Indirect Faculty Development and the Role of Sociability

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Informal socialization is an essential ingredient in effective faculty development, and a necessary component of successful centers for teaching and learning. There is more to assisting faculty than providing workshops, even assuming faculty retain and use the methods discussed at the workshops. Foundational learning theories apply to faculty as well as any learner, and identifying how to create sustainable relationships with faculty is a key component of successful development. Theoretical models of socialization apply partly to this context, but a new model informed by emotional intelligence is needed for authentically connecting faculty with developers.

Introduction

From its roots as a classroom-based endeavor, faculty development has undergone near-constant changes to its scope and mission. Lewis (1996) explains that by the 1990s the foci of faculty developers encompassed personal development, instructional development, and organizational development. The complex interplay of working with single individuals and entire departments has led some to characterize the profession as "educational development." Yet what appears to be a single task should more properly be understood as a mixture of various skills, abilities, and expertise. An effective faculty developer aspires to be much more than a fountain of knowledge about teaching and learning theories, and practices. A caring, insightful developer requires a sense of relational competence,

which can be a challenge to acquire through traditional step-wise academic promotions.

Becoming a faculty developer involves both tangible and intangible aspects. Successful developers have evolved an ability to interpret problems brought to them by faculty members as opportunities for improvement. But the "content" of the solution may be less important than the means of delivery. Successful developers realize that building relationships with faculty members is perhaps the major portion of our roles. In this article, we hope to capture the process of becoming a successful faculty developer as well as explore some of the social, cognitive, and developmental attributes required. The ultimate aim is to identify the ideas that can lead to intentional mentoring for the next group of faculty developers.

How centers for teaching and learning (CTLs) should maximize their effectiveness is a frequently debated topic with few clear answers. How are centers for teaching and learning (CTLs) supposed to demonstrate their effectiveness? Certain questions remain for faculty developers about their effectiveness in general and, more fundamentally, about their role in particular. Determining what makes an effective faculty developer is highly contextual, depending on institution, discipline, resources, expected outcomes, support, and faculty needs, to name only a few important parameters. We have observed that the art and science of assisting faculty members is multi-faceted, complex, and non-linear. Although acquiring the necessary attributes may initially seem daunting and difficult, most faculty developers interpret these as interesting challenges. The one common denominator that appears throughout the literature is that CTLs serve a significant social and service-oriented purpose.

Previous Studies:
How Do Faculty Developers Define
Their Role and Responsibilities?

Considering the extensive history of academe, the business of faculty development in higher education is relatively new. One of the main international professional organizations for faculty development, the Professional and Organizational Development (POD) Network in Higher Education, began in 1974, with the Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education (STLHE) coming into existence in 1981, and the American Association for Higher Education (AAHE) in 1967 (Boyer, 1990). Early in the history of faculty development, Sullins (1988) recognized the universal need for faculty development in higher education as well as the lack of consensus on what that might mean to institutions and faculty

members. In 1998, Bland added to the discussion by suggesting effective approaches to faculty development, characterizing development in two ways: "A wide-perspective that continuously looks for and tries to address all the aspects that impact faculty success; and a systematic and rigorous attention to each of the steps in the faculty development process" (p. 15). Finally, Wager (2006) spent his semester sabbatical traveling to 15 CTLs collecting significant data on their mission and roles and identifying best practices.

Faculty Development Models

The Learning Triangle

The role of a teacher is often approached through the Learning Triangle, created by Hawkins (2002) as a version of the well-known rhetorical triangle (consisting of speaker, audience, and message) reproduced in the educational context with the vertices labeled teacher, student, and subject (see Figure 1). The lines of the triangle traditionally represent the relationships between the three points: teacher to student (Teaching); teacher to subject (Expertise); and student to subject (Learning).

### *The Faculty Development Parallelogram*

While the Learning Triangle offers intriguing ways to think about the roles and relationships of the teacher and student, it has limited value for anticipating the needs and services of faculty developers. One way to conceive of a conceptual model for faculty developers is to adjust and expand the Learning Triangle. The logical place to insert the faculty developer is near both the teacher and the subject matter. Thus, the Learning Triangle becomes the Faculty Development Parallelogram (see Figure 2). In this model the teacher-subject line retains its focus on the teacher's expertise in the material. The line between the faculty developer and the subject matter is the location of pedagogy: We concern ourselves with how this material can best be taught (not with teaching it directly). The line between the faculty developer and the teacher is again a relationship; this is where faculty development—particularly the social elements—occurs. Pedagogy comprises the "content" of our work with faculty members, but faculty development is the method through which we interact with instructors.

