**Peer Evaluation Pilot: An Analysis of Classroom Effectiveness**

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This project developed a structured peer and student feedback evaluation process designed to improve teaching effectiveness at Irvine Valley College. Components of the project included development and testing of the instrument, faculty recruitment in the process, development of a project task force to oversee the effort and the development of conferences for faculty participants. Increased discussion and analysis of teaching resulted from this project.
Peer Evaluation Pilot: An Analysis Classroom Effectiveness

A project is proposed which will improve the teaching effectiveness of faculty at Irvine Valley College (IVC) through development of a teaching evaluation process involving structured peer and student feedback. Background work for the project has been done during the flexible calendar staff development activities. Interest in the expansion of peer and student evaluation has grown out of faculty interest and leadership. Although administrative evaluation is the current predominant method of evaluation, peer evaluation is permissible under the existing contract. Many faculty believe that a key to the improvement of teaching lies in the active participation of the professional staff in designing and implementing an option which would enhance professional conversation about teaching in the context of the evaluation process.

Toward that end, funds are requested to identify appropriate survey instruments, develop sufficient computer support, and recruit faculty opinion leaders to participate in a major effort to evaluate teaching at the college. The financial support is sought to overcome budget limitations which have so far prohibited implementation of the proposal which has been developed with the support of the Academic Senate. Implementation of the project would seek to overcome the limited faculty interaction about teaching, to develop a vehicle for gathering student feedback for use by faculty and to provide incentive for faculty to participate in the use and evaluation of the system.

Objectives of the project include the identification, testing and critique of survey instruments, the development of computer-based procedures for processing the student feedback, recruitment of an initial group of faculty to participate, development of a project task force to oversee and recommend the implementation of the program, the structuring of a comprehensive set of professional conferences for faculty participants, and the issuance of a project report.

The goal of focusing on the development and implementation of this evaluation component with a pilot group and evaluating the results of the program carefully is to build a foundation for the institutionalization of the program. Although the initial impact of the program will be primarily on the participants, it is projected that careful selection of the original group will help in promoting increased discussion and analysis of teaching, which will in turn be widespread in its effect—that of improving instruction throughout the college.
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1. Specific Educational Program Being Addressed

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM OR SERVICE ADDRESSED

The purpose of this project is to improve the teaching effectiveness of faculty members through development of a teaching evaluation process involving structured peer and student feedback. There is no other project of this kind at Irvine Valley College. Although this project is a new project aimed at staff development, much thought has been given to the improvement of the evaluation process at IVC. Background work has been done during the flexible calendar inservice project staff development sessions. A presentation on ways to improve the evaluation of teaching was a part of the Fall 1987 inservice schedule; a subcommittee of the Committee on Academic Affairs has developed proposals for improvements, among them voluntary peer evaluation.

A portion of Dr. Jerry Rudmann’s time as college researcher will be used in support of this project. Dr. Rudmann has been a full-time psychology professor for the Saddleback Community College District since 1977. He holds a Ph.D. in Educational Psychology and Technology from USC (1985) and has had excellent academic preparation in educational research design and statistical analysis. Dr. Rudmann has provided research to IVC in a number of areas including: 1) the design, analysis, and interpretation of IVC’s accreditation surveys; 2) a marketing survey of students attending IVC’s feeder highs schools; 3) IVC’s matriculation planning and evaluation effort; 4) a comprehensive investigation of the factors that lead community college students to persist or drop out of their courses. Dr. Rudmann is a member of SCCCIRA (Southern California Community College Institutional Research Association), AERA (American Educational Research Association), and APA (American Psychological Association).

In addition to the project manager, the project will involve 18 instructors, the students in two classes taught by each of the 18 instructors, and a clerical assistant.
2. Specific Problems Being Addressed

SPECIAL PROBLEM (S)

- **Budget limitations.**

Outside of the flex days, there are few staff development activities at IVC. Budget limitations have reduced the frequency of most staff development opportunities such as conference attendance. As the campus continues to grow, faculty have fewer and fewer opportunities to interact. As budget resources are used to maintain the basic operations of the college, fewer dollars are available to direct toward innovative efforts that will pay off in the future. Support for this project will allow faculty and staff to invest their energies in a long-term effort.

