

THE PREPARATION OF HUMANISTIC TEACHERS FOR NEXT CENTURY SCHOOLS

Cecil H. Patterson and William W. Purkey

Department of Counseling and Specialized Educational Development
University of North Carolina at Greensboro

(The Journal of Humanistic Education and Development, 1993, 30, 147-155)

(Some of the concepts expressed in this article were originally expressed in the book Humanistic Education [C.H. Patterson, 1973]).

I see the facilitation of learning as the aim of education ... We know ... that the initiation of such learning rests not upon the teaching skills of the leader, not upon his scholarly knowledge of the field, not upon his curricular planning, not upon his use of audio-visual aids, not upon the programmed learning he utilizes, not upon his lectures and presentations, not upon an abundance of books, though each of these might at one time or another be utilized as an important resource. No, the facilitation of significant learning rests upon certain attitudinal qualities which exist in the personal relationship between the facilitator and the learner.

Carl R. Rogers Freedom to Learn 1969, pp. 105-106

It has been over two decades since Carl Rogers wrote Freedom to Learn. During this period we have seen countless educational techniques, skills, and methods come and go, as well as content-oriented "new" math, programmed" learning, "back to basics," and other subject matter innovations. Like the Medicine Man Shows of early America, each came riding into town promising to "cure what ails ye," and then vanishing, leaving the vacant lot for the next traveling show. American education has been slow to heed Rogers' advice regarding the central importance of certain attitudinal relationships in facilitating human learning. After so many medicine shows it is now time to realize that the preparation of teachers for next century schools must consist of educating human teachers in human relationships.

Current Preparation Proposals are Inadequate

The focus on attitudinal relationships in the preparation of teachers is an endangered species in American education. As Rogers pointed out decades ago, "one could listen to thousands of ordinary classroom interactions without coming across one instance of clearly communicated, sensitively accurate, empathic understanding" (Rogers, 1969, p. 112).

Lack of skill in interpersonal relations was also highlighted by Koile (1977) who reported that teachers are among the poorest of listeners. Sadly, the same can be said today. Yet all the

recent proposals to revitalize American education in general, and teacher education in particular, continue to ignore attitudinal relationships and the people-in-the-process.

In light of what we know about teaching it seems paradoxical that the emphasis in teacher education continues to focus on subject matter and methods, with relatively little attention to the attitudinal qualities of the teacher. For example, recent funding by the Federal Government (May, 1991) gives "absolute preference" for training academies for teachers in each of five disciplines (English, mathematics, science, history and geography), while nothing is said about the personal characteristics of the teacher. This is also true of the National Goals for Education (1990), prepared by the offices of President Bush and the various state Governors.

Those who have been concerned about student achievement in subject matter areas have focused upon the inadequate preparation of teachers in subject matter content as well as in the liberal arts (Ball, 1990; Ball & McDiarmid, 1990; McDiarmid & Wilson, 1991). Numerous changes have been made towards this end in many teacher education programs. A major thrust is to involve the entire university in the education of teachers to insure a solid knowledge base (The Holmes Group, 1986; 1990; 1991). Other than this emphasis on content and technique, there has been little basic change in the preparation of teachers during the last half century. A 1988 review of the literature linking teacher behavior to student achievement dealt almost entirely with teaching methods, with no consideration of teacher attitudes and interpersonal relations (Brophy, 1988). Major changes in teacher education programs have essentially been limited to academic content and instructional methods.

Although empirically based knowledge of subject matter clearly is necessary, it is not sufficient to make a good teacher (Ball, 1990). Additional emphasis on methods courses and instructional technologies do not seem to be the answer either, for there are few, if any, teaching methods that are uniformly found among master teachers (Combs et al., 1969, 1974; Combs, Avila & Purkey, 1978; Patterson, 1977). Yet these two alternatives appear to be the only approaches seriously considered. None of the many reports critical of American Education have addressed the personality characteristics of the teacher and his or her beliefs regarding teaching, people, and oneself.

