a continuum from improved career/professional development related to teaching, research, and service, to enhanced personal development, to personal health and growth (Bianco-Mathis & Chalofsky, 1996; Boice, 1992; Millis, 1992).

Many scholars have suggested that faculty development should be broadly defined to include professional development and renewal activities related to teaching, research, and personal growth and health, as well as to the management of the faculty member's professional career over time (Mathis, 1982; Menges & Associates, 1999; Schuster, Wheeler, & Associates, 1990). Thus, when broadly defined, faculty development is a holistic approach that encompasses not only remedial but also improvement and validation aspects of professional and personal development. This expanded definition assumes that there is a dynamic interrelationship between professional and personal development. In other words, faculty members who participate in professional development gain experiences that enhance their personal development and vice versa. Little evidence, however, exists to support the assumption that improvement in professional development leads to improvement in personal well-being.

The literature further suggests that both the institution and the faculty member are responsible for managing the faculty member's professional career over time (Boice, 1992; Chandler, 1989; Menges & Associates, 1999; Millis, 1992). Accordingly, professional development is viewed as faculty members' efforts to assess and plan their professional and personal development and an institutional approach to assist faculty members in doing so. In an ideal world, these two aspects form a synergy that produces a third aspect— institutional commitment, co-operation, and collaboration across

disciplines, faculties, and schools (Centra, 1979; Chandler, 1989; Eble & McKeachie, 1985; Hirshberg, 1992).

The literature, however, also indicates that no matter how much support and encouragement the institution may provide or how comprehensive its faculty development and renewal activities may be, if the process of socialization and support is inefficient and ineffective, it will fail the institution and the new faculty members (Austin, 2002; Boice, 1992). For the process to be successful, faculty members must also take ownership and responsibility for their professional and personal development (Chandler, 1989; Gardner, 1985; Kort, 1992; Palmer, 1992). Furthermore, the traditional full-time tenure-stream position is no longer the norm; 43% of instructional faculty and staff in American colleges and universities are employed on a part-time basis, and many faculty appointments to full-time positions are term rather than tenure-stream positions. Regular tenure-stream faculty members are now outnumbered by term and/or part-time positions (Austin, 2002; Finkelstein, Seal, & Schuster, 1998; Schuster, 1999). An aging faculty population and the financial exigencies of many institutions further exacerbate the situation on many campuses. In addition, personal values and beliefs, the content taught, and the institutional context influence the faculty's objectives and roles (Swenson, 1997). Thus, understanding the evolving nature of the teaching faculty and their roles, and how they can be helped to develop as teachers, is critical.

Those who teach in UCE units present particular issues. Typically, they are employed on a part-time basis while working full-time elsewhere. In contrast to full-time university faculty, they are not socialized to the university's culture, values, attitudes, and expectations (Austin, 2002) and, because of this, may not have the same level of employment commitment as full-time faculty to the unit, its mission, and its students. Thus, the development and implementation of faculty development and renewal activities based on the assumptions of a full-time, traditional faculty may be problematic. Although UCE part-time instructors are not required to assess, plan, and participate in professional and personal development, if, as Percival (2002) suggested, the goal of professional (albeit not personal) development and renewal activities is to ensure high-quality programs, this situation may lead to dissonance rather than synergy (i.e., commitment, co-operation, and collaboration across disciplines and instructors). In other words, there may be a conflict between the unit's need to fulfill its goal and its part-time instructors' need to demonstrate their teaching competence without self-assessment plans and participation in professional development and renewal activities.

In this context, responsibility for professional development and renewal activities may be shifted entirely to part-time instructors, although the unit may play a supportive role (Tsunoda, 1992). This view of the need for part-

time instructors to be independent and self-directed learners is consistent with the assumptions of andragogy, which underpin UCE practices, values, and beliefs. As Knowles (1980) stated, adults have a "deep psychological need to be generally self-directed" and independent learners (p. 43).

Based on the literature review, this paper suggests that UCE part-time instructors' professional development and renewal activities are intimately interrelated with the context of practice, the nature of instructors, and consequently their motivation to participate in professional development and renewal activities. Faculty development and renewal must be understood within a broad definition of professional development, including part-time instructors' personal and professional well-being, the context in which practice occurs, and a philosophy of adult education and how adults learn. Within this definition, activities may include, but not be limited to, the provision of professional development opportunities, the elements of a caring and nurturing learning environment, a description of the context of practice, and an understanding of the nature of part-time instructors.

