
Developing Teachers: Some Ways to Go, Some Ways to Be

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There are two general approaches to teacher education current in our field today: training and development. Before discussing some of the ways that we teachers can go beyond training to development, it is important to distinguish between these two approaches.

Teacher Training

Training occurs when the teacher trainer directly intervenes in the teaching process and directs the trainee toward some specific, quantifiable goal. Often the trainer will specify what areas of change the trainee should concentrate on and many times will suggest avenues for change or action to be taken by the trainee.

Freeman (1989) illustrates training when he discusses a vocabulary lesson in which the trainee does not solicit information from students before presenting new vocabulary to the class. Freeman suggests that a teacher trainer in this situation might direct the trainee to alter the way in which he/she presents new vocabulary. The trainer might prescribe that the trainee in the future elicit student knowledge before presenting new vocabulary, and then set a time frame for the trainee to apply this skill in class. The trainer would also set criteria for evaluation. In training, teacher trainers direct, inform, model, prescribe, and evaluate.

Training is based on the belief that certain behaviors characterize effective

teaching and that these behaviors can be quantified and imparted to the teacher trainee (Freeman, 1989). Teaching is seen in parts and these parts are the central focus of training. Richards (1990) refers to this focus on parts as a microapproach to teacher education. A microapproach categorizes those aspects of teaching that are thought to characterize "effective instruction," and they are taught to the trainee. These might include:

1. Wait-Time—Trainees are instructed to wait after asking a question, after students respond, or before the teacher comments.
2. Questions—Trainees are instructed to ask certain kinds of questions (for example, referential rather than display questions).
3. Feedback—Trainees are instructed in ways to use feedback.
4. Time-on-Task—Trainees are instructed to keep their students on task.

The goal of training is to assure that trainees are competent in using these components of teaching in certain observable and quantifiable ways. There are, of course, objections to this approach to teacher education. Some teacher educators (Fanselow, 1990; Freeman, 1990; Richards, 1990) have warned that teaching is a very complex activity that cannot be diluted to certain "low-inference" categories like the ones mentioned above. Though training teachers in these skills might be useful and helpful in certain

situations—such as with beginning, inexperienced teachers—these skills in themselves do not reflect the whole of teaching. Furthermore, Freeman (1990) has cautioned that an over-emphasis on training activities can lead to formulaic teaching, the kind that applies the same teaching strategies, activities, and solutions in every situation. An emphasis on training may also cause the trainee to feel defensive and can even take from him/her the power to decide how and what to teach. If this happens, the responsibility for teaching is taken out of the trainees' hands and placed in the hands of the teacher trainer, short-circuiting the development of the trainee.

Teacher Development

Teacher development, on the other hand, is focused on assisting the teacher in exploring, developing, and reflecting on his/her teaching. Unlike training, development takes a holistic view rather than an analytical view of teaching. Teacher educators using this approach seek to aid the teacher in developing internal processes or conceptual constructs that will serve in guiding decision-making and enhance understanding of the processes involved in teaching. Teacher educators attempt to help the teacher develop a locus of control (Gebhard, 1990; Fanselow, 1990; Freeman, 1990). The teacher educator in a developmental framework is not a banker (Freire, 1973) who "deposits" information ready-made into the mind of the teacher. The teacher educator is more a midwife (Belensky et al., 1987) who seeks to draw out from the teacher hypotheses about teaching and a sense of inner- or self-control for making decisions which are appropriate to a particular teaching situation.

Direct intervention, guiding, prescribing and evaluating do not fit in a developmental framework of teacher education. Instead, development is marked by the indirectness the teacher educator uses. Teacher educators, rather than directing, seek to influence, to support, to enhance and draw out the teacher's own approaches to teaching rather than to impart or prescribe the teacher educator's opinions and methods. Gebhard, Gaitan, and Oprandy (1990) state that development seeks to enforce the individual qualities of teaching, as there is not one best way to teach. They believe that teacher development should activate in the teacher an awareness, an acute sensitivity to how one's own teaching affects students and the classroom environment.

Richards (1990) has called a developmental framework a macroapproach to teacher education. A macroapproach considers larger dimensions of teaching such as student grouping, classroom management, and activity structuring. These are aspects of teaching that cannot be reduced to quantifiable behaviors or skill components. A macroapproach to teacher education is more holistic, more cognizant of the complex relationships involved in teaching. High-inference behaviors and broader generalizations about teaching characterize this approach.

Development Strategies

There are a number of development strategies that teacher educators employ in moving teachers toward development. Gebhard, Gaitan, and Oprandy have suggested that development can occur when teachers have the chance to examine and reflect on their teaching by participating in several different activities.

These might include:

1. Observation—Teachers systematically observe others' or even their own teaching.
2. Keeping a Journal—This provides the teacher opportunities to reflect on his/her teaching through writing.
3. Projects for Investigating Teaching—Teachers examine their own teaching, choose an area for change, then re-examine to see how the change, once implemented, has affected the students and themselves.
4. Reading—Teachers read about the experiences of other teachers or read research—particularly ESL classroom-based research.
5. Discussion Groups—Talking about one's experience can reveal insights about teaching that were previously absent.

Observation as a Teacher Development Tool

Though each of these methods for development could be discussed at length, observation is one of the most widely used and investigated methods of teacher development and the one considered here. Observation has great potential as a development tool because it gives the teacher a method and the power to investigate teaching and use the knowledge that investigation uncovers to make informed decisions about what and how to teach. Observation is a methodology for enhancing growth and developing awareness. This is a radically different approach from one that hands the teacher pre-packaged skills.

Fanselow (1987) has defined observation as a way of "seeing teaching differently."

By this, he means that in observing other teachers, the observer gains new insights, new ideas into his/her own teaching. With these insights can come understanding, alternatives, and the power to change. Observing then becomes something like a living mirror. By looking at others' teaching, the teacher can more clearly see and explore his/her own teaching.

There are many ways to observe and many tools to use in observing. In observing others, teachers can take notes, collect dialog samples, participate in action research (Nunan, 1990), use seating charts, use observation schedules or checklists, or tape their classes. Each of these techniques has merit, and each can open new understandings of teaching processes and strategies.

Whatever method is chosen, researchers caution that observation is not for the purpose of judging or evaluating. The purpose of observing others is to discover new possibilities for one's own teaching. The purpose of observing one's own class is to gain insight into the complex interactions and relationships that shape a particular classroom environment. Most of all, the purpose of observation is to enhance awareness, to give the teacher the power of decision-making, and to foster in the teacher a sense of control. With a developmental tool such as observation, teachers can continue to develop, to grow, and to see teaching more clearly throughout their professional lives.

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