It may be fruitful to envision the faculty developer, teacher, and subject matter as a separate triangle, analogous in some ways to the original Learning Triangle. Though few faculty developers would relish the description of themselves as being the "keepers of knowledge" while

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Figure 1
The Learning Triangle

Subject Matter

Expertise

Learning
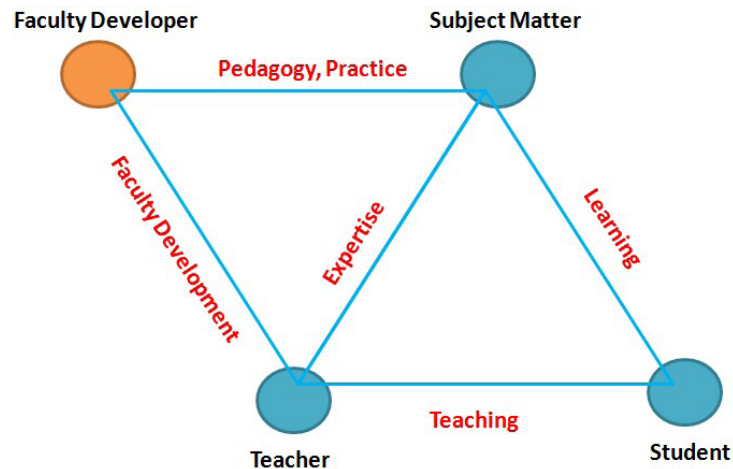
Teaching

Teacher

Student

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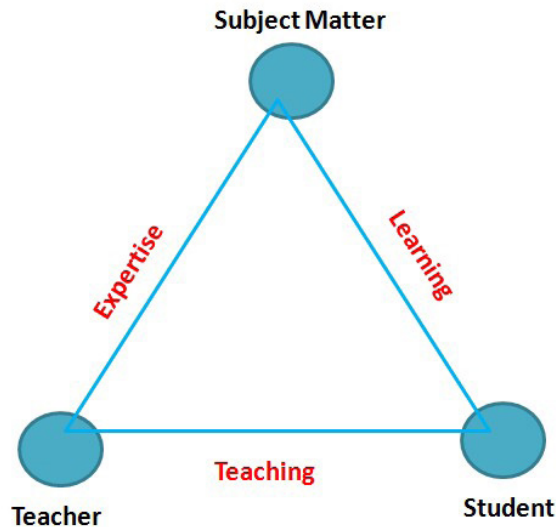
teachers fulfill the role of learners, there are, nevertheless, parallels to the Learning Triangle. The almost-vertical lines in both cases have to do with learning, while the horizontal line(s) stays focused on teaching. But such modeling has its limitations as well: It can be dangerous to remove the student completely from the equation. Indeed, faculty developers rightly ought to keep students' needs and learning foremost in their minds when working with faculty members through the issues of pedagogy and subject matter expertise.

If the role of faculty development focuses explicitly on the relationship between the teacher and the faculty developer, as seen in the Faculty Development Parallelogram model, then our efforts need to be concentrated on social interactions with faculty members as much as on the "content" of faculty development (the pedagogy). We can pretty easily discern that there is more than one type of interaction with faculty. Formal contacts happen via workshops, consultations, and observations. But there are informal discussions as well, such as unscheduled visits,

Figure 2
The Faculty Development Parallelogram

impromptu discussions about teaching and learning, and smaller acts of mentoring. An example of an informal discussion would be the faculty member with a concern about poor student evaluations arriving at the center for teaching and learning for a surprise consultation. While not scheduled (in which case it would be a formal consultation), the discussion is nonetheless focused exclusively on issues of teaching and learning.

This study contends that a third category of faculty developer-instructor interaction occurs on a purely social level. When faculty developers chat with faculty members on unrelated topics (everything from sports to politics), they not only exemplify the "whole person" approach to relationship management, they also promote the possibility of further and deeper interactions that do relate directly to teaching and learning. In fact, in our experience, almost all of our "informal" interactions and discussions with faculty about teaching have begun as purely social conversations on topics other than pedagogy. Because many faculty members view teaching as a private act, they are often reticent to discuss their practice of it. One is more likely to discuss private, intimately held practices with a friend than with a stranger—thus, arguably, the duty of the faculty developer is

to become skilled at making friends and engaging in social interactions in the event that the conversation will veer toward teaching and learning (which, in our experience, it often does naturally). To deny the social element entirely would eliminate the opportunity to do faculty development based on informal consultations.

