

Perceived Effectiveness of Faculty Development Programs for Full-Time
Occupational-Technical Faculty in Virginia Community Colleges

By

Kurt W. Sprenger

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to identify faculty perceptions of the personal and student benefits deriving from participation in faculty development activities. Faced with the challenge of keeping up-to-date with technology in order to keep their students up-to-date, faculty participate in many different activities. The perceived effectiveness of faculty development activities varies depending on the knowledge and interest of each faculty member.

This study was descriptive, using a two-part survey to collect both quantitative and qualitative data. First, a mail survey was used to collect data on the perceptions of faculty members regarding 12 professional development activities. The survey was sent out to 407 faculty in Business Technology and Engineering and Industrial Technology at the 23 colleges in the Virginia Community College System. Second, selected participants were contacted for a follow-up phone interview which elucidated some of the information from the mail survey. The surveys were designed based upon a review of the literature and through interviews with professionals. The survey was pilot tested on community college faculty.

Major findings from the study included the following:

1. The three most participated in activities were training in computer skills, professional conferences, and college-sponsored presentations and workshops.

2. Professional conferences and college-sponsored presentations and workshops were the highest rated in terms of participation, but rated the lowest in terms of personal and student benefit.
3. Females, on average, participate in more activities and have higher ratings for personal and student benefit.
4. Many faculty reported that funding for professional development activities is limited and that they have a limited amount of time to participate in activities. It is not uncommon for a faculty member to pay out of their own pocket for a worthwhile activity.
5. Activities that deal the most with learning new technologies, such as training in computer skills, retraining for fields in technology, and internships in business or industry, were given the highest ratings of personal and student benefit.

Based on the findings several recommendations and suggestions for future research were made:

1. Additional research is needed on the actual measures of student benefit, not just perceptions
2. Community college faculty need to carefully select professional development activities that will benefit not only themselves and their student as well.
3. Community college administrators should encourage faculty members to participate in internships in business and industry. Administrators need to do all they can to provide funding for these activities.
4. Additional research is needed on the differences in how males and females rate their perceptions.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank many individuals for their help, encouragement, advice, and support throughout the completion of this study. I want to express my sincere appreciation and gratitude to my advisor, Dr. Kurt Eschenmann, for his outstanding guidance and friendship, and for providing me with much needed encouragement. I would also like to thank my committee members (Dr. Bernadette Black, Dr. Bradley Hertel, Dr. Patrick O Reilly, Dr. Daisy Stewart) for providing feedback and observations and for all of their time, efforts, and expertise in helping me complete this project.

A special thanks to Dr. Bernadette Black for sharing her expertise and ideas about professional development and in helping me obtain my participant list from the Virginia Community College System Office.

I would like to thank all of the graduate students in the Vocational Education Department with whom I conversed for sharing their ideas and providing encouragement. Thank you to Dr. Keith Waugh for his friendship and for helping to spark my interest in professional development.

My sincere appreciation goes out to Mr. Ron Chaffin at New River Community College and Dr. Paul Parker at Wytheville Community College for providing me with the opportunity to gain experience in professional and workforce development.

To all of the faculty in the Virginia Community College System who took the time out of their busy schedules to participate in my study, my sincere thanks and appreciation.

Finally, I would like to extend a special thanks to all friends and family, especially Cristin Campbell, who encouraged me along the way. I would especially like to thank my father, to whom I am indebted, for providing me with support, and encouragement.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Abstract	ii
Acknowledgments.....	iii
List of Tables.....	viii
Chapter 1 INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY.....	1
Statement of the Problem.....	5
Research Questions Evolve from Purpose of the Study.....	6
Delimitations.....	8
Definition of terms.....	8
Significance of the Study.....	9
Chapter Summary.....	9
Chapter 2 REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE.....	11
Evolution of Faculty Development in the United States.....	11
Dynamics of Community College Faculty Development.....	14
Faculty Development in the Virginia Community College System.....	19
Classifications and Models for Faculty Development.....	22
Theoretical Frame of Reference.....	25
Research Methods.....	26
Chapter Summary.....	29
Chapter 3 METHOD.....	31
Introduction.....	31

