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Two Heads Are Better Than One?
Setting Realizable Goals
in the Basic Course

Glen Williams

Conventional wisdom holds that two heads are better than one for analysis and decision making. Additionally, we likely have encountered the sage's observation: "If you don't know where you're going, how will you know when you get there?" Advice and counsel abundantly exist for how to pursue our affairs. When it comes to applying these instructions, though, we sometimes falter.

This article explores the context of the basic course, examining the usefulness of establishing goals and how to proceed so that they are more likely to be realized. It probes beyond the musings of philosophers to the studies of social scientists and the recorded experiences of directors and staff of the basic course. What emerges are some specific insights for overseeing the basic course. What is discovered, in short, is that directors of the basic course not only can benefit from establishing goals but also can profit from involving staff in identifying goals and in sensing how goals complement principles and larger objectives.

This article first discusses the desirability of identifying goals and clarifies common terms and concepts associated with establishing goals and the greater process of defining objectives. Next, it examines the benefits of involving staff, explores ways to inaugurate involvement, and contemplates central elements the group likely will need to address while establishing goals and defining objectives. The final section
notes the conditions necessary for the collaborative identification of goals and objectives.

DEFINING OBJECTIVES: AN ASSESSMENT OF THE LITERATURE

Much has been written about establishing goals, and authors on the subject agree that identifying goals is central to success. Studies indicate that, among other things, goals allow the individual and the group to know what needs to be done; they lessen frustration, empower people to act expeditiously, motivate performance, and they foster commitment, loyalty, and morale (Larson & LaPasto, 1989; Mills, 1995; Morrisey, 1988; Simpson & McConocha, 1991). In addition, goals allow a group to determine progress and achievement (Matejka, Kurke & Gregory, 1993). And if the goals are published (on a syllabus, for example), they can acquaint external audiences with the group's endeavors and might then foster appreciation and support (see Morrisey, 1988).

Although unanimity exists as to the value of establishing goals, little agreement exists regarding the process involved or how goals relate to vision and mission. Authors have randomly defined goal, vision, and mission, and often use the terms interchangeably (Larson & LaFasto, 1989, p. 121; Morrisey, 1988, p. 50). To consider goal, mission, and vision as synonymous is to obfuscate their specific functions and their overall relationship. A more productive view is to recognize them as counterparts within the process of defining objectives. Goals are most specific and are particular ends to be accomplished. Vision is most abstract and is what a group envisions itself to be and to be doing, and what it aspires to become and to do (see Williams, in press). Mission is a sense of purpose that reflects both the vision and the goals, and it is philosophical — often formalized into a mission statement. A mission statement helps attune a group to a vision as well as
to a set of *principles* and it helps the group identify specific goals.

In terms of defining objectives, vision embodies a "dream of greatness" (Matejka, Kurke, & Gregory, 1993, p. 34), but as Nanus (1992) observes, "It is a special kind of dream built upon information and knowledge" (p. 34). Given its viability, then, the vision also instills the self-confidence and motivation necessary for pursuing the overall objective residing in the "dream." Goals are specific objectives that must be identified and accomplished so to advance toward fulfillment of the vision and to keep it alive. Mission is a sense of responsibility to the overall objective as well as an accountability to achieve the specific objectives along the way. Even so, though, mission is not perceived as a burden but is undertaken willingly and enthusiastically (see Nanus, p. 135; Larson & LaFasto, 1989, p. 121) — so much so, in fact, that it may attract others to the enterprise. As Hoffer (1951) observed, people may "find elements of pride, confidence, and purpose by identifying themselves with the efforts, achievements and prospects" (p. 20) of a group.

As to which is constructed first — vision, mission, or goals — no one can rightfully say. Authors (Conger, 1989; Madsen & Mermer, 1993; Matejka, Kurke & Gregory, 1993; Nanus, 1992) often describe the process as a linear one which begins with a vision or a set of principles, from which a mission is derived which, in turn, allows specific goals to be discerned and specified, and which, finally, allows strategies (i.e., specific ways and means calculated to achieve goals) to be devised. As with any act of composition, though, the process is not linear but is recursive; there is constant movement to and fro between each of the elements as they are juxtaposed and checked for their "fit" and alignment, and reflection upon any one area may assist invention with another (Weyer, 1994, p. 68). Just as a writer uses a thesis statement, main points and data recursively, so will individuals and a group contemplate, incubate, exchange and evaluate information and ideas per-
taining to mission, principles, goals, strategies, and overall vision. Once in motion, the process never ceases and occurs intrapersonally, interpersonally, and as a group.