A 1983 report released by the National Commission on Excellence in Education (A Nation At Risk, 1983) was noteworthy for its almost total neglect of such "nonacademic" areas as self-esteem, interpersonal relationships, social skills, sensitivity to the feelings and needs of others, the capacity to give and receive affection, and self-confidence, self-efficacy, and perceptual clarity. It was not alone in this perspective.

The same can be said of High School (1983), Horace's Compromise (1984), A Place Called School (1984), The First Holmes Group Report (1986, 1990), and nearly every other published report. From reading these and other reports it would be easy to conclude that the personal characteristics of teachers are of little importance compared to academic content or instructional technology.

Faced with the almost total absence of attention to the teacher's person, it would appear that the answer would be to offer more teacher education courses in psychology. However, courses in the psychology of learning place heavy emphasis on research that often has little to do with real people working with real students in real classrooms. Most attention is given to narrowly defined cognitive approaches to teaching and learning. If teacher education has been inadequate in preparing teachers to facilitate cognitive learning, it has been almost totally lacking in preparing teachers to facilitate affective learning.

Any psychology appropriate to teaching must be an expanded discipline that encompasses the total personalities and behaviors of teachers and students in constant interaction. It must focus on those characteristics which are more important than knowledge of subject matter or proficiency in skills, methods, and techniques. These characteristics are the vital personal qualities of every good teacher: empathic understanding, respect, and genuineness.

The Characteristics of Self-Actualizing Individuals

Continuing research in counseling and psychotherapy have confirmed the existence of several characteristics of self-actualizing behavior that are included, either explicitly or implicitly, in virtually every major theory or approach to counseling or psychotherapy, though differing terminology has been used. Three of the basic conditions which have been identified are empathic understanding, respect, and genuineness.

Empathic Understanding

Empathic understanding means understanding of another person from that person's point of view. This internal frame of reference is achieved by putting oneself in the place of the other, so that one sees, as closely as possible, as the person does (Patterson, 1985). Rogers' definition perhaps expresses it as well as any: "an accurate, empathic understanding of the [other's] world as seen from the inside. To sense the [other's] private world as if it were your own, but without losing the 'as if quality--this is empathy..." (Rogers, 1961, p. 284). To teach a student it is imperative that the teacher know something about that student from the student's point of view.

There seem to be no synonyms for empathic understanding. Unlike other languages, English does not have two words to designate the two kinds of understanding or knowing: knowing about, and the knowing which is empathy. Both kinds of knowing can be taught in teacher education programs, but only one is taught in the vast majority of colleges and universities.

Respect or Nonpossessive Warmth

The second condition is a deep respect for people, an unconditional acceptance of the other person as he or she is, without judgment or condemnation, criticism, ridicule, or depreciation. It is a respect which includes a warmth and liking for another as a person, with all his or her faults, deficiencies, or undesirable or unacceptable behavior. It is a deep interest and concern for the person and his or her development. Being respected by a significant other, a teacher, can be a

powerful force in inviting positive self-respect in students (Purkey & Novak, 1984; Purkey & Stanley, 1991).

Genuineness

Genuineness is the congruence or integration of the teacher in the professional relationship. "It means that within the relationship he is freely and deeply himself, with his actual experience, accurately represented by his awareness of himself" (Rogers, 1957, p. 95). The teacher is not thinking or feeling one thing and saying another. He or she is open, honest, sincere, without a facade and without playing some stereotypical role.

The conditions of empathic understanding, respect and genuineness are not new and certainly not revolutionary. Yet their consistent application in interpersonal relations might well be revolutionary in teacher education programs. If one considers the totality of the facilitative conditions--understanding, empathy, concern, liking, prizing, acceptance, respect, warmth, sincerity, openness, authenticity--they add up to a concept which has long been recognized as basic to good human relationships. The Greeks had a word for it: *Agape*. St. Paul called it *love*.