To return to the Faculty Development Parallelogram, what looks like one line of the parallelogram—faculty development—could more properly be broken down into three subcategories of social, informal, and formal contacts with the instructors (see Figure 3). Each of these subcategories can draw upon existing theoretical frameworks for various types of interactions. We find it relevant to draw from multiple disciplines when examining these faculty development roles, for indeed, faculty developers "wear many hats" and interact with faculty in complex, multidisciplinary ways.

## Subcategories of Faculty Development

Social Contacts

The social contact subcategory may be the most intuitive. Indeed, faculty developers have long recognized their job as inherently social in nature. Most CTLs operate with a philosophy of permitting, even encouraging, drop-in consultations, necessarily positioning the faculty developer as an on-call clinician for questions about pedagogy and student interactions (Wager, 2006). Socializing in such a context is clearly expected.

The SECI Model (Nonaka, 1994)

One might best understand the faculty developer's role, in fact, as the conduit through which knowledge (about teaching theories and practice) becomes "created" for the faculty member. The Socialization, Externalization, Combination, Internalization (SECI) model of knowledge creation developed by Nonaka (1994) offers a relevant conceptual framework (see Figure 4). What we consider "internalized knowledge" actually begins with socialization. When tacit, socialized knowledge passes through an "externalization" phase—where knowledge is converted to an interpretable form—and a "combination" phase—where knowledge is analyzed, organized, and compiled with broader concept systems in mind—it becomes again a tacit, internalized artifact of knowledge in the other party.

An example of the SECI model in action might be the situation of a new worker at a factory. Socialization occurs through his or her shared
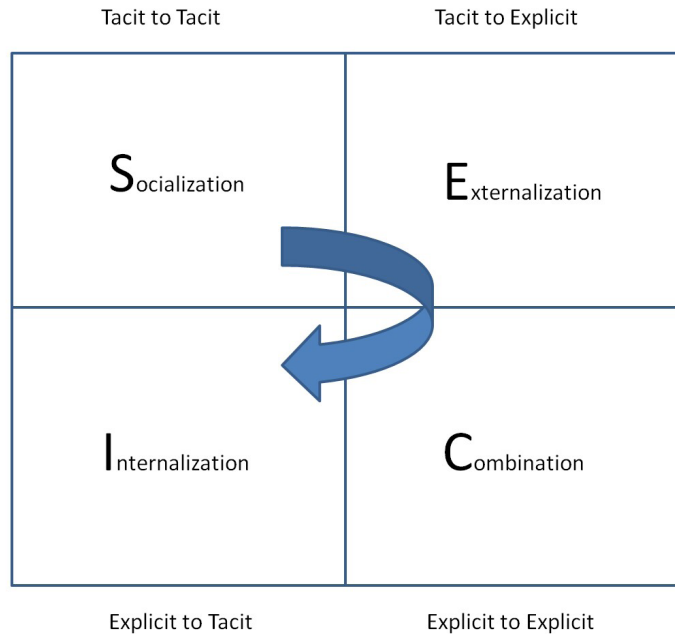
Figure 3
Subcategories of Faculty Development
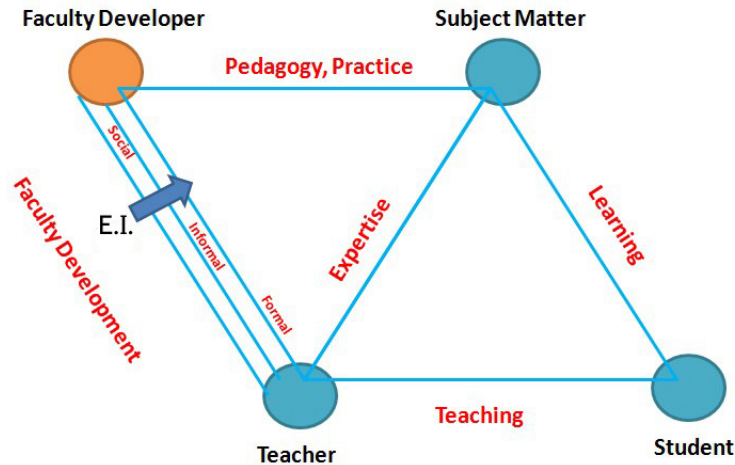
experience, such as an apprenticeship. Concepts become externalized through communication, then combined when a prototype of correct behavior, and, finally, internalized when the new knowledge becomes part of the base knowledge of the indoctrinated worker. Nonaka's model assumes a continuous spiral, where new knowledge and concepts again start with socialization after the first concepts are mastered.

