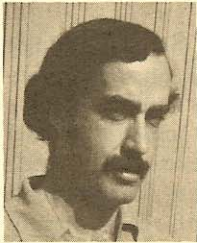


Faculty Development: A Stage Conception



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THE SUBJECT of faculty development has gained prominence in the field of higher education as a number of recent publications attest,^{2,3} but the term has various meanings. Often it mirrors common sense ideas of mental health and adjustment and refers to ways in which faculty can learn to function more effectively with minimum stress and tension. This definition is useful, but it does not adequately touch one essential facet of the development of faculty members: the growth of increasingly complex ways of thinking and acting. To conceive of faculty development as less than increased *complexity*, and thus possibly increased tension and concern over one's role and responsibilities, will result in inadequate programs for assisting faculty growth. These programs must be based on an understanding of personality development as a whole, not just more secure adaptation to a professional role. Toward this end, this article describes a scheme of stages of faculty development, an idea which I had formulated previously¹² but am presenting now in light of more recent research.

The notion of looking at college professors from a psychological perspective and creating typologies or schemes to describe their diversity is by no means a novel idea. Adelson's "The Teacher as Model"¹ is certainly an important formulation as is the contribution of Mann and associates.⁹ But these schemes view each pattern as a discrete entity, dynamically unrelated to others in the typology. It is my belief that important practical and theoretical advances can be made if important differences between professors can be described from a developmental perspective. Faculty can then be located along a continuum and developmental goals can be specified for individual faculty.

As is the case with any scientific construct, the origins of this developmental progression scheme were theoretical and empirical. Although the first conception of faculty as developing adults was formulated by my associates, Robert Shukraft and J. Wesley Brown,¹³ my plan developed along somewhat different theoretical lines, using as a point of departure the work of such developmental theorists as Loevinger and Wessler⁷ and Perry.¹¹ The unique aspect of their work is that they examine the form or structure of an individual's assumptions about social reality and how these change

through life. Development means dealing with experience in increasingly sophisticated and complex ways and being able to integrate this complexity into stable structures. The focus here is not on the content of development, the specific issues that preoccupy an individual at a given time in life, but the structures he uses to generate that content. As Kohlberg and Gilligan note,⁸ such theorists look at *how* an individual thinks about such matters as good and bad, or truth and beauty, but not *what* he thinks about at any given time.

With this general point of view in mind I examined the protocols of 24 interviews that had been carried out with faculty members at a large state university. These interviews covered such matters as personal and educational background, as well as views on teaching, students, colleagues, and professional goals. The questions were open ended and faculty were encouraged to respond fully and freely.

Using these interview data I ordered faculty along a continuum according to the complexity of the assumptions which underlay the meaning they gave to their professional lives. I analyzed their views concerning the process of education, their conceptions of the nature of knowledge, their philosophy of teaching, their notions of professorial roles, their relation to their discipline, and finally their attitudes toward colleagues and students.

The continuum portrayed a progression from a position where faculty see knowledge as an unambiguous entity, and where teaching consists of simply presenting facts to students, to a position where they begin to see knowledge in more differentiated terms and recognize the need to use various strategies to help students gain understanding. Farther along the progression is a more problematic, even relativistic notion of knowledge, accompanied by a view of teaching as helping the student develop frameworks for ordering unrelated facts. The concept of professional role evolves from simple definitions of right and wrong actions, to an awareness of choice in roles and a sense of possible restrictions and limitations, and finally to a sense of style and tolerance within their choice of roles. In relations with others the progression goes from a view of people in moralistic terms of good and bad, to a more psychologically insightful notion of people that recognizes the origins of manipulation and inequality in human relations, and then to a sense of commitment in a context of tolerance and reciprocity.

After sorting faculty along this continuum I grouped them into five levels or stages.

STAGE ONE

At this level the faculty member has a simple view of his role and the nature of his work. His professional reference group provides his role definition, and he

enacts his role in conventional fashion. Thus, in a large university he might see himself in terms of what is expected of a member of his academic discipline, while at a small college he might adopt local conventions. Similarly, he defines educational goals in accord with his reference group and may believe that training new recruits for his profession is the sole aim of education. His goals are distinguished by their rather stereotyped form rather than their specific content. Knowledge is seen in absolute terms, that is as unproblematic facts. Education in turn consists of pouring facts into an empty vessel, the student, who assimilates a body of knowledge. Views of students, grading procedures, and the like are relatively undifferentiated. There are right and wrong procedures and judgments, and they may be easily catalogued. Grading reflects the degree to which students know right from wrong information. Opinions are relatively dogmatic and are distinguished by their lack of complexity. Their presentation tends to preclude argument and alternative points of view. For this kind of professor the world is divided into areas of good and bad by some authority, usually his reference group. Nine percent of the sample were in Stage One.