- **Limited faculty interaction about teaching.**

The hectic pace of teaching and meeting schedules has made it increasingly difficult for faculty to discuss and share ideas related to the role of teaching. A need exists for a procedure which facilitates discussion and sharing about teaching. The project as outlined in this proposal will pilot test a formal process of gathering feedback from each instructor's esteemed peers and students and structuring that feedback in a manner which will encourage and reinforce progressively better teaching. Faculty and students will benefit. If found successful, the entire process will become a standard staff development procedure at IVC.

- **No provision for student feedback is currently made.**

Although many faculty believe that student feedback is important and helpful, no widely accepted student survey instrument is available at IVC. This project will incorporate a student feedback instrument. The design of the student feedback instrument will reflect the findings of an exhaustive literature search which was conducted last year by the project manager. The peer observation instrument (observer checklist) will combine the better features of instruments in use at several other community college districts in California. Consensus on the quality of the instrument and procedures for its use will be developed.

- **Incentive for using peer evaluation is absent.**

It is felt that without some incentive, instructors will be reluctant to participate in the project as described in this proposal. This reluctance may stem from two sources. First, due to the relatively small number of full-time faculty at IVC, combined with our growth mode, most faculty attend many meetings and serve on a number of committees during their college work week. Thus, faculty may be reluctant to add another seven hours of non-teaching time to their mid-semester schedule. Second, faculty might be threatened by the "evaluation" overtones of the peer and student feedback gathering components. Because good participation is essential to the project's success, faculty will be urged to see this project as a staff
development project. Furthermore, faculty will be compensated for time involved.
3. Population To Be Served

POPULATION SERVED

This project is designed to assist the teaching staff at IVC by putting in place a process of peer and student feedback regarding teaching behaviors and course characteristics. If the project is successful, the student population of IVC also will benefit by improving teaching. It is estimated that approximately 18 full-time instructors will participate in this staff development activity. In addition, a successfully implemented pilot project at IVC would make information and procedures available to all faculty in the district.
4. Objectives

OBJECTIVES

1. Identify and pilot test survey instruments.
   Timeline: Complete by August 1, 1989
   Budget: $2,500 (project manager time)

2. Develop computer-based procedures for processing the student feedback instrument.
   Timeline: Complete by September 15, 1989
   Budget: $2,000 (contract programmer)

3. Recruit and inservice a group of faculty participants.
   Timeline: Complete by August 15, 1989
   Budget: $2,500 (project manager time)

4. Develop a project task force to oversee the implementation of the program.
   Timeline: July-August, 1989
   Budget: Committee assignments

5. Develop and implement schedule of evaluation activities and follow up.
   Timeline: Complete by October 1, 1989
   Budget: $10,500 (faculty stipends, coordination)

6. Accumulate a database for analysis of the project.
   Timeline: October 1989-April 1990
   Budget: $1,500 (contract programmer)

7. Develop and issue a project report.
   Timeline: Complete by June 15, 1990
   Budget: $1,000
5. Workplan Narrative

ACTIVITIES

The sequence of the project will be as follows:

A. Identify and Pilot Test Instruments

   Develop and pilot test the student feedback instrument and the peer observer checklist. Each participating instructor will be observed while teaching by two colleagues. The students in two classes of each participating instructor will complete the student feedback instrument.

   Personnel: This step will require the attention of a project manager and the voluntary participation of several faculty members during the initial phase of the project.

B. Refine Instruments

   Based upon the pilot test phase, refine the student feedback and peer observer instruments.

   Personnel: The same individuals who were involved in the pilot test will complete this step.

C. Computerize Scoring and Processing of Student Instrument

   Design and purchase from the Scantron Corporation, a student feedback instrument which can be scored via a Scantron machine. Write a computer program to enable file information and summary printouts to be generated by a microcomputer connected to the Scantron machine.