Of particular note to the faculty developer is the starting point in Nonaka's (1994) model of socialization. Not only does the model imply socializing in settings such as the collegial environment, but also it posits socializing as a required component in the creation of knowledge. Simply put, the faculty developer's job is, first and foremost, that of a colleague, and everything else falls into place thereafter. In fact, explicit efforts to offer faculty development programming benefit directly from an emphasis on socialization. Nonaka's model implies that faculty members become more receptive to the "knowledge" of faculty development when it is presented in a social context and through the lens of a relationship with the faculty developer.

Figure 4
The SECI Model of Knowledge Creation
(developed by Nonaka, 1994)

Tacit to Tacit   Tacit to Explicit

Socialization Externalization

Internalization Combination

Explicit to Tacit   Explicit to Explicit

The Poon Model (2007)

We might also fruitfully turn to the realm of counseling for further theoretical models that capture the faculty developer's role in a CTL. Frequently, CTLs attempt to position themselves as neutral, even confidential, places for faculty members to confer about all aspects of their career at the institution (Wager, 2006). As a consequence, faculty developers become *de facto* "shoulders to cry on" for faculty members. Yet few faculty developers have traditional training as counselors. The American Counseling Association defines counseling as "the application of mental health, psychological, or human development principles, through cognitive, affective, behavioral, or systematic intervention strategies that address wellness, personal growth, or career development, as well as pathology" (http://www.counseling.org). Poon (2007) defines a model for the coun-

seling process that includes three stages of responses—to dependence, to independence, and to interdependence—within each of the areas of physical, psychological, social, and spiritual development. When working with faculty members, faculty developers who adopt Poon's model need to cultivate an awareness of, and commit fully to, a "whole person" approach that goes far beyond the surface considerations of instructors' explicit questions about teaching and learning.

Informal Contacts

From social conversations that are not, strictly speaking, about teaching and learning, discussions can often progress to the next subcategory of informal pedagogical conversations. Not formally structured as an appointment for a consultation or an invited classroom observation, these informal conversations usually emerge out of purely social discussions held in the CTL. They become different from social conversations, however, if their focus eventually turns to questions about teaching. The SECI and counseling models remain relevant in such discussions, as the tone and purpose of the conversation shift. Rather than talk as if to a friend, faculty members in informal pedagogical discussions speak with a different purpose in mind. Often, a problem statement, such as a particularly vexing problem student or frustratingly low student evaluations, drives their reasons for speaking. Faculty members frequently attempt to take blame when confronting such a problem because they need to expose a weakness (or perceived weakness) in order to understand the problem before trying to solve it. Others may display defensiveness rather than acceptance of blame, however. This stance further complicates the role of faculty developers, who need to consider how honest the faculty member is being with himself or herself in a given situation. In either circumstance, however, the discussion of a faculty member's (perceived) faults creates emotional transparency, where the potential shortcomings of his or her character are laid bare and exposed for judgment. Faculty developers must be cautious not to render any judgment themselves. Our role here might approximate that of a mediator: listening, bearing witness to, consoling when necessary, and offering advice when appropriate. The faculty member, in unburdening himself/herself to the impartial and confidential faculty developer, most values and deserves discretion.

Seasoned faculty developers become adept at recognizing moments when their roles can advance beyond consolation and commiseration to a more active mentoring capacity. Zachary (2000) points out that like all adults, faculty members innately use their personal ecology—their web

of relationships—to solve goal-oriented problems as they arise. Faculty developers become part of that ecology primarily by positioning themselves as ready to assist when asked, but they can also increase their effectiveness by presenting themselves as a mentor to faculty members when the need and context are right. Recognizing when such offers for assistance are appropriate (and desired) during informal discussions about teaching and learning is part of the juggling act all new faculty developers must master, either through extended experience on the job or discrete mentoring by an advanced faculty developer.