STAGE TWO

The professor in this stage has a more differentiated notion of his role than does his Stage One colleague. He may still define his role in relation to conventional reference groups, but he demonstrates increasing distance from them. Nonetheless, the certainty of right action as derived from authority is never in doubt. His view of knowledge is more complex than Stage One. Although the aim continues to be the acquisition of facts by students, this faculty member is interested in using helpful techniques. The nature and source of knowledge are clear, but one must find the right methods for presenting them. He still sees people in monolithic good and bad terms, but he is willing to try to explain their behavior, usually in terms of simple causal relationships—for example, between behavior and social class or behavior and childhood experience. This professor has had some experience with diverse opinions, with views contrary to his own, and so his position is relatively articulate. Thirty-six percent of the sample were in Stage Two.

STAGE THREE

The Stage Three faculty member has more distance from reference group definitions of his role. He has a heightened awareness of possible alternatives in his teaching and professional role, but he may display some uncertainty about how to integrate diverse choices. This individual has considerable psychological insight into interpersonal relations: he can see students and colleagues in terms of inner motives and their relation to behavior. As an educator he seeks to create conditions in which students may learn, and he believes they can learn only by active effort. This faculty member adheres to a problematic idea of knowledge. At this stage his philosophy of education may appear to be permissive. His ability to think in psychological terms and his appreciation of human variousness contribute to a height-

ened sense of responsibility and conscientiousness. Although he is more open to choice and diversity than are his less developed compatriots, he has not integrated these elements. Eighteen percent were in this stage.

STAGE FOUR

The prototypic faculty member of Stage Four not only has a sense of freedom and relativity in social roles, he has evolved a personal style of functioning. He has mastered some role conflicts and has achieved partial synthesis. He is liberated from the excessive conscientiousness that at times characterizes the faculty member in Stage Three. He has a sense of reciprocity in human relations and education: he believes a faculty member should not only give but get. Learning is viewed as the ability to synthesize, not just absorb, diverse facts and information. Students must discover answers for themselves. At this stage the professor can readily see things from the student's perspective. The permissiveness which sometimes appeared in Stage Three has been replaced by a slightly more structured view which still values the autonomy of the student. Synthesis among diversity and complexity is stressed. Twenty-nine percent of the sample fit in here.

STAGE FIVE

At this stage the faculty member has a more clearly articulated position than does his colleague of Stage Four. For example, included in his philosophy of education is an explicit concern with helping students develop a sense of values or character. He has a real appreciation of the student's situation and how material may best be learned. Not only has he realized the reciprocity of Stage Four, he is able to find satisfaction in relationships with students of whom he may be critical. This tolerance is a conscious or explicit construct; he is aware, that is, of having developed a sense of tolerance, an ability to live with diversity. Considerable cognitive complexity is evident at this stage. The prototypic faculty member is able to accept contradiction and ambivalence in human functioning and irony in social processes and to carry on effectively within such contexts. Individuals who reached this stage constitute eight percent of my sample.

VALIDATION

In developing typologies, it is customary (and considered acceptable) to stop at the point we have now reached, the level of theory generation. I believed, however, that it was necessary to move beyond generation to validation. If the scheme was valid, there should be a high level of agreement among raters using the scheme. I had two psychologists rate a sample of 92 interviews of faculty from three institutions: a large state university, a medium size state college, and a small private college. The level of agreement, measured by Pearson's product moment correlation, was 0.87 for the whole sample ($p < 0.001$). The level of agreement was such that comparable results would occur by chance less than one time in a thousand. These results were more than satisfactory to assure that there was an "objective"

construct, something more than an idiosyncratic way of ordering reality.

FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Loevinger⁷ states that a developmental model has the following characteristics: (1) there is an invariable order of the stages of development; (2) no stage can be skipped; (3) each stage is more complex than the preceding one; and (4) each stage is based on the preceding one and prepares for the succeeding one. I believe the scheme I have presented is fully developmental in this sense, except for one limitation: faculty members may be located at stages higher than the first or several without having passed through them in their earlier faculty careers. In some cases there is evidence that they passed through these first stages when they were graduate students or even undergraduates. For example, in a number of interviews faculty gave retrospective accounts of their own development which seemed to match that described by the scheme.

The stages do not encompass the whole of ego development as conceived by Loevinger and Wessler.⁸ I am concerned with ego development only as it relates to a professor's professional functioning, as expressed in such aspects of his life as his career, his teaching, his view of students and colleagues, and his ideas about the nature of knowledge. One would expect, of course, some correlation between professional growth and ego development as more generally conceived. In fact, in a sub-sample of 30 professors from a medium size state university I found my scheme correlated 0.49* with the Loevinger Sentence Completion Test,⁸ a measure of ego development. A correlation of this order was encouraging since it indicated we were measuring a developmental entity similar to general ego development but not identical to it. That is, while I expected some relationship between a measure of how the individual viewed important aspects of life and his role as a person and how he viewed his role as a professor, I did not expect such a high relationship.

Given this description of faculty development and its correlates, are we able to offer some prescriptions, to suggest what types of programs might be undertaken to facilitate faculty development as described here? First of all, we can *select* faculty who seem to possess the qualities we have some interest in. But most campuses, especially in the mid-seventies, do not really have this option open to them. The faculty of today, by and large, will be the faculty of tomorrow given the steady state (and in some areas decline) of higher education. Disciplines and campuses attract individuals with certain orientations, and while they may influence these orientations (ego structures), this influence is likely to be slow. Another option would be to undertake programs that would promote the development of faculty, but if anything this approach would be even more difficult. As Loevinger and Wessler⁸ (1970) point out, ego structures are relatively stable entities; they change only slowly. The professional development of professors, a facet of their ego development, is such a structure, and

it is not easily modified. Development occurs when the individual is confronted with novel perspectives and events that he cannot account for with his usual assumptions. The integration of this new experience must occur slowly, if the stability of the ego is to be maintained. If change is too rapid, this security is threatened. If nothing else, development is an intensely personal thing, and rightly so. The individual best knows the rate of growth consistent with his or her stability. Changing faculty in important ways is difficult, and the types of experiences that are likely to have an impact would have to be intense and yet carried out with care and sensitivity.†

A point I have not directly addressed yet is whether the more developed teacher will also be the more effective teacher. We do not yet have an answer to this question. But there is some evidence that relates to this issue. Harvey and associates⁴ using a stage scheme similar to my own found in a sample of secondary school teachers that the most developed teachers differed from the least developed in what was presumed to be an educationally desirable direction on all 26 dimensions of classroom behavior on which they were rated. The difference was statistically significant on 14 dimensions. The *most developed* teachers "expressed greater warmth toward students' needs and wishes, were more flexible in meeting student's interests and needs, were more encouraging of individual responsibility, gave greater encouragement to free expression of feelings, were more encouraging of creativity, displayed greater ingenuity in improvising teaching and play materials, invoked unexp'ained rules less frequently, were less rule oriented, were less determining of classroom and playground procedure, manifested less need for structure, were less punitive, and were less anxious about being observed." (Italics mine) Whether the same type of finding could be replicated for college student populations, as the saying goes, is a matter for future research. There are, of course, effective teachers at every stage in the sense that they effectively fulfill the needs of some portion of the student population.

What, then, is the significance of faculty development in the terms I have described? I believe that it provides a model which transcends the notion of faculty development as mere adjustment or acquiescence to roles with a minimum of stress. The model presents a course of growth that offers professors increasing choice and complexity in constructing their roles. Further, I believe that the greater the faculty member's development the greater his or her potential for helping students increase their own growth. In an age that seems to become increasingly turbulent and bewi'dering, more complex and humane ways of thinking and valuing are essential steps in a person's development.

FOOTNOTES

* The statistic used was the Pearson product moment correlation and this result was significant at the 0.01 level.

† Morimoto¹⁰ attempts to influence Harvard teaching fellows by means of groups that include both didactic and experimental elements. In these groups basic assumptions about people and instruction are examined in a spirit of free and non-threatening inquiry.

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