Within this process leaders may “occupy a first-author type status” (Williams, in press). Ultimately, though, objectives are authored by multiple voices and any member of the group can contribute an idea that will “catch on” (Bormann, 1972, p. 398). To encourage contributions, “any formally designated leader should employ a participative style of leadership” (Williams, in press). By suscitating involvement, the leader can derive the benefits from teamwork, an area to which this paper now turns.

THE BENEFITS OF INVOLVING STAFF

Defining objectives collaboratively is linked to a number of positive outcomes. Not only does the process intensify the benefits associated with having goals, principles, mission, and a vision (Coblentz, Gerber & Pribble, 1987, p. 12), but it produces additional benefits (see Chemers, 1993) for the individual, the group, and the enterprise. Actively involving the staff facilitates better understanding of an objective, the reasoning behind it, and its importance (Hersey & Stinson, 1980). This clarity, in turn, enables performance and satisfaction; if people know what is expected and why they are able to perform expeditiously and confidently, knowing that they are contributing and likely will be recognized for their contributions (see Nanus, 1992). But people do not merely want clear directives, they want to help decide and determine objectives. Such participation helps satisfy the needs for “freedom of communication and self-concept affirmation” (Infante & Gorden, 1991, p. 301; Barge, 1994, p. 40). These individuals feel valued and important, and they view the workplace as a place where they can grow and expand their capabilities (Jaffe, Scott & Orioli, 1986).
Supervisors and staff in the basic course report similar outcomes as well as additional benefits for the staff member. Buerkel-Rothfuss, Fink, and Amaro (1994) support findings that collaborative defining of objectives can provide the clarity necessary for performance, and Madsen and Mermer (1993) reaffirm that morale increases if instructors are involved in “significant decision making” (p. 106). Dixson (in press) adds the observation that arrived at goals constitute “boundaries” which allow supervisors to empower staff to “use their own strengths and teaching style to create a classroom conducive to learning.” Empowerment, in turn, Dixson maintains, helps the staff to feel important and respected. Additionally, as Williams (1995) observes, involvement and empowerment help to nurture competence, confidence, and the ongoing development of instructors.

In addition to personal benefits, identifying objectives collaboratively can foster healthy relations and collegiality. Collaboration “promotes team building” (Coblenz, Gerber & Pribble, 1987); workers who are free to state their ideas, concerns, and opinions become more involved in the enterprise and with one another (Miller & Monge, 1986). Simpson and McConocha (1991) explain that defining objectives can “bring about improved relations” because each objective that the group considers becomes a ‘common bond for communication and negotiation’ (p. 11), also Zarefsky, 1989, p. 22). Furthermore, a sense of team and team spirit often intensifies once objectives are defined and understood as interrelated and worthwhile. Larson and LaFasto (1989) observe, objectives can engender “intense emotional bonding and identification” (p. 77). In addition to improved relations with peers these people enjoy a significantly better relationship with their supervisors” (Wayne, Liden, & Sparrowe, 1994, p. 697). And the exchanges between leaders and subordinates — inherent to collaboration — are positively related to a number of outcomes, including performance ratings, job satisfaction, reten-
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tion, promotions and perceptions of organizational climate” (p. 698).

Literature pertaining to the basic course provides further evidence for these findings. In the context of the basic course, Buerkel-Rothfuss, Fink, and Amaro (1994) find that collaborative defining of objectives can assist socialization, a factor which they identify as integral to the success and well-being of instructors, particularly inexperienced staff. Dixson (in press) likewise observes that involving staff in determining objectives instills a sense of belongingness and builds community, an observation Williams (1995) also makes.

Collaboration also promotes excellence. For one, the identification of objectives (as with any type of group activity or decision making) is improved. Barge (1994) summarizes the repeated findings that “decisions that . . . have many possible solutions require increased participation in the decision-making process. Multiple perspectives are generated about a problem, ideas and viewpoints are challenged by others, and increased scrutiny of proposed solutions occurs” (p. 40). In addition, discussion can kindle imagination and innovation (Larson & LaFasto, 1989, p. 31) and, as a result “more creative and meaningful goals are set and achieved” (Coblenz, Gerber, & Pribble, 1987, p. 12). Furthermore, participants often are more committed to the undertaking (Miller & Monge, 1986).