CONTEXT OF PRACTICE

Although UCE units across Canada may differ in organizational structure, mission, governance, hiring practices, and instructional arrangements, a cost-recovery and income-generating motif appears to drive most of them. Research has suggested that teaching-development goals are influenced not only by the content that is taught and the faculty's values and beliefs, but also by the institutional context (Swenson, 1997). This study is located in a UCE context that has a cost-recovery/profit-generating mandate and a mission to advance lifelong learning in the province and beyond by assisting learners to achieve personal and professional goals through the delivery of high-quality courses and/or programs. The unit hires mostly part-time instructors who either work full-time with other organizations or are self-employed consultants. Based on the unit's cost-recovery and profit-generating mandate, it may be argued that hiring part-time instructors to avoid costs associated with full-time positions benefits the unit.

To achieve its mandate and mission, the unit offers over 32 certificate programs and approximately 300 individual courses, including seminars and workshops, in a variety of formats, such as evenings, days, weekends, and summer institutes/sessions. Approximately 20,000 adult part-time learners enrol in these courses/programs, and over 263 part-time instructors, who are not normally full-time employees of the unit, are employed to teach them. To be hired, they must have a minimum of a master's degree and/or a professional designation, expertise in the content area, experience in the field of

study, experience in teaching adults (Cross, 1981), and knowledge of adult learning principles (Knowles, 1980).

The unit provides an infrastructure of administrative and clerical supports to part-time instructors, including ad-hoc access to professional development and renewal activities and the occasional "thank you" reception in recognition and support of their work. The summative, formal, end-of-course evaluations that are routinely conducted are shared with the part-time instructors and normally used to make re-hiring decisions.

THE STUDY

The purposes of the study were: 1) to describe the nature of the part-time instructors; 2) to understand the dynamics of their continuing professional development with respect to their role as instructors; and 3) to identify strategies that may support and enhance their professional development and renewal activities. Some guidelines for professional development and renewal activities were also explored.

Population and Sample

UCE part-time instructors were defined as those who had taught a non-degree course(s) previous to and during the 1996–97 academic sessions. Thus, all 263 part-time instructors who were listed in the database for that period were invited to participate in a survey. In addition, a purposeful sample of 14 participants who taught in two different areas (management and professional, and community programs) was used to conduct two focus groups.

Method

Quantitative and qualitative methods were used, including a survey, with both closed and open-ended questions, and a focus group technique. Survey research was used to collect specific data to describe the characteristics of this fairly well-defined group and/or to collect information on their attitudes (Jaeger, 1988; Merriam 1988). Although the survey method allowed large amounts of data to be collected at minimum cost, it did not permit in-depth responses to questions (deLeeuw, 1992). The survey was developed and pre-tested with a sample of five persons comparable to the population, and a number of survey questions were modified as a result of the feedback. A letter containing an explanation of the goal of the study, the survey instrument, and a stamped, self-addressed envelope was mailed to respondents. Data were collected over a four-month period.

A focus group—a guided group discussion to create a process of sharing and comparing among participants—was subsequently used to collect in-depth data often not obtained in surveys. The group dynamics also provided a different level of information, as participants tended to build on each other's ideas. In addition to the content of the conversation, the group dynamics served as a rich source of information. A standard protocol for moderating and recording was also used (Einsiedel, Brown, & Ross, 1996).

Data Analysis

Surveys were mailed to all 263 part-time instructors who were listed in the UCE unit's non-degree database up to 1996–97. To increase the response rate, a telephone follow-up was used approximately three weeks later. The follow-up asked the instructors if they had received the survey, if they were willing to participate in it, and, if so, could they complete and return the survey. Based on these questions, 79 respondents were removed from the list for a number of reasons: they had not recently taught for the unit; they had no immediate plans to continue to teach; they were out of the province; and/or they did not want to participate in the study. This process left 184 names on the list and resulted in 92 usable surveys, for a response rate of 50%.

The response rate allowed for meaningful data analysis, reporting, and observations (Babbie, 1995). The data were analyzed using SPSS. Descriptive data and simple frequencies were reported for the structured items, while categories and themes were developed from the open-ended items that expanded on structured items. Summative, formal, end-of-course evaluations, including informal feedback from students, instructors, and advisory committee members, informed the data collection.

