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REPORT ON PLANNING EFFECTIVE INSERVICE EDUCATION:

SUBMITTED TO THE ADMINISTRATION OF  
RINGWOOD TECHNICAL SCHOOL ON OCT 22ND 1984  
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INTRODUCTION:

School-based inservice education, as a means of ensuring continuing professional development of teachers, must be planned to meet the needs of those teachers.

Subject based inservice programs, across the region, are currently conducted once a year in technical schools. These inservices usually meet the need that teachers have to keep abreast with current developments in their subject areas, to network with their counterparts in other schools in the region, and to see what is happening in other schools.

On the other hand, school-based inservices are often run to accommodate areas of need as perceived by the administration. This can be very productive in streamlining school processes ( eg. assessment) and improving school structures. However, it may leave the classroom teacher feeling quite helpless in terms of improving his or her effectiveness as an individual in his/her professional role. To give individual teachers an opportunity to develop professionally, inservice must be planned to meet the needs of individual teachers, to help them to strengthen their perceived weaknesses, and to overcome their areas of difficulty.

We are part of an ageing teaching service; many members of whom have not undertaken new courses of study since they began teaching

(often ten or more years ago). Schools tend to impose inservice on them from above, often by a passive transfer of information or with input from the more vocal teachers, resulting in a slightly increased awareness of the issues tackled. This method of inservice is NOT likely to induce a teacher to:

- . make a self-examination, with a view to self-improvement.
- . tackle new projects within the department/school.
- . tackle new projects outside the school, eg further study.
- . improve classroom performance, or the way in which he/she relates to students.
- . cope better with the stresses of the job.

To involve teachers to an extent where these developments can take place, school-based inservice must focus its attention on the NEEDS of the teachers in a particular school. Teachers must be made to feel that the inservice is being held for their benefit not because the department has set aside a blank on the calendar that has to be filled with a seemingly worthwhile activity.

#### SURVEYING NEEDS:

"Teachers certainly favour an inservice education program about which they have been consulted ..... rather than one that has been "put together" without consultation." Geoff Moore (REF APPENDIX I Geoff Moore, rightly, suggests that to find out the needs of teachers a survey questionnaire should be filled out by the individual staff members, to determine the inservice priorities of the staff.

I have enclosed two such surveys ( APPENDIX II & III ) in this report, which may be helpful in developing a questionnaire relevant to our school.

I conducted a brief survey at a general staff meeting of this



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school (3.9.84.) to get some idea of perceived areas of need amongst teachers at Ringwood Technical school (APPENDIX IV). Because it was a one-page survey sheet, it did not tease out specific needs.

However, it did indicate general inservice priorities. The top four areas of concern were:

1. Raising staff morale
2. Effective teaching
3. New teaching methods
4. Program planning within departments.

The first priority correlated with a large number of teachers (20) seeing the "fostering communications/relations with fellow staff members" as a top priority. It is open to question whether or not that teachers are referring to communications in a professional sense, or a social sense.

Many teachers put suggestions for "moral raising" activities in answering the third question. Twelve staff members (possibly those who had been at the school for over three years), suggested that we could raise staff morale by having a day of instruction in canoeing, sailing or horse riding, as had been done in the past. Activities such as these are currently being conducted in other regions. A S.E.O. at Tullamarine region informed me that in the past 12 months he has organized several such inservices, as the raising of staff morale is a key issue with teachers in that area and that such inservices had been seen as very valuable in bringing people closer together and to help to improve morale generally.

In the few minutes that I spent gathering up the survey, many teachers asked me what would be done as a result of it. They seemed pleased that they had been asked for their opinions and had raised expectations about the type of inservice that would be offered

in future.

PLANNING EFFECTIVE INSERVICE:

A number of strategies may be used in planning effective inservice (APPENDIX V), however the following points must be taken into consideration once the need for the inservice is established:

. Who should organize it? (a) An individual? If so, the person must be given an adequate time allowance. (This will be dealt with later.)

(b) A committee? If a number of staff members want to be involved with inservice planning then this could be a good way of going about the task because it would provide adequate reflection and discussion of the modis operandi. However an individual may be able to tackle the task more efficiently.

To plan effective inservice the following points must be addressed:

. Determine aims and objectives.

. Advertise the activity. Feedback may be required at this stage.

. Organise resources. The venue, materials, speakers, handouts etc., whatever is appropriate to the inservice.

. Conduct the activity.

. Evaluate the activity. Depending on the nature of the inservice a short term evaluation (eg. a questionnaire on the day), or a long term evaluation (such as a survey three months after the activity) can determine the success of the activity, the need for follow-up to it, or the need for some other type of activity. The evaluation will assist the organiser(s) in planning future activities. For a sample evaluation questionnaire ref APPENDIX VI.



THE ROLE OF AN INSERVICE ORGANISER:

If an individual is selected to organise school based inservice education he/she will need a time allowance of at least two units per week as the job involves the following considerations if it is to be done effectively:

1. To meet the Professional Development needs of the staff (and possibly the school council).
2. To initiate, plan and organise programs that cater for the needs of
  - . The whole staff
  - . Individual departments
  - . Special interest groups
  - . Individuals
  - . School council and possibly parents
3. To establish links with regional consultants and teacher centres.
4. To identify human resources, both inside and outside the school community.
5. To form a Professional Development committee within the school community.
6. To assist the induction of new teachers into the school.
7. To provide a focal point for the reception, exchange and dissemination of information about Professional Development.
8. To maintain a resources file of professional associations, tertiary institutions, V.I.S.E.C. and R.I.S.E.C. courses, and to ensure that

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the staff is aware of what is currently available and when to apply for it.

9. To develop a Professional Development library.

FOOTNOTE:

The (considerable amount of) material that I recieved whilst under -taking the course PLANNING EFFECTIVE INSERVICE, will be included in the inservice file at Ringwood Technical school.

  
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