A meaningful goal/objective improves performance by the team and its members. If an objective is “clear, worthwhile, and challenging, team members will probably do a better job of energizing and commanding themselves and fellow team members than will sources above or outside the team” (Larson & LaFasto, 1989, p. 139). In addition, such an objective “can enhance individual performance” because it may “require more of individuals than they would probably require of themselves” (p. 97).

Collaboration produces other benefits as well. Participants model how to participate, and the leader models leader-
ship that facilitates participation and healthy exchange. Plus, the people see that their input is expected and appreciated and it receives just consideration and perhaps integration. They come to know that they, as much as the leader, are the architects of a new, improved enterprise. Furthermore, because of collaboration, people “gain a better understanding of each other’s roles and contributions” (Coblenz, Gerber & Pribble, 1987, p. 12) which, in turn, can lead to a greater appreciation of other team members and the leader, as well as a transcendent optimism.

Clearly, the benefits of collaboration are many. Perhaps Larson & LaFasto (1989) summed up these benefits best: “When people believe in each other, when they believe that each team member will bring superior skills to a task or responsibility, that disagreements or opposing views will be worked out reasonably, that each member’s view will be treated seriously and with respect, that all team members will give their best effort at all times, and that everyone will have the team’s overall best interest at heart, then excellence can become a sustainable reality” (p. 71).

**Types of Involvement**

Collaboration, as described above, seems to equate involvement and participation with discussion. If communication is understood as transactional, though, it broadens the conception of involvement (see Barnlund, 1970). Even when one person (leader or otherwise) presents a message, those receiving the message participate in creating its meaning. Hence, involvement occurs not only when one is producing a message but also when she or he is receiving and reflecting upon a message. Perhaps, though, the degree to which others participate as listeners is related to how much they are encouraged to be involved — another potential benefit of collaboration.
Leaders who collaborate with their staff can still be highly influential in deciding objectives. In fact, objectives that they propose can be as effective and motivational as any devised in a more cooperative fashion (Barge, p. 156). The degree to which the group perceives that the leader has articulated "something significant, something that will last, and something that renders the expenditure of time and energy worthwhile" (Larson & LaFasto, 1989, p. 140) will determine the success of what is advanced. To be compelling, the message should resonate with the members' "own deepest feelings about what is right and worth doing" (Nanus, 1992, p. 135). Similarly, when a member contributes, the leader who paraphrases the idea accurately and in a manner that displays appreciation for the contribution can assist understanding and promote serious consideration by the group.

The leader will want to encourage every staff member to participate in discussions. Obviously, even the most careful and perspicacious leader cannot think of everything. The leader needs to tap the experiences and creativity of others, and to encourage active reflection and contribution and to attend carefully to their ideas, perceptions, and feelings. Hugenberg (1993) acknowledges this reality, observing that the "skilled" director of the basic course understands the importance of involving instructors and thereby drawing upon their "skills and knowledge" (p. 172). For a group to excel, ideas must come from within as well as from above. In this view, leadership that is "enlightened" is that in which "bottom-up input is solicited" (Simpson & McConocha, 1991, p. 9). And each participant must be encouraged to take a lead role from time to time, emulating the leadership of the leader (see Larson & LaFasto, 1989, p. 128).
GETTING DOWN TO BUSINESS: THE CONTEXT OF THE BASIC COURSE

In order to establish a comprehensive and clear set of goals for the classroom, the staff of the basic course can benefit from engaging the entire process of defining objectives — devising a vision and a sense of mission as well as principles and goals with an understanding of how each are interrelated and can inform and check the others. As noted above, the process of establishing goals is akin to the writing process; it is recursive, i.e., continually evolving through modification and adaptation. In addition, like any act of public discourse, goals, mission, and vision are cooperatively "written," the degree to which depends on the level of involvement by each member of the staff as they reflect individually and as they collectively pool their insights, review information, and discuss ideas.

The group will need to attend to each of the counterparts that, together, constitute objectives. To begin the process the course supervisor might take what could be termed a formative approach and draft tentative goals, a mission statement, a set of principles, and an overall sense of vision for the group to critique and consider. Or, the director may wish to pursue what could be called a facilitative approach, perhaps having each participant author his or her own statement of goals, principles, mission, and vision which they will bring to the group for comparison and consideration. Or, the director could facilitate proceedings by having participants respond to a series of questions related to principles and objectives. It may prove most fruitful for the course supervisor to combine these two approaches. The supervisor might also vary the approach from occasion to occasion.
A Formative Approach for Defining Objectives

In a formative approach the supervisor (mindful of the parameters of the curriculum) presents her or his own ideas of what constitutes the group's goals, mission, vision, and set of principles. The group critiques what the director presents as to whether it is comprehensive, precise, and complementary among its parts. This approach can get the process quickly underway, particularly if what is presented is well-considered and well-structured and if it resonates with the group. A director, for example, might present the following for consideration for a basic course in public speaking.