These characteristics, empathic understanding, respect or nonpossessive warmth, and genuineness, manifested by teachers in classrooms, are the necessary conditions, not only for affective learning but for cognitive learning (Aspy, Roebuck & Benoit, 1987; Carkhuff, 1987; Whitman, Spendlove, & Clark, 1986). They are the necessary conditions for self-initiated, meaningful, experiential learning, enabling the student to actualize his or her relatively limitless potentialities.

The Focus of Teacher Education

It is the person of the teacher that is the most important factor in teaching and learning. It should therefore be apparent that teacher education should focus upon the development of the person of the teacher. This requires primary attention to the feelings, attitudes, and beliefs of the teacher, including all the attitudes, opinions and beliefs which the teacher holds to be true regarding one's own personal existence: one's self-concept.

That good teachers differ from poor teachers in their belief systems was discovered early by Combs and Associates. In The Florida Studies in the Helping Professions (1964), good teachers, as compared to poor ones, perceived others as able rather than unable, as friendly rather than unfriendly, as worthy rather than undependable, and as helpful rather than hindering. These same studies also found that good teachers perceived themselves differently than do poor teachers. Compared to poor teachers, good teachers perceived themselves as more adequate, trustworthy, wanted, and tended to identify more with other human beings.

What are the implications of this for teacher education programs? It is not the purpose here to deal with the total program of teacher education, but only that part that deals with the teacher's person: the conditions that facilitate the development and maintenance of self-actualizing

individuals. Teacher education is far more than the teaching of subject matter, for it requires the development of self-actualizing teachers.

Some Specific Suggestions for Teacher Education

There are special pressures and particular forms of isolation that are brought about by being a teacher. The attention given to the development of academic knowledge and instructional skills must not overlook the person who is to teach and the student who is expected to learn. Society needs not only persons with cognitive abilities, who can read, write and calculate--the three R's--but also citizens who can relate to others--the fourth R--interpersonal relationships. Teachers must be prepared for this aspect of education. Here are some practical suggestions from the authors for the preparation of teachers for the 21st century.

The suggestions offered in this article are based on a person-centered approach to the educative process first described by Carl Rogers, A.W. Combs, C.H. Patterson and others who gave primary emphasis in teacher preparation programs to the people in the process: the attitudinal qualities that exist in human relationships.

Focus on the teacher of teachers: This paper addresses the conditions for facilitating the development of self-actualizing students and teachers for next century schools. But these conditions are the same for the development of self-actualizing teachers in teacher education programs. If society wants teachers of teachers who are capable of fostering self-actualization in their students, then these teachers of teachers must themselves be self-actualizing persons. They can become such persons by experiencing the conditions which are necessary for the development of self-actualizing persons. The manner in which the conditions operate is complex, but one important aspect of the nature of the influence is what is called modeling. One becomes like those with whom one associates or engages in close interpersonal relationships. Teachers are models for their students; and teacher educators are models for their student teachers.

Establish an internal frame of reference: Traditional teacher education programs have focused on objective observation: to report what they observe without personal bias or distortion. This emphasis on objectivity has often blinded student teachers to the feelings, attitudes, perceptions, goals and purposes of the pupil: to see things from the pupil's side of the desk.

Laboratory experiences for student teachers should offer practice in taking the internal frame of reference in interaction with individuals. This training can begin with learning to recognize the existence of various levels of the conditions of empathy, respect and genuineness. Role-playing is a valuable aspect of laboratory experience in developing these conditions. This, and actual supervised laboratory experiences, offer opportunities for the student to engage in self-exploration regarding his or her beliefs and attitudes, leading to better self-understanding and the possibility of positive change in one's self concept. Such experiences should be accompanied by seminars in which students discuss their observations and experience, and also their philosophy, beliefs, and attitudes towards themselves and others. These continuous integrative seminars will be considered later in this article.