The focus group involved three phases: planning, conducting, and data collection and analysis (Stewart & Shamdasani, 1990). Two males and six females participated. Data were collected over a one-month period. Participants were asked to share their perspectives on what would be important to support their teaching with the unit, the extent to which their needs and expectations had been met, and their recommendations for improving the unit's efforts. Fit with the data and context-to-context extrapolation may be inferred on the basis of the data (Firestone, 1993).

The researcher, in collaboration with the recorder, completed interpretations of the data and content analysis. In analyzing the data, the following guidelines were used to report the results: intensity of responses, order in which items were expressed, and amount of time spent on issues. Data analysis involved reviewing data for patterns, contrast, differences, and points that were emphasized. Discussion patterns that emerged as key issues were also identified. Various methods were used to identify patterns such as key words, variety of experiences, common terms used, and level of agreement or disagreement (Stewart & Shamdasani, 1990).

FINDINGS

The survey data were organized into three sections: a description of the respondents; respondents' needs and level of interest in continuing professional development; and respondents' strategies for professional development and renewal activities. Themes that were developed from the open-ended questions and the focus groups were integrated within the reporting of these data.

Nature of Instructors

Of the 92 respondents, there were more males (51%) than females. Table 1 describes the distribution of males and females. Participants in the focus group were representative of those who participated in the survey.

Table 1: *Gender*

Gender	Frequency
Female	47% (43)
Male	51% (47)
N/R (no response)	2% (2)

As Table 2 indicates, the majority (72%) of respondents reported that they had been teaching for three or more years with the unit. Similarly, focus group data were consistent with these findings; that is, all but two respondents had taught for three or more years with the unit and had extensive teaching experience with adult learners in external organizations.

Table 2: *Teaching Experience*

Number of Yrs	Teaching in unit	Teaching experience
Less than 1	10% (9)	3% (3)
1 – 2 years	18% (17)	9% (8)
3 – 4 years	24% (22)	8% (7)
4 + years	48% (44)	80% (74)

With respect to survey respondents' teaching experience, the majority (88%) reported that they had extensive teaching experience, including teaching for the unit (teaching adults was one of the criteria used to hire part-time instructors). As well, the majority (96%) reported that they normally taught adults.

The majority (68%) of respondents reported that they were employed full-time with an organization, and 32% were self-employed consultants. Of those who were employed with an organization, 51% were female, and of those who were self-employed, 59% were male.

Table 3: *Employment and Gender*

Gender	Self-employed	Employed by organization
Female	28% (12)	72% (31)
Male	36% (17)	64% (30)
N/R	2% (2)	

The majority (65%) of respondents reported that they engaged in professional development activities. Of these, 48% were full-time employees and 58% were self-employed.

Of those who were employed full time with an organization, 66% indicated that teaching was part of their main job responsibilities and that teaching for the unit was an "add-on" responsibility that was an extension of and compatible with their full-time job responsibilities. For self-employed consultants, teaching for the unit was consistent with their employment.

Dynamics of Continuing Professional Development

As to whether or not survey respondents engaged in professional development and renewal activities, 65% of them reported participating in activities related to their teaching and instructional skills and abilities. When asked to describe these activities, of those who responded, 25% reported the activities were related to adult and professional development, 15% indicated they were content knowledge specific, 9% stated they were degree-related course work, and 51% did not respond.

Table 4 describes the categories that were derived from responses to an open-ended question about reasons for participating in these activities. Goal-oriented factors (employment opportunities, skill enhancement, professional development, and work/job requirement), the most frequently mentioned reasons for pursuing professional development (95%), were followed by self-development/personal interest and networking factors.

Table 4: *Motivation for Professional Development & Renewal Activities*

Reasons	%
Employment opportunities	45% (41)
Skill enhancement	24% (22)
Professional development	18% (17)
Work/job requirement	8% (7)
Self-development/personal interest	4% (4)
Networking with other instructors	1% (1)

Interestingly, more than half of the focus group participants had engaged in professional development activities that were offered through the unit and were directly related to their content area. In an open-ended question, survey respondents were asked to indicate what supports would have been helpful to them as new instructors, but only 59% of respondents replied. Categories generated from their responses are provided in Table 5.