Table of Contents (Con t)	Page
Research Design.....	31
Quantitative Collection and Analysis of Information	33
Target Population.....	33
Delimiting Time and Participant Parameters.....	33
Survey Instrument - Design and Pilot-Testing Process.....	34
Mail-Survey Instrument.....	36
Mail-Survey procedures and protocol.....	38
Non-Respondent Follow-up.....	40
Analysis of Survey Responses.....	41
Non-Response Bias.....	44
Qualitative Collection and Analysis of Information.....	44
Interviewee Selection.....	45
Telephone Interview Protocol.....	46
Chapter Summary.....	47
Chapter 4 RESULTS.....	49
Introduction.....	49
Quantitative Results.....	49
Respondents Demographic Profile.....	50
Non-Respondents Demographic Profile.....	52
Research Question #1.....	57

Table of Contents (Con t)	Page
Research Question #2.....	65
Research Question #3.....	69
Research Question #4.....	71
Gender and Personal Benefit.....	71
Age, Gender, Field, and Personal Benefit.....	73
Teaching Experience, Gender, Field, and Personal Benefit..	79
Research Question #5.....	85
Telephone Interviews.....	99
Chapter Summary.....	102
Chapter 5 SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS,	
AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	104
Summary of the Study.....	104
Research Design.....	106
Research Results.....	107
Research Question #1 Results.....	107
Research Question #2 and #3 Results.....	108
Research Question #4 and #5 Results.....	109
Conclusions and Implications.....	111
Table of Contents (Con t)	Page
Implications for Practitioners.....	117
Recommendations for Researchers and Policy Makers.....	118
REFERENCES.....	120

APPENDICES	129
A. Faculty Development Survey.....	129
B. Telephone Interview Questions.....	133
C. Occupational-Technical Certificate, Degree, and Diploma Areas	135
D. Letters to Faculty Member.....	137
E. Letters to Presidents of Community Colleges.....	142
F. Informed Consent.....	145
G. Summary Data from the Qualitative Phone Interviews.....	148
H. Other Activities.....	152
I. Virginia s Community Colleges.....	155

List of Tables

Table	Page
1. Gender of Respondents.....	51
2. Age of Participants.....	53
3. Gender and Age.....	54
4. Teaching Experience.....	55
5. Teaching Experience and Gender.....	56
6. Extent of Participation.....	58
7. Participation Frequency.....	60
8. Number of Activities Participated in by Gender and Field.....	61
9. Number of Activities Participated in by Age.....	63
10. Number of Activities Participated in by Teaching Experience.....	64
11. Personal Benefit of Faculty Development Activities.....	67
11a. Personal and Student Benefit for Other Categories	68
12. Student Benefit of Faculty Development Activities.....	70
13. Summary of Male and Female Personal Benefit for Top 5 Activities in Participation.....	72
14. Retraining for Fields in Technology (Personal Benefit) by Age.....	74
15. Summer Institutes, Workshops (Personal Benefit) by Age.....	75
16. Training in Computer Skills (Personal Benefit) by Age.....	76
17. Professional Conferences (Personal Benefit) by Age.....	77
18. College-Sponsored Presentations, Workshops (Personal Benefit) by Age.....	78

List of Tables

Table	Page
19. Retraining for Fields in Technology (Personal Benefit) by Years of Teaching Experience	80
20. Summer Institutes, Workshops (Personal Benefit) by Years of Teaching Experience	81
21. Training in Computer Skills (Personal Benefit) by Years of Teaching Experience.....	82
22. Professional Conferences (Personal Benefit) by Years of Teaching Experience.....	83
23. College-Sponsored Presentations, Workshops (Personal Benefit) by Years of Teaching Experience.....	84
24. Male and Female Student Benefit for Top 5 Activities in Participation.....	86
25. Retraining for Fields in Technology (Student Benefit) by Age.....	87
26. Summer Institutes, Workshops (Student Benefit) by Age.....	88
27. Training in Computer Skills (Student Benefit) by Age.....	89
28. Professional Conferences (Student Benefit) by Age.....	90
29. College-Sponsored Presentations, Workshops (Student Benefit) by Age.....	92
30. Retraining for Fields in Technology (Student Benefit) by Years of Teaching Experience	93
31. Summer Institutes, Workshops (Student Benefit) by Years of Teaching Experience	94
32. Training in Computer Skills (Student Benefit) by Years of Teaching Experience.....	96

List of Tables (Con t)

Table	Page
33. Professional Conferences (Student Benefit) by Years of Teaching Experience.....	97
34. College-Sponsored Presentations, Workshops (Student Benefit) by Years of Teaching Experience.....	98