   Personnel: The project manager and a computer programmer.

   Equipment/materials: Customized Scantron forms will be designed for this step. The expertise of staff from the Computer Center will also be critical.

D. Recruit Faculty Participants

   Have a "kick off" inservice presentation for faculty during the fall 1989 inservice week. Present an overview of the project and the specific steps for all volunteer participants.

   Personnel: Project manager will conduct inservice session.

E. Hire Classified Support
Hire a secretary to distribute, collect, organize, process, and duplicate all feedback forms. The secretary will maintain a coordinating schedule and will notify faculty at each step of their expected involvement in the project. The secretary will notify the project manager of the project status on a regular basis. The secretary will visit two classrooms of each instructor and will distribute and collect the student feedback forms.

F. Conduct Observations and Collect Data

During the 6th, 7th, and 8th weeks of the semester, peer observers will visit the classrooms of all target instructors and will complete the peer observer checklist. Each target instructor will be observed by two instructors of his/her choice. Each target instructor will then conduct an observation of two colleagues. Finally, during the 7th week of the semester, the students in two of each instructor’s classes will complete the student feedback form. The project clerk will process the student feedback forms and send summaries to each of the two peer observers by the end of the 8th week.

Personnel: All participating instructors and the classified support.

G. Feedback Meetings Between Instructors and Peer Observers.

Each target instructor will meet with his/her respective peer observers no later than the 10th week of instruction. At this meeting the instructor and his/her peers will review the results of the peer observations and discuss the student feedback reports. The meeting will primarily be a sharing session in which teaching methods and ideas specifically related to the instructor’s subject area are discussed.

Personnel: Participating faculty.

H. Develop and Issue Project Report

Following the processing and analysis of the project evaluation instruments, a report which describes the project sequence and outcomes will be written and issued to the college community.

Personnel: Project manager.
6. Expected Outcomes

EXPECTED IMPACT AND TRANSFERABILITY

It is anticipated that this project will improve instruction by facilitating among faculty a greater interest in staring and discussing how they conduct their teaching. Hopefully, following participation in the feedback session/discussion many faculty will be motivated to try various teaching methods and ideas with the intent of improving their teaching effectiveness. Students should directly benefit from any positive changes in their instructor's teaching. Hopefully, the enthusiasm generated by instructors participating in the project will "spill over" to those faculty who did not participate.

It is highly likely that some form of the peer observer and student feedback process developed for this project will continue on in subsequent semesters. Currently, IVC does not have a standardized, efficient system for collecting student feedback about instructors and courses. Also, it should be noted that AB1725, when enacted, may mandate much greater use of peer and student feedback as part of the contractual process by which instructors are evaluated. Should AB1725 require student and peer feedback, IVC will be able to capitalize from having participated in this project.
7. Evaluation Plan

EVALUATION PLAN

The project manager will develop a participant feedback form to collect faculty reaction to the project at the end of the semester. The feedback form will contain both objective and open-ended questions which solicit both criticisms and positive outcomes regarding the project. Some items, for example, will ask if the instructor has considered altering any aspect of his/her course(s) since the feedback sessions. A second instrument will be developed to solicit student opinion and suggestions regarding the process in which they participated. This instrument will be distributed during the final week of the semester and also will ask students to indicate if they observed any positive changes in the class and/or the instructor's teaching behaviors following the mid-semester feedback period.

The project manager will design the evaluation forms. The distribution process will be overseen by the secretary assigned to the project. The project manager, using the SPSS/PC+ statistical package, will analyze and summarize the result of the evaluation for sharing with faculty and for the purposes of reporting.
8. Dissemination Plan

INFORMATION FOR DISSEMINATION

The final report from this project will be submitted for publication to the ERIC documentation system. In addition, the project manager will present an overview of the completed project to the annual SCCCIRA institutional research conference. If the opportunity presents itself, the project manager may present an overview of the project at other conferences related to the community college.
9. Budget Narrative

NO “BUDGET NARRATIVE” ACCOMPANIES THIS DOCUMENT.]