Table 5: *Supports Identified*

Supports	%
All supports provided	26% (24)
Teaching techniques	9% (8)
Effective instruction & support materials	9% (6)
Grading/student evaluation	4% (4)
How adults learn	4% (4)
Developing course goals & objectives	4% (4)
N/R	41% (38)

Based on the focus group data, participants' perspectives on what would be important to support their teaching with the UCE unit, and the extent to which their needs and expectations were met, were consistent with the survey data. All participants indicated that the unit's staff was extremely supportive, supports for teaching were always provided, and, while they appreciated meeting with other instructors, there was limited time to commit to more meetings or educational activities. Although only half of them had taken advantage of the free educational opportunities available through the University Teaching Services and/or the UCE unit, they valued their access to these activities. Participants commented that the "thank you" receptions (although not offered for over four years) made them feel "special and val-

ued." Finally, they agreed that "occasional, surprise tokens of appreciation" (e.g., free parking passes) would certainly make them feel more appreciated and committed to the unit and to their role as part-time instructors.

Survey respondents were asked to rate (on a scale of one to five, with five being the most important) a number of categories that related to the importance of teaching competencies for their teaching activities and their desire to learn more about these. Although respondents willingly rated the importance of the competencies for their teaching, they appeared less willing to indicate if they needed to know more about the particular item. Table 6 illustrates the correlation between the top-rated categories on the importance of the competency for their teaching and their desire to learn more about it.

Table 6*: Competencies*

Competencies	Importance to teaching	Desire to learn more
Facilitating adult learning	86% (79) (1st)	63% (58) (1st)
Instruction (impact, credibility, accountability)	80% (74) (2nd)	52% (48) (3rd)
Evaluating student learning	78% (72) (3rd)	52% (48) (3rd)
Alternatives to lecturing	74% (68)	56% (51) (2nd)
Teaching techniques	73% (67)	48% (44)

Focus group data did not provide additional insight into their competencies, importance to teaching, and desire to learn more. Participants reiterated that access to educational opportunities was important and appreciated, but that time was a factor in their participation.

Strategies for Professional Development and Renewal Activities

Categories were derived from the open-ended survey question on what professional development and renewal activities the unit should provide for respondents. The majority (62%) of respondents did not respond to this question. The categories that emerged from those who did respond (38%) are listed in Table 7. Focus group data did not shed additional insight into this topic. Focus group participants felt that their educational needs and expectations had been met and offered no suggestions for professional development.

Table 7: *Professional Development & Renewal Activities*

Professional development	%
Improve teaching skills	10% (9)
Maintain & upgrade knowledge base	10% (9)
Provide compensation or free PD	8% (7)
Provide feedback on student assessment	4% (4)
Offer alternatives to lecture	3% (3)
Interact with other instructors	3% (3)
N/R	62% (57)

With respect to strategies for delivering continuing professional development and renewal activities, survey respondents clearly indicated a preferred duration of offerings: 64% preferred activities that were offered in "half-day" blocks, and 18% preferred "one-day" and "two-day" blocks, respectively. Respondents' preferred times of offering were: evenings (35%) and/or during working hours (35%), during the day (16%), and weekends (14%).

Respondents' preferences for the location of these activities resulted in a close split between a preference for on-the-main-campus (45%) and off-campus (47%) locations; the remaining 8% of respondents checked both categories. As for the preferred time of year, the fall session (38%) was preferred to winter (25%). The "other" category was the next preference (20%), followed by summer session (9%) and those who did not respond (8%).

Survey respondents were prepared to invest various amounts of money to participate in professional development and renewal activities: 35% indicated they would invest $30 for a half-day session; 20% would spend $50 for a one-day session; 25% checked the "other" category, which ranged from "$0" to "lots for useful and relevant courses"; and 20% did not respond.

Recommendations from the focus group data were limited to administrative details, such as the limit placed on photocopied materials, locked classrooms, cancellation of classes, and preference for electronic class lists.

DISCUSSION

The dearth of research on professional development and renewal activities of UCE part-time instructors may reflect their position and status within universities. Although generalizations cannot be made from this study, several observations on the nature of respondents, the dynamics of continuing professional development, and strategies for professional development and renewal activities can be drawn about the fit between the data and the picture presented in the literature.