**Vision:** To develop and grow a basic course that enriches the lives/education of students and instructors alike and that achieves widespread appreciation and renown.

**Mission:** To work together with the commitment to provide a high quality educational experience for undergraduates that helps to nurture the communication competence that is vital to their academic, professional, and relational success and to instill a sense of civic responsibility and moral accountability that is vital to the well-being of society while simultaneously nurturing the professional and scholarly growth of instructors.

**Principles**

1. To meet our moral and ethical accountability to our students, department, institution, and supporters.
2. To inform our instructional efforts with scholarly rigor.
3. To be animated by team spirit — characterized by common goals, mutual respect, and ready assistance.
4. To be characterized by success and professionalism.
5. To merit recognition as one of the top programs at our institution and in our field.

6. To be ever watchful for what we can do better and to be proactive and progressive.

7. To operate with a set of standards that promotes excellence.

8. To operate with a set of principles that unleashes our talents and creativity.

9. To operate efficiently but never at the expense of quality.

Goals: To enable students to:

1. understand the principles of verbal and nonverbal communication

2. apply these principles through the preparation and presentation of speeches

3. apply these principles critically to evaluate the communication of others and of self

4. acquire the technological expertise and artistic know-how to utilize the latest presentational technologies effectively (e.g., computer assistance)

5. cultivate the power to think: to reason, to investigate, to test new ideas, to evolve new concepts, to make decisions on the basis of pertinent data, to distinguish fact from opinion, to analyze persuasion, to form sound judgments, to solve problems, to organize and compose ideas effectively

6. develop as an articulate human being who is aware of her or his accountability for any ideas expressed

7. gain an appreciation for American public address and its role in our socio-political world
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8. gain an appreciation of writing and visual design as thinking

Since objectives likely transcend programs, the director and staff might assist their invention by viewing others' goals, mission statements, and other expressed objectives. The group would simply need to make into their own any of these that they find appealing, something that can be accomplished via analysis and discussion.

A Facilitative Approach for Defining Objectives

Morrisey (1988) provides suggestions for a facilitative approach. He suggests that the leader construct a worksheet "designed to get team members to look at the big picture" (p. 50) which each individual will complete and bring to an "off-site" meeting. The worksheet will facilitate discussion at the meeting, and the leader should post everyone's answers to every item and discuss everything that is posted. When the group reaches a consensus about what best answers every item, they can then begin drafting and refining their objectives (i.e., goals, vision, and mission) and the principles that underlie the objectives (p. 51).

The director of the basic course could follow Morrisey's lead, perhaps making slight modifications. An "off-site meeting" or retreat, for example, may not be feasible, but even if conducted in-house, the director might benefit from informality (Larson and LaFasto, 1989, p. 57). In addition, the director could distribute a questionnaire which prompts the staff to contemplate, comprehensively (i.e., not merely the "big picture"), the objectives of the group that suggest goals, principles, mission, and vision. The director would need to be careful to define any ambiguous terms. For example, the director might define stakeholder (from number four, below)
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as “anyone who suffers by the failure of the enterprise” (Covey, 1991, p. 298). Items for a questionnaire about the basic course might include:

1) Why do we exist? i.e., What is our value to the curriculum?

2) What exposure and training do we provide our students?

3) What assistance should we provide our students?

4) Who are the stakeholders of our enterprise? (i.e., who is affected by our performance or nonperformance?)
   a. What special considerations do we have for each group?
   b. What ranking would you assign to the groups? (and why?)

5) What are the current strengths of our team?

6) What is (or should be;) unique about our group?

7) What can we do to enhance our performance?

8) What are we doing differently from previous terms? (and why?)

9) What should/will we be doing differently in future terms? (and why?)

10) What philosophical issues must we contemplate and address?

11) What constraints do we face and how can we operate effectively within those constraints?

12) If you could discuss one issue with the group, what would it be? (and why?)

13) What would you preserve in terms of the current leadership? (and why?)