Select Supervising Teachers Carefully: The classroom internship, which is one of the most important experiences in teacher education, can be one of its major problems. The practicing classroom teacher (the supervising or critic teacher) with whom the student does his or her practice teaching is a critical influence on the teacher education student, becoming a model for the student. Yet, such teachers are typically chosen on the recommendation of a principal or superintendent, whose concept of a "good" teacher may be essentially one who maintains good discipline and control.

There is much that can be done to improve the classroom internship and its supervision. A good model can be found in the teaching of counseling students, where the student is given the opportunity to engage under supervision in real counseling with real clients, and where he or she has real responsibility for the counseling situation. This experience requires the student to develop a theory of counseling and a system of principles that can be applied to a great variety of specific situations. The supervisor becomes the primary facilitator for the student's development.

Use Group Processes Frequently: The essence of successful professional work with people is the effective use of the self as instrument. Teacher education should focus on the development of the teacher as a person: as a person who can offer the necessary conditions of learning and self-actualization to others. Thus, the general atmosphere of the teacher education program contributes to the development of an adequate and helping self.

Individual counseling can and does help, though to make it available to, or to require it of, all students would be prohibitive. It should certainly be available for those who need and want it. But perhaps the most effective method for developing teachers who can facilitate the personal development of their students is the experience provided by group counseling.

Groups are also vital in developing appreciation for cultural and social diversity. As Cazden and Mehan (1989) point out "...teacher education can help beginning teachers learn how to learn experientially about students and their families and encourage them to reflect on their own cultural background rather than unthinkingly live it as an unexamined norm " (1989, P. 55). Providing information about cultural and social differences without providing small group activities where students can discover the personal meanings of this information is ineffective.

It is helpful for any professional teacher to be in touch with his or her own feelings when working with students. Group experiences can be a great help in this, provided these experiences are conducted by qualified counselors. New approaches, such as students peer coaching, peer tutoring, and peer helping can best be directed by teachers who are themselves prepared in the nature of groups and group processes.

Conduct Continuous, Interactive Seminars: While group processes are concerned with personal development and interpersonal relationships, students also benefit from the opportunity to participate in continuous integrative professional seminars in which they can, with the instructor and with each other, consider, evaluate, and integrate their total experience in teacher education, including instructional content, laboratory experiences and other activities in their

teacher education program. This should also include their personal and professional development in terms of ideas, beliefs, attitudes, and their philosophy of education. This seminar should be a continuing one from the very beginning of their teacher program to its end, including the internship teaching experience.

Continuing seminars are also valuable for teachers-to-be to examine who they are and how they see their career choice. Too often young adults are caught up in the wishes of parents or other older adults without having a real desire to teach. This lack of opportunity to examine options is compounded by the rush to select a major in college. Teachers who are satisfied in their careers tend to be those who have found a fit between their personalities and teaching.

Train For Perceptual Clarity: Donald Meichenbaum (1977) and Aaron Beck (1976) have noted the connection between thoughts and feelings. Through studies of human behavior it appears that thoughts often determine feelings. In a sense, we behave in ways that reflect thought processes. Beck has identified several significant ways that people distort their thinking through internal dialogue, often called "self-talk." (What we say to ourselves, and listen to, when we talk to ourselves). There is growing evidence that monitoring self-talk and practicing perceptual clarity can be a valuable process for the education of teachers.

Cognitive distortions in self-talk block new learning by reducing the amount of information teachers have to make reasoned decisions. Distorted perception results in our blocking information that contradicts what we believe to be true about ourselves, others and the world (Beck & Weishaar, 1989). Teachers are more likely to take risks, recognize achievements, and set realistic expectations for themselves and others when their perceptual processes are free from distortion.

Conclusion

In this article we have offered some suggestions for the preparation of humanistic teachers for next century schools. Current proposals for reform in education which are limited to academic content or instructional skills do not adequately recognize the necessity for (1) expanding the educative process from cognitive development to affective development and, therefore, (2) for preparing teachers to recognize and respond to the affective needs of students.