Nature of Respondents

The typical instructor in this study was a highly goal-oriented, motivated person currently employed full-time with an organization or as a self-employed consultant and working on a part-time basis for the UCE unit. The person's main job responsibilities included teaching adults and participating in professional development and renewal activities. Teaching for the unit was an "add-on" responsibility. Given the context of practice and the unit's mandate, part-time instructors normally require a minimum of a master's degree and/or a professional designation, experience teaching adults, and knowledge of adult learning principles in order to be hired.

Specifically, there was a balance of male and female part-time instructors who had taught with the unit; many of them had a long and continuous track record of part-time teaching in the unit. Most of them were either full-time employees of external organizations or self-employed, had teaching responsibility as part of their main job description, and traditionally taught adults. From these data, there appears to be a core cadre of part-time instructors with experience teaching adults who had been teaching in the unit for three or more years.

Slightly more females than males were employed by an organization, and slightly more men than women were self-employed. These instructors seemed to have accumulated a number of years of teaching experience through the unit, which may suggest that any professional development and renewal activities should address the differing needs of new and continuing instructors. Further, a mentoring or peer-learning strategy, where experienced part-time instructors are paired with inexperienced instructors, may be a viable approach in this situation. Given the demographics and the constantly changing nature of the workforce, a mentoring strategy might conserve and transfer the special know-how of experienced part-time instructors, help less-experienced instructors reach their full potential, and encourage their contribution (Wunsch & Johnsrud, 1992).

Both male and female part-time instructors' full-time job responsibilities included teaching, and their teaching experience was mainly with adult

learners, which suggests that the guidelines for hiring part-time instructors were followed. Therefore, content, strategies, and techniques related to facilitating adult learning and development may be important professional development and renewal activities for all part-time instructors.

As indicated above, the majority of respondents had accumulated a number of years of teaching experience with the unit and continued to teach with the unit over time. However, because the study did not investigate the nature of re-hiring decisions, there was no evidence to suggest that excellent teaching instructors were retained while poor ones were let go. Further investigation is needed to determine if the unit recruits and retains the best part-time instructors or if, once hired, they simply continue to teach for the unit unless their evaluation results are well below average. More critical appraisal of part-time instructors may be needed in addition to the standard evaluation forms, including on-site classroom visits, written debriefing notes, and informal conversations with part-time instructors.

Dynamics of Continuing Professional Development

Part-time instructors who were employed by an organization tended to engage in fewer professional development activities than those who were self-employed. Overall, respondents reported participating in mostly goal-oriented types of activities (employment opportunities, skill enhancement, professional development, and work/job related), while a small number participated in personal development or general interest types of activities. This finding is consistent with the literature on motivation and participation (Boshier, 1973; Cross, 1981; Houle, 1961). Although motives cannot always be inferred from activities studied, in this particular case, some correlation appears to exist between the two categories, that is, motivation for taking the activity and the type of activity completed (Kowalski, 1988).

The follow-up telephone responses and the focus group data suggest that these instructors appreciated the technical supports that were provided, but they felt less connected to the unit. This may be consistent with the unit's lack of a retention strategy—a well-articulated, developed, and integrated policy and practice—that might demonstrate to part-time instructors that they mattered. If this was the case, these instructors might not have viewed themselves as part of, or as contributing to, a learning community or as an integral part of the mandate and mission of the unit. Instead, they might have seen themselves as being on the margin of the unit. "Mattering is a motive: a feeling that others depend on us, are interested in us, are concerned with our fate, or experience us as an ego extension [and it] exercises a powerful influence on our actions" (Rosenberg & McCullough, 1981, p. 165). If mattering exercises a powerful influence on actions, it may be in the unit's best interest to help its part-time instructors feel that they matter—not through rhetoric but through concrete actions that involve them.

How does a UCE unit involve part-time instructors who may not perceive themselves as mattering and may feel on the margins of the unit? Or, is the unit's current practice toward these instructors a realistic response, given that they work full-time elsewhere, teach on a "part-time" or "add-on" basis, and appear to teach mainly to improve their employability? If a unit's central function is to provide adult learners with high-quality programs, including challenging, relevant, and useful learning opportunities, then a first step may include developing practices and policies that speak to the care, support, and respect of part-time instructors. Alternatively, these instructors may have to be socialized as to the importance of their role in maintaining and fostering high-quality programs and the mandate of the unit. Mattering may be an important guiding principle for the work of the unit and its part-time instructors.

