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POD Northeast Regional Conference

MICHAEL KOFFMAN and MICHAEL THEALL

On May 29 and 30, the first POD Northeast Regional Conference took place at Northeastern University's Warren Center in Ashland, Massachusetts.

The main goal of the conference was to provide a forum for instructional, organizational, and personal development specialists from the region to share information on their recent work.

Presenters included Carol Mann of North Shore Community College; Libby Hruska, Holyoke Community College; Ed Caffarella, University of Maine; David Holmes and Tony Roberts, University of Vermont: Ric Long, University of Bridgeport; Joe Durzo and Kathy Rogers, Syracuse University; John Anderson, Bucknell; Margaret Guellette and Fred Adair, Harvard; Bob Wolke, University of Pittsburgh; John Kelly, Commonwealth Institute for High Technology (Massachusetts); Bobbie Koffman, Boston State College; Gay Lumsden, Keane College; and Ginger Rotondo, Patricia Dovas, Michael Theall and Gerry Herman of Northeastern University. Conference planning and coordination were handled by Glenn Erickson and Michael Koffman.

In addition to the presenters, twenty-five persons registered for the conference. The range of involvement of these persons in development went from Director, Office of Faculty Development to "interested single crusader," with actual experience ranging from six months to fifteen years. Two-thirds of the participants had attended POD workshops and conferences prior to this one, although only nine were currently POD members. Altogether twenty-four separate higher education institutions in the northeast region (primarily New England) were represented.

As indicated in the number of presenters, the conference achieved the goal of bringing development professionals together to share mutual interests. The rural "retreat-like" ambience of the conference center contributed to this purpose, including the fact that par-

ticipants were required to share camp-style living quarters and cooperate in setting and clearing tables.

In addition, many presentations were conducted as workshops, skill-building and even personal growth exercises. Ed Caffarella's three-hour simulation on "Diffusion of Innovations" was a highlight of the conference for many. Participants rated the presentations as well suited to their needs, and gave excellent ratings to both the overall quality and organization of the program.

Some criticism was voiced regarding the full schedule for the two days (9:30 A.M. to 9:00 P.M. the first day and 9:00 A.M. to 3:00 P.M. the second day). As is often the case, some individuals felt the need for more time for informal social exchange. Others were frustrated by the necessity of choosing between equally attractive presentations. While certain problems with noise level in the rooms as well as a shortage of lecture rooms were cited, both the presenters and the participants regarded the regional conference as a success and would support another conference in 1980.

One substantive suggestion was made to encourage the directors of development centers to bring their entire staff to the regional conference and to allow time during and after the conference for each staff to discuss the application of various new ideas to their situation. To stimulate such staff development certainly falls within the goals of the POD network.

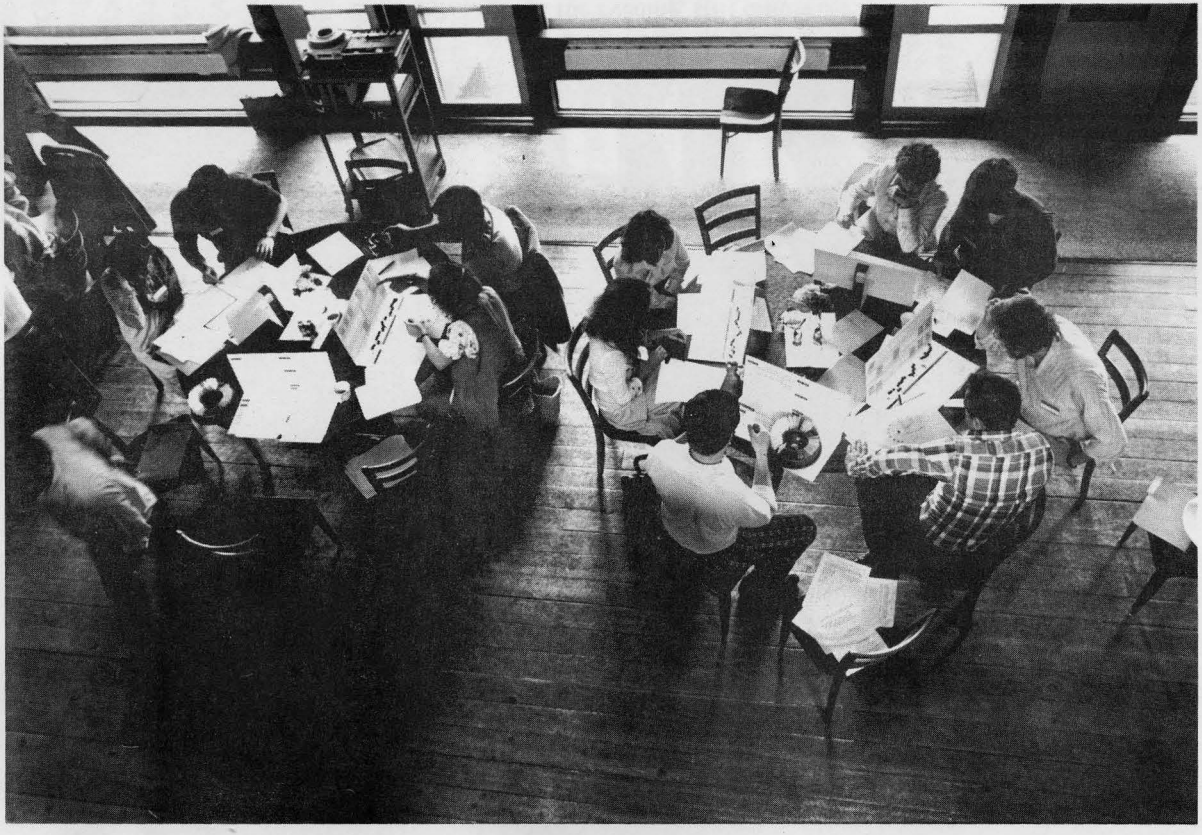

Figure 1. Participants involved in Ed Caffarella's "Diffusions of Innovation Game"

Figure 2. Later in the evening, still diffusing . . .