14) What changes would you make in leadership style or practices? (and why?)
During the meeting, the director might detect how the questionnaire could be modified to be more comprehensive and/or to enhance involvement. For example, number ten might need to be clarified with an example or two of philosophical issues, such as "In the instruction of speechmaking, what degree of emphasis should be given to content and what degree to deliver?" Likewise, item eleven might benefit from an example of a constraint, such as "What skills and training is desired by those departments who require their majors to take our course?" In addition, the course supervisor may wish to have staff members answer only a portion of the item—perhaps assigning items or allowing them to choose.

The facilitative approach can prove very worthwhile. It can help instructors sense the interplay between goals and strategies, and those who imaginatively and enthusiastically take on their role often devise impressive strategies. For example, during her first semester as a Teaching Assistant, Katherine DeMaria encountered a student with extreme communication apprehension. The day before the presentation, DeMaria had the student to present the speech to her and a few other TAs— all very supportive audience members. The student struggled through, nearly fainting once or twice, but was encouraged by all to continue. The student presented her speech three times to the small group who applauded the content and the delivery. When the student presented her speech to the class, she rose to the occasion. Not only was her speech among the best written, but she also presented it very well—even better than she had done in the practice sessions. DeMaria's assistance provides insight for item three of the questionnaire (i.e., what assistance do we provide?), and it also provides further support to Ayres' (1996) recent findings that apprehensive students need to practice their speeches before an audience. Rather than leave it up to the highly anxious student to find an audience and to conduct such
sessions on his or her own, DeMaria shows how an instructor might intervene and assist.

The imagination and creativity of new staff also can help to achieve the objectives of the course. For example, when contemplating item two (i.e., what exposure and training we provide) I had expressed an interest in establishing a public speaking contest for the end of the term. I knew it would provide good exposure, but I also knew that it would present a logistical nightmare. One of my first-year TAs, Nate Baxter, suggested that we could conduct the contest during the final meeting of the mass lecture. Everyone immediately understood the brilliance of Nate's idea. During the last meeting I had administered student evaluations of teaching, but attendance waned because the last exam already had been administered. The contest, for which we would require attendance, would constitute a worthwhile experience for speakers and audience alike, provide us with a new set of sample speeches that we might use in instruction and in TA training, and provide a good finale to the term. In addition, if I administered student evaluations during the review session for the last exam I would have a larger sample. Nate's idea has worked brilliantly.

New instructors also can provide insights on how to prepare them for their teaching role. For example, when contemplating item 14 (i.e., changes they would recommend in leadership), I asked what they would like to see included in orientation. Some responded that it would be helpful to see the actual classrooms where they would be teaching and the equipment they would be using. Some also wanted to see, on video, what a typical class of students might look like and to see some of our instructors in action. As a result, I now include in orientation a tour of classroom facilities, hands-on experience with the overhead projector and video camera, and brief, videotaped clips of actual classes in session. In ongoing sessions, at their request, I spend less time discussing assigned readings and instead integrate what we have read
into hands-on activities. For example, after they have read what Ruud (1992) has to say about providing in-class oral critiques of students' speeches, we view a sample speech on video and afterwards list their various criticisms on the board. We then can classify each item in terms of its perspective (i.e., rhetorical, expressive, mimetic, formalistic) to gain a sense of how various perspectives can be used productively. Instructors can then review the various comments they made in order to "sort out their own instructional priorities" (p. 73) so to help them gain a better sense of their own instructional goals and principles. Similarly, when discussing the construction and design of a multiple choice exam, we critique a set of sample items in light of what we read regarding testing with the multiple choice exam. These suggestions for training and development have proven insightful and effective.

A Combined Approach

The course supervisor might fuse the two approaches discussed above. For example, the supervisor might utilize a questionnaire but supply tentative answers for some or all items. In addition to newly composed answers, some answers might be borrowed from previously completed questionnaires or from sources outside the group. Consider, for example, the following sample responses to some of the items presented in the questionnaire above. (The source of the response is indicated in brackets.)