Survey respondents indicated that "all necessary information was provided." A fair number, however, did not respond to the survey question about whether supports were provided to them as new instructors. It may be that, because of the retrospective nature of the question, they could not recall what mattered at the time of their hiring. The focus group data confirmed that technical needs were provided and appreciated; however, perhaps affective needs (i.e., small tokens of appreciation and caring) were not met. Nevertheless, according to the survey data, instructors wanted more information on facilitating adult learning, effective teaching strategies, evaluation of student learning, and resource materials to facilitate their teaching. These needs appear to be consistent with the competencies or tasks that instructors identified as important to their teaching and their desire to learn more about them. The broad category of facilitating adult learning, including effective instruction and evaluation of student learning, provided additional insight into their needs and suggests that any provision of professional development opportunities should take these needs into account.

Strategies for Professional Development and Renewal Activities

Historically, the unit offered, at minimal or no cost, professional development activities to its part-time instructors to address some of the competencies or tasks identified above. Attendance at these activities varied from very satisfactory to poor. Thus, in some sense, the responses to the survey questions may reflect the types of professional development opportunities provided by the unit rather than the instructors' strong commitment and desire to learn more about a particular task.

The "add-on" or "part-time" characteristic of instructors' roles may provide some insight into the policies that frame part-time instructors' professional development within the unit, as well as their attitude and approach to

teaching for the unit and the professional development opportunities provided by the unit. Within this context, instructor development has been the responsibility of an ad-hoc faculty development committee, which has not operated on a regular basis. Consequently, professional development opportunities have not been provided in a systematic, comprehensive, or ongoing manner but, rather, in an infrequent and random manner. As a result, instructors may neither have questioned the availability of these activities nor have come to expect them to be made available in a regular way, particularly because their main motivation for professional development and renewal activities was to improve their employment opportunities.

With respect to respondents' preferences for location of offerings, time, and cost, no new insight was shed. The responses confirmed the unit's existing practices with respect to location, time, and cost of professional development activities. The void in the data on the question of strategies for professional and personal development that the unit should provide speaks louder than any data collected.

The broader definition drawn from the traditional faculty development literature, which includes management of faculty's personal and professional career over time, may be problematic for the unit because of the "part-time" nature of these instructors and the "add-on" character of their employment with the unit. In addition, the cost-recovery and income-generation mandate of the context of practice favours part-time instructors; if no immediate, tangible economic outcomes are seen, this may be an obstacle to creating and sustaining a comprehensive, systematic, and supportive program of professional development and renewal activities for part-time instructors.

High-quality programs and effective classroom teaching and learning are hallmarks of both the program's and the unit's success. Therefore, short-term economic gains may be offset by long-term negative consequences. In short, it is prudent to invest in maintaining and improving high-quality programs and effective classroom teaching and learning through supportive systems. Given the context of practice and the part-time nature of instructors, a unit may be inherently a site of conflict, that is, cost recovery and income generation versus the provision of high-quality, socially responsible programs. Can such a unit provide a caring and supportive environment that facilitates high-quality programs delivered by part-time instructors who are socialized outside the university culture? Until a unit comes to terms with the nature of its part-time instructors, the context of practice, and its mandate to provide high-quality programs, determining the nature of a supportive and caring environment that includes professional development and renewal activities for part-time instructors may continue to remain an elusive goal.

IMPLICATIONS

The importance of faculty renewal and development through professional and personal development activities is an article of faith in the traditional academy. This is because it is generally believed that faculty members, the institution, and learners will all benefit from the process. More important, participation in renewal activities is seen to minimize burnout, improve morale, and increase instructional effectiveness. Broader benefits include the removal of isolation across disciplines, establishment of a strong sense of a learning community, co-operation among faculty members, and the creation of a revitalized institution (Austin, 2002; Boice, 1992; Carroll & Goldberg, 1985; Chandler, 1989).