Formal Contacts

The required skill set for an effective faculty developer is, not surprisingly, different still when considering the formal subcategory of faculty development. Workshops, scheduled appointments, and classroom observations require developers to display all of the skills discussed in both social and informal contexts—and still more. Obviously, faculty developers must be teachers themselves in such moments. They need to be first-rate communicators who can consistently match the content with the needs of the audience, switching approach and method as needed to maximize the effectiveness of the message. One might find it difficult to imagine a successful faculty developer who is not himself or herself regarded by peers as an exemplary teacher. Otherwise, among other problems, his message would fall on deaf ears—who would consider suggestions from a practitioner who cannot deliver on his own promises? The credibility of the faculty developer is so central to his or her success, in fact, that most faculty developers continue to teach (on an adjunct basis, if nothing else) even when fully employed by a CTL (Wager, 2006).

Intervention: What Faculty Developers Need to Know

Many consultations, especially spur-of-the-moment (yet still "formal") consultations, could rightly be considered "just in time" interventions of a practical nature. Faculty members often think to ask about syllabus requirements only in the days before the semester starts, and many seek training on university grade-submission software only at the very end of a term. Faculty developers become the natural ones to ask questions about navigating the myriad (and sometimes confusing) networks of support systems in the larger institution. Here the theoretical model of the faculty advisor becomes relevant. Kramer (1999) suggests that advisors for undergraduate students must master all of these skills:

- Know/apply student development theory.

- Focus on students and their on-going needs over an extended period of time. One advising session builds upon another.

- Challenge students to achieve their learning potential and to take academic risks.

- View students as active partners actively engaged in intellectual and personal growth.

- Help students think about and articulate what is important to them in their academic as well as their personal lives.

- Set short-term as well as long-term goals, discuss ways to achieve those goals, and help the student monitor progress in fulfilling those goals.

Many of these parameters obviously are highly relevant to faculty developers seeking to interact with faculty members. For instance, it behooves faculty developers to know the university's resources well, the better to steer faculty members to the proper location when questions arise. While it might seem perilous for faculty developers to assume that all faculty members wish to be challenged and pushed to achieve their learning potential in matters relating to pedagogy, it remains arguable, nonetheless, that the faculty developer's job is to do all that is possible to enhance student learning. Some faculty members wish merely to hear practical advice, positioned and contextualized as just one option among many. Others may wish to be told prescriptively what the proper course of action would be in any given context; this is particularly true of contingent instructors. Parsing what a faculty member wants in any given moment is also part of the faculty developer's job.

Kramer's (1999) list as applied to faculty members might look like the following, with faculty developers expected to master the following skills:

- Know/apply faculty development theory, such as parsing the needs of a faculty member at the moment, and nudging conversations toward pedagogical principles if they do not incline in that direction naturally.

- Focus on faculty and their on-going needs over an extended period of time. One advising session builds upon

another, so that relationships become as important as the concepts being discussed.

• Challenge faculty to achieve their learning potential and to take risks when teaching in the classroom, and to venture outside their comfort zone.

• View faculty as active partners actively engaged in intellectual and personal growth. This can result in professional research partnerships, such as jointly publishing in the scholarship of teaching and learning.

• Help faculty think about and articulate what is important to them in their academic as well as their personal lives. This involves a more active mentoring role for faculty developers, particularly with pre-tenure or non-tenure-track instructors.

• Set short-term as well as long-term goals, discuss ways to achieve those goals, and help the faculty monitor progress in fulfilling those goals. While the mentoring of contingent faculty is easy to imagine, it should be equally possible to mentor all types of faculty members on the subject of teaching methods and practices. Faculty developers might even consider long-term tracking of the teaching efforts by faculty members, the way undergraduate student efforts are tracked with frequent commentary by professional advisors. Such an approach could present a conflict of interests, however. By focusing on what faculty members need rather than what they want, developers could risk straining the social relationship with faculty members, which is otherwise so crucial to the developer's message.