Item three: Who are the stakeholders of our enterprise?
Response: "Students are stakeholders, and since each stakeholder 'has and shares equal responsibility' (Covey, 1991, p. 298) for contributing to the success of the enterprise, one principle is to expect, emphasize, and hold students accountable, in part, for their education." [a lecturer]
Item four: What are the current strengths of our team?  
Response: “We possess a good work ethic and are characterized by collegiality!” [a TA]

Item six: What can we do to enhance our performance?  
Response: “To continue to improve the program, adding better ideas and procedures every semester, never being completely satisfied with what has been done and always searching for ways to do a better job next semester.” [the course supervisor]

Item nine: What philosophical issues are important to our future and how will we address them?  
Response: "By emphasizing teaching quality to TAs, we can produce graduates who are better prepared to be professors or communicators in other careers” (Sheridan, 1991, p. 27). [a dean — from a published source]

Item twelve: What would you preserve in terms of the current leadership? (and why?)  
Response: "I like it that the director is not seeking to clone himself but to operate with a reflective type of supervision, which Sprague describes as a mode of supervision that 'has as its goal the development of expertise; the supervisor functions to surface puzzlements and to encourage reasoned experimentation' (Sprague, 1992, p. 2). Because of this, I have become a better teacher and more confident, too.” [a TA]

Item thirteen: What changes would you make in leadership style or practices?  
Response: “To not tolerate slackers because nonperformance by one hurts us all!” [a TA]

The questionnaire will help the group to gain a sense of their principles and objectives. Once questionnaires have been completed, the director and staff can begin to classify and discuss the responses and to extract principles and objectives.
Another approach that blends the formative and facilitative would be for each newcomer to identify, briefly in writing, what he or she detects as the vision, mission, and goals of the basic course that underlies the various documents provided by the department and supervisor. For example, the new staff member might re-examine the letter of appointment and other communications from the department head and the director of graduate studies as well as the various communications from the course supervisor and any orientation materials that the supervisor has provided. The writer could critique what is identified and could note anything that deserves greater emphasis or inclusion. This assignment might also direct the writer to contemplate how and to what extent the objectives that she or he detects for the group complements and promotes her or his own goals.

Regardless of whether the basic course director uses a formative, facilitative, or a combined approach, the activity can yield valuable contributions, and it can prove worthwhile in other ways as well. For one, it can help to acclimate the newly arrived individual to the nature of the enterprise and the culture of the group and the department. For another, as with any group activity, it can promote communicative exchange and relational development. In addition, it can set a precedent for involvement, participation, interdependency, and mutual respect. The activity might also prove highly motivational if the individual identifies with the objectives of the group, finding them personally meaningful and worthwhile.

Reviewing Objectives

Morrisey (1988) suggests that “organizations should review formally their mission statements at least once a year” (p. 52), and the same schedule seems applicable to all objectives. How the director proceeds with the review could
draw upon any of the approaches listed above. If, for example, the director wants the staff to approach the process independently and anew, she or he would engage a facilitative approach, first soliciting input and then, in a brainstorming session with the staff, create objectives and identify principles. The group would then juxtapose what they had created afresh with those previously established. Or, the director may approach the endeavor as purely a review, considering it to be more of a revision than a new draft. In this manner, the group would size up the existing statements and artifacts (e.g., statement of goals on a syllabus, mission statement, catalog description) and whether they adequately suggest action that is responsive to actual as well as anticipated needs. This approach would utilize the input from former staff members plus (as noted above) likely prove more efficient. When examining existent objectives the leader might wish to review not only what is expected but also explain or recall "why." Doing so, according to Simpson and McConocha (1991), might "encourage workers to suggest new ideas and new ways of accomplishing tasks" (p. 10). Regardless of approach, though, the group will have reflected upon their principles and objectives, and the improved understanding can translate into personally more meaningful objectives for each member.

To encourage reflection and active contribution, the director can utilize more than a questionnaire to begin the process. Prior to holding an open forum, for example, the director could have staff members campaign for a new procedure or policy, including an explanation of how it meets objectives and principles that the group has or should have. These ideas could be published in the usual mediums of a group mailing with e-mail, distribution of a memo, and personal contact. In addition to conveying respect and trust, modeling the process, and inciting involvement, a campaign allows the group time to reflect upon whatever is being suggested, and perhaps discuss it informally with others, prior to
the meeting. At the same time, though, the group should be reminded to think critically about any proposal and its ramifications. The group should attempt to identify any advantages that have not been mentioned as well as any disadvantages or drawbacks.