   There are three aspects of renewal activities in the traditional academy: faculty members assess and plan their professional and personal development needs; the institution facilitates faculty members achieving these needs; and there is institutional commitment, co-operation, and collaboration across disciplines, faculties, and schools. However, these may be problematic given the nature of a UCE unit's part-time instructors and the contextual factors. UCE part-time instructors may not recognize the need for self-assessment and participation in professional development and renewal activities, and units may not place a high priority on these activities or on co-operation and collaboration across disciplines or areas. The data and literature provide some insight into the roles that units may play in the renewal process, including establishing a guiding principle, such as mattering, and facilitating guidelines that focus at the individual and unit level, with benefits accruing to part-time instructors, the unit, and learners (Hirshberg, 1992; Millis, 1992).

   The faculty member is central to any professional and personal development process. No matter how supportive the institution or how comprehensive its professional and personal development activities, the faculty's effort and commitment to development must be at the heart of a renewal process (Chandler, 1989). The institution's role must be to support, encourage, and nurture the faculty's efforts. In a UCE unit, maintaining and facilitating high-quality programs is central to the unit, and the part-time instructor is important in this process. The unit might begin by adopting and communicating to its part-time instructors not only the principle of "mattering" but also guidelines that demonstrate how the principle operates in the unit (Schlossberg, 1989). This is essential because the goals of its part-time instructors may differ from those of traditional faculty.

   Orientation and mentoring programs for new part-time instructors may support this principle. An orientation program can provide new instructors with some of the supports identified in the survey, including facilitation of

adult learning, effective teaching strategies, evaluation of student learning, and alternatives to lecturing. A mentoring program that matches new and experienced part-time instructors can utilize the expertise and knowledge of experienced instructors and act as a motivator for new instructors and indicate they are valued. Additional focus groups may be conducted to determine the usefulness and value of such programs for enhancing teaching and creating a supportive and nurturing environment.

Relationship building through personal and emotional supports is critical for implementing the principle of mattering. These supports may include regular contact with part-time instructors, one-on-one meetings with them, on-site classroom visits of mentor-mentee pairs, group meetings with those from the same discipline or programs to share information about content, grading, and evaluation, informal debriefing discussions, and offers of small tokens of appreciation. Ownership of needs and commitment to high-quality programs may be established through these relationship-building processes.

The data identified some professional development needs (e.g., facilitating adult learning, providing effective instruction, and evaluating student learning) and scheduling preferences (e.g., half-day or evening sessions offered during the fall and winter terms). Links with other professional and personal development programs that are available through the wider university community may be a cost-effective means to address these needs and preferences.

An infrastructure of clerical and administrative instructional supports is another good basic starting point for providing a supportive environment. These supports may include preparing and typing course materials, copyrighting and photocopying materials, ordering course textbooks, ordering audio/visual aides and equipment, providing electronic class lists, arranging for the administration of course evaluations, and providing feedback on course evaluations. Again, ongoing face-to-face meetings may determine the extent to which these supports may need to be improved.

A resource library or resource materials in a central location for "drop-in" use may help create a supportive environment and provide opportunities for part-time instructors to network. Facilitating their access to the Internet and listing professional development opportunities on a Web page may also create a nurturing environment and a sense of a learning community. A newsletter may be another useful tool for facilitating dialogue and engaging part-time instructors.

Historically, the unit organized "thank you" receptions for all part-time instructors, issued them invitations to graduation ceremonies, and occasionally invited them to attend free-of-charge current conferences. The value of these activities, as well as other methods for useful and relevant renewal activities, may need to be reassessed. Attendance at these events may be enhanced by public recognition for outstanding service.

Conclusions

Teaching for the UCE unit is no small matter. The unit receives many requests from potential part-time instructors who wish to be associated with the prestige and status of the institution. A definition of professional development and renewal activities within the unit may be seen within the context of practice and the nature of part-time instructors as they may teach for the unit over a long period of time.

Professional development and renewal activities may be supported by principles that are grounded in practice. The principle of mattering is a critical first step in enhancing a nurturing and supportive work environment for part-time instructors. The goals of commitment, co-operation, and collaboration may form the cornerstone of professional development and renewal activities that may benefit the part-time instructors, the institution, and the learners. Part-time instructors' ownership, articulation, and identification of needs are also important for the provision of high-quality programs and professional development and renewal opportunities. A major challenge for the unit is to entrench these principles in its policies as well as in its practices. However, given the context of practice, whether management of part-time instructors' personal and professional careers over time is a reasonable and realistic goal and what would make sense given the nature of part-time instructors are critical discussion issues.

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