It is unlikely that any one individual will have a background in all of the disciplines mentioned above. Yet faculty developers could benefit from becoming familiar with counseling, mentoring, and advising. Our roles sometimes lead us to hear confessional statements or to generate knowledge by virtue of counterintuitively funneling attention and effort toward socialization rather than toward discrete "developmental" activities. But while the individual subcategories of faculty development are important to understand in isolation, their interconnectedness and interplay remain equally integral to a comprehensive accounting of the roles and relation-
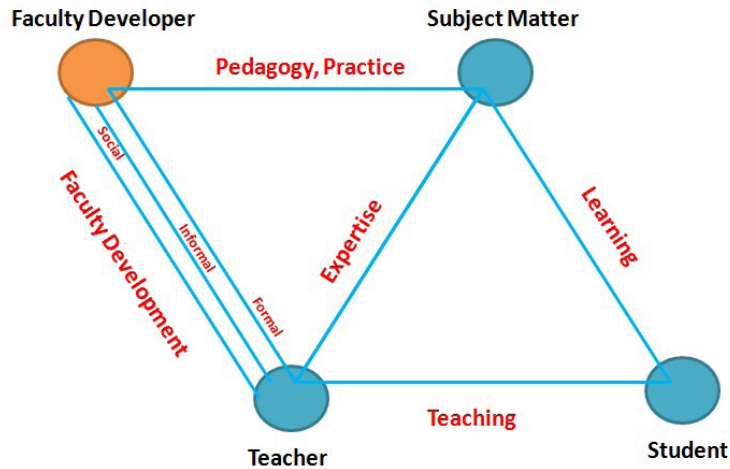
ships of faculty developers—especially because those subcategories do not actually exist in isolation. As mentioned previously, many social interactions become informal conversations about teaching, and some informal conversations lead to appointments for future consultations, workshops, or observations. Each level can be a gateway to the next.

Emotional Intelligence: The "Sixth Sense" of Faculty Developers

Properly assessing a faculty member's need (or willingness) to advance to the next level is a separate skill, one not easily measured with the theoretical models mentioned so far. The primary trait here could be summarized as the skill of social "emotional intelligence" (or "EI"; see Figure 5), a term somewhat in dispute. Initially, the social/ emotional attribute connected to intelligence, although most recent research favors the view of a skill or competency. The skills include a set of related, intentional behaviors of self-awareness, consideration, connection, and impacting others (Boyatzis, 1999; Goleman, 1998). Properly sensing when faculty have an unexpressed need, not to mention knowing when to avoid suggesting unwelcome consultations, requires a social interaction component that the job description seldom reflects. Mayer and Salovey (1997) offer a taxonomy of emotional intelligence, comprising (a) reflective regulation of emotion, (b) understanding and analyzing emotion, (c) assimilating emotion in thought, and (d) perception and expression of emotion. This taxonomy is sometimes called the Ability Model for the emphasis on being able to perceive, use, understand, and manage emotions. The interplay of these skills is the domain of a faculty developer. Frustrated faculty members should not have their questions deflected in favor of a return later to a formal workshop; they need assistance now, and a faculty developer should possess the ability to perceive and manage the emotions of the needy faculty member. Likewise, instructors who could benefit from an in-depth demonstration (say, of a teaching technique) but do not know (or think) to ask for it could benefit from a faculty developer skilled at reading and interpreting the emotions of others.

The taxonomy developed by Mayer and Salovey (1997) mostly aims inwardly. Aware that social skills necessarily involve others, Goleman (1998) identified five components of emotional intelligence that culminate in the true goal: relationship management. Goleman's skills include self-awareness, self-regulation, internal motivation, empathy, and social skills. They combine to ultimately enable relationship management, a term that

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Figure 5
A Model of Escalating Faculty Development

Faculty Developer   **Subject Matter**

Pedagogy, Practice

Social

Faculty Development   *Informal*   **Expertise**   **Learning**

Formal

Teaching

Teacher   **Student**

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for Goleman includes providing leadership by inspiration, developing others, influencing outcomes, catalyzing institutional change, resolving conflicts, building bonds, and encouraging collaboration—all topics that will sound intimately familiar to seasoned faculty developers.

In a way, emotional intelligence (as conceived by Mayer and Salovey and operationalized by Goleman) functions as the glue binding together the subcategories of faculty development. Without the empathetic and observational skills inherent in emotional intelligence, faculty developers would lack the social skills necessary to move between the subcategories of social, informal, and formal interactions with faculty. Absent any of the three, faculty development's potential will be shortchanged.