The course director, obviously, will need to ponder and perhaps research each item carefully so to gather her or his thoughts and give them expression. For example, when contemplating a response to item three of the questionnaire above (i.e., Who are the stakeholders of our enterprise?), the director might have read about studies that indicate that workers must believe that "what they are doing is more important than anything else" (Larson & LaFasto, 1989, 97) and note the implications of those findings for a teaching staff of graduate assistants. The director might contemplate how that directors and departments cannot encourage a dichotomous view of the teaching assignment and graduate study but must emphasize how the two are complementary: For TAs who plan to remain in academe, the experience is helping them to develop as professionals who can teach and still have time for research and publication. For TAs who plan to pursue other career tracks, the skills they are developing as instructors will transfer to other contexts as well as comprise an important entry on their resume and material for a letter of recommendation that emphasizes those skills and their personal mastery. In either case, the director might emphasize, as Jo Sprague (1992) suggests, that the classroom provides an opportunity to test the various theories and principles they are learning in their coursework, as well as their ability to communicate those concepts effectively and in a manner that promotes understanding and appreciation.

Directors can read widely to inform their thinking and can encourage their staff to do likewise. As a result of such wide reading and careful scrutiny of objectives, the director and staff are more able to identify topics and issues that require further exploration — many that are worthy of the
attention of a wider audience. They likely will want to pursue some of these formally and present their findings at a conference or a convention or to get them into print.

CONDITIONS FOR SUCCESSFUL COLLABORATION IN THE BASIC COURSE

Hackman and Johnson (1991) note that the only significant drawbacks to democratic leadership are that democratic techniques are time consuming and can be cumbersome with larger groups" (p. 27). Perhaps, though, they oversimplify. These conditions and a few more are worth noting and contemplating.

Time certainly is a condition. Covey (1991) acknowledges the amount of time required to involve and empower staff, noting that it does “take more time in the beginning, and many who feel they are now pushed to the hilt simply won’t take this time to explain, to train, to commit” (p. 237). Hence, the director must have the time available and also must be willing to expend the time necessary for collaboration. But as Covey suggests, this time is spent principally in the beginning. Once the director has taken the time to devise and locate materials that provide basic explanations, and once the director has compiled materials and established procedures that can be used in the training and development of staff, and once the staff has become accustomed to and somewhat proficient with collaboration, the dividends can be sweet — including time saved in the long run and fewer crises and problems.

Another condition for collaboration is that it requires a participative style of leadership and some degree of autonomy for the staff. Mills (1995) holds that “setting goals for empowered individuals or teams is very different than giving task assignments to subordinates, and it takes experience for an executive or manager to develop the skill” (p. 254). By collaborating, though, the supervisor does not have to be all-

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knowing and does not have to be especially skilled in handing down directives; the group can work together to define objectives and discern principles. To do so, the leader will need to engage a participative style of leadership, a style in which he or she will "solicit opinions and ideas from followers for the purpose of involving followers in decision making" (Hackman & Johnson, 1991, p. 51). Engaging a participative style, even if it is not their usual mode of leadership, should not prove overly difficult; supervisors can learn to alter their leadership style with relative ease (Coblentz, Gerber & Pribble, 1987).

Participative leadership, though, involves more than learning a new style; the director must also be willing to cede some authority. Larson and LaFasto (1989) note perceptively that "getting people involved and giving them autonomy is what promotes collaboration" (p. 94). Nyquist and Sprague (1992) likewise identify these conditions for successful collaboration in the basic course, as does Williams (1995). The director and staff will need to understand that autonomy is not complete liberty but is regulated by the objectives and principles defined by the group and by the curriculum. In this manner, individuals are not independent but are interdependent; the freedom they enjoy is that of empowerment, which Mills (1995) explains is "the explicit grant of authority to make decisions and take actions — usually in the context of a broad set of rules and frameworks" (p. 255).

Still, any allowance of autonomy involves risk, and it requires patience as well as a willingness by the course director to allow mistakes. Directors may need to remind themselves of the positive outcomes. For one, some degree of autonomy via empowerment, as Williams (1995) notes, is necessary for growth. For another, the director might also recognize how experimentation by individuals supplies experiences that the group can share, reflect upon, and find instructive.
Of course, the director can also remind himself or herself — as well as the staff — that allowing mistakes is not the same thing as tolerating or accepting mediocrity or indolence. If workers are empowered, Larson and LaFasto (1989) suggest that the supervisor should adopt an achievement orientation, which means “never accepting excuses for a lack of results” and “creating consequences for failure and rewards for excellence” (p. 100). They emphasize the importance of demanding performance and a sense of interdependency and cooperation, quoting one prominent CEO who observed: “One person who doesn’t work well with others . . . can ruin a team. When that happens, you give feedback to that individual and help them make the necessary changes. But if they can’t adapt, then you have an obligation to remove them from the team. Otherwise, the rest of the team can become pretty resentful” (p. 71).