Discussion

We believe there exist multiple levels and approaches to being successful as a faculty developer. Several models integrate social aspects into learning, and while some may be right some of the time, few are

right all of the time due to contextual considerations. What does seem incontrovertible, though, is that for a faculty development program to be successful, it must include a social element, with a particular focus on relational competence. Ours is not a discipline based solely in hard facts and cold packets of knowledge.

An appropriate disposition of caring for people is critical to faculty development, but other attributes are needed as well. One approach could include the creation of a knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSA) checklist for becoming a faculty developer. It is difficult to craft a truly comprehensive KSA since such a checklist should, rightly, vary by institution and context. It seems reasonable, however, that some elements could be placed onto every checklist. Thus, we offer this rudimentary scaffold, with the caveat that institutions should take care to customize the list to match their own contexts:

- **Knowledge:** theories of teaching and learning; network of support systems at the institution of higher learning; familiarity with publishing in the scholarship of teaching and learning.

- **Skills:** presentation and communication skills in all modalities (personal consultations, telephone interactions, and creating asynchronous online materials); updated skills in methods or technologies that faculty will deem relevant.

- **Relational Abilities (and Dispositions):** perceiving and managing emotions in the target audience; discretion and confidentiality; relationship management.

Portions of existing theories of counseling, mentoring, and advising are relevant for faculty developers, but identifying wholly with just one theory is less than pragmatic. Ideally, we believe that actually implementing our proposed emotional intelligence model of faculty development should create attitudinal and dispositional change in the faculty developer, perhaps even leading to the creation of a blueprint for a successful developer. This blueprint would allow future faculty developers who wish to work in centers for teaching and learning to look ahead of them, visualize more accurately the role of developers, and, subsequently, request and receive appropriate, targeted mentoring.

Several years ago, the issue of instructional technology became a new and vital role for faculty developers. The focus at that time arguably became the "subject matter"—the technology itself. Our proposed model of

faculty development places more emphasis on the interaction between developers and faculty members and on the process of laying the foundation for that relationship. In our experience, most current faculty development efforts presume that the primary concern is with the positioning of the center in reference to the institution rather than with the person-to-person modeling needed. Having knowledge of pedagogy is important, as is the ability to communicate those strategies, but it may be equally important to possess relational competence sophisticated enough to enact change in others, because the learning will often take place embedded within the context of the relationship.

The roles and responsibilities of a faculty developer become expanded in the proposed model of faculty development—certainly we have argued for a role of sociability in a primary capacity for a successful faculty developer, and the need for a faculty developer to enhance his own credibility through both education and pedagogical practice. But it has not been our intention simply to build a recipe concocted with cookie-cutter answers to successful faculty development.

If the role of relationship building is predicated on any belief, it would be that every single faculty development interaction requires a holistic and customized approach. Still, a few guidelines emerge as best practices to encourage the type of faculty development efforts guided by emotional intelligence:

- **Encourage and actively create opportunities to interact with faculty members in purely social (non-pedagogical) ways, watching for natural moments to nudge the conversation toward fruitful discussion of teaching and learning.** This might include organizing outings of local cultural or historical interest. Faculty developers should also not steer every conversation too quickly to pedagogical issues; when faculty are ready, they will broach the subject themselves. Developers should see relationship building as its own objective.

- **Apprentice new faculty developers with an eye toward developing emotional intelligence skills even more than knowledge of pedagogical theories and practices, at least initially.** Just as new advisors for undergraduate students become skilled by observing consultations run by experienced practitioners, so too could new faculty developers.

- **Mentor new faculty developers to become skilled at**

recognizing various faculty needs and desires. Some faculty members seek only immediate help and do not desire deeper relationships. Others seek relationships only when non-pedagogical in nature (at least initially), and it requires emotional intelligence to recognize when to nudge conversations toward teaching and learning. Still others need professional mentoring yet do not ask for it; in such a situation, an effective faculty developer could gently intervene to aid the faculty member who did not know to ask for help. Experienced developers can aid in this endeavor by debriefing explicitly these skills when discussing and demonstrating faculty development interactions to new developers.

We believe CTLs that adopt these practices stand the best chance of maximizing professional development interactions with faculty members. With faculty development encompassing skills from fields as disparate as counseling, advising, and mentoring, a multi-pronged approach that prioritizes interactions and relationships should prove the most fruitful.

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