The ability to collaborate and the results of such efforts also requires participation by all participants; the entire staff must be involved. Various factors determine the level and degree of involvement. For example, the attributes of the leader influence participation and, as such, constitute a condition. The leader, obviously, must be perceived as competent and must be respected (see Larson & LaFasto, p. 64; also Sprague, 1992). Other attributes of the leader include patience, an ability to work well with others and to coordinate efforts, some native intelligence, an openness to new ideas and perspectives, and an ability to communicate skillfully and to appreciate and utilize the eloquence of others. Each of these attributes constitutes a condition under which the process thrives or is threatened.

Involvement by the staff is also contingent upon the intellectual ability of members, their level of experience, their interpersonal skills, and their ability to work collaboratively and to communicate effectively (Salazar, 1995). The ability of the group to collaborate should improve as a result of engaging the process, and involvement that requires reflection can
nurture their development (Williams, 1995). Hence, the group not only learns to collaborate by collaborating, but they likely will grow intellectually as well, which also will make them more able collaborators.

Individuals must also be psychologically prepared to be involved. To promote the proper mindset, the director can help the staff sense the personal benefits of involvement. They need to understand that there is enough success to go around and “if the team is a winner, then the individual is successful and a winner” (Larson & LaFasto, 1989, p. 69). In this manner they can sense the overlap between the needs and goals of the enterprise and their own individual needs and goals and capabilities (see Covey, 1991, p. 191).

Individuals may also lack an appreciation of collaboration which may prompt some reluctance. As Larson and LaFasto (1989) note, the willingness to collaborate depends on “understanding . . . how one’s objectives can be integrated with those of others, how one’s own point of view can be advanced at the same time that other points of view are understood and acknowledged” (p. 18). Course directors might have to describe the process beforehand and be careful to include everyone once proceedings and discussions are underway. To do so, of course, the director will need to acknowledge, fully and diplomatically, any input an individual provides and to convey appreciation of what is contributed. In other words, the director will need to provide what some authors term interpersonal leadership” (Hackman & Johnson, 1991).

Madsen and Mermer (1993), in discussing proceedings in the basic course, emphasize the importance of “mutual respect (106). Hence, course supervisors may need to hone their sensitivity. Kalbfleisch & Davies (1993) remind leaders that self-esteem affects involvement/participation. they find that individuals with higher self-perceptions of value and self-worth may be better able to perceive themselves . . . with skills to contribute” (p. 403). The director may have to help people along, allowing individuals to have successive suc-
cesses (Williams, 1995). I might have them to assist, as Hugenberg (1993) suggests, for example, in the construction of exams and assignments. If they see one of their items appear on the exam or on a common syllabus (even if the item has been revised) their confidence can rise.

Finally, other conditions exist outside the group that affect their ability to collaborate. Most notably, perhaps, the director must have departmental support (see Sprague, 1992, p. 5). The director needs to be respected and supported by the chair and the faculty and must be empowered to act, whether in a participative mode or, when situations demand, in a directive manner. To build respect and sustain support, the director may benefit from keeping the department regularly informed on the objectives, progress, and activities of the group.

CONCLUSION

This article challenges the perspective of authors who describe the process of defining goals and objectives as top-down, never acknowledging the group processes that often characterize the enterprise, nor recognizing the benefits of leadership that fosters and facilitates widespread participation. A leader cannot merely present goals and expect for them to be understood, appreciated, and carried out. To have full impact, goals cannot merely be handed down nor transplanted, intact, from one context to another. What happens in the process is as important or moreso than what emerges in verbal form. It is the thought, reflection and exchange that fosters improved understanding and steadfast support. It is the appreciation and incorporation of the members' ideas that strengthens morale and relations and builds community. And it is the pooling of talent that improves and invigorates the enterprise. In addition, active involvement assists an
individual's development. Clearly, "two heads" are better than one for establishing goals in the basic course.

Collaboration is not all that is important. In order to establish goals that are more meaningful worthwhile, and significant, the director and staff must contemplate how the goals complement other, larger objectives as well as how they complement the principles and values identified and shared by the group. Supervisors of the basic course can prompt such thinking and reflection by employing what has been described as a formative approach, a facilitative approach, or some combination of the two. Helping the staff to sense the relationship between goals, mission, vision, and the set of principles around which they revolve is what makes goals more compelling and, hence, realizable in the basic course.

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