Six specific suggestions for the preparation of teachers of the 21st century were offered: (1) focus on the teacher of teachers, (2) take an internal frame of reference; (3) select supervising teachers carefully, (4) use group processes frequently, (5) conduct integrative seminars, and (6) provide training for perceptual clarity. While the six suggestions are not inclusive of all the experiences tomorrow's teachers need, they do focus on the heart of teaching and that is teaching with the heart. Attempting to improve education without preparing teachers in human relationships is surely a lost cause.

References

- A Nation at Risk (1983) Washington, DC: The President's Commission on Excellence in Education.
- Aspy, D., Roebuck, F. N. & Benoit, D. (1987). Person-centered education in the information age. Person Centered Review, 2, 87-98.
- Ball, D. (1990). The mathematical understandings prospective teachers bring to teacher education. Elementary School Journal, 90 (4), 449-466.
- Ball, D., & McDiarmid, W. (1990). The subject-matter preparation of teachers. In W. R. Houston (Ed.) Handbook of research on teacher education, (pp. 437-449). New York: Macmillan.
- Beck, A. (1976). Cognitive therapy and the emotional disorders. New York: New America Library.
- Beck, A. & Weishaar, M. (1989). Cognitive therapy. In A. Freeman, K. Simon, L. Beutler, & H. Arkowitz (Eds.) Comprehensive handbook of cognitive therapy, (pp. 21-36). New York: Plenum.
- Boyer, E. (1983). High school. New York: Harper & Row. Brophy, J. (1988). Research linking teacher behavior to student achievement. Educational Psychologist, 23, 235-286.
- Carkhuff, R. R. (1987). The productive teacher (two volumes). Amherst, MA: Human Resources Press.
- Cazden, C. & Mehan, H. (1989). Principles from sociology and anthropology: Context, code, classroom and culture. In McReynolds (Ed.) Knowledge base for the beginning teacher. (pp. 47-57). Oxford, England: Pergamon Press.
- Combs, A. W., Soper, D.W., Gooding, C.T., Benton, J.A. Dickman, J. F. & Usher, R. H. (1969) Florida studies in the helping professions (Social Science Monograph No. 37) Gainesville, FL, University of Florida Press.
- Combs, A. W., Blume, R.A., Newman, A.J. & Wass, H. L. (1974). The professional education of teachers. A humanistic approach to teacher preparation. (2nd Ed.) Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- Combs, A. W., Avila, D., Purkey, W. W. (1978). Helping relationships: Basic concepts for the helping professions (2nd Ed.). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- Federal Research Report (1991), 951 Pershing Dr., Silver Spring, MD, Vol. 27, No. 20, May.
- Goodlad, J.I. (1984) A place called school. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Koile, E. (1977). Listening as a way of becoming. Waco, Texas: Regency Books.
- The Holmes Group (1986). Tomorrow's teachers. East Lansing: the Holmes Group, Inc.
- The Holmes Group (1990). Tomorrow's Schools: Principles for the design of professional development, East Lansing: The Holmes Group.
- The Holmes Group (1991). Toward a community of learning. The preparation and continuing education of teachers, E. Lansing, MI: The Holmes Group.
- Meichenbaum, D. (1977). Cognitive behavior modification: An integrative approach. New York: Plenum Press.
- McDiarmid, W. & Wilson, S. (1991). An exploration of the subject matter knowledge of alternate route teachers: Can we assume they know their subject? Journal of Teacher Education, 42, 93-103
- Patterson, C. H. (1973). Humanistic Education. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc.

Patterson, C.H. (1977). Foundations for a theory of instruction and educational psychology, New York: Harper & Row.

Patterson, C.H. (1985). The therapeutic relationship. New York: Brooks/Cole Publishers.

Purkey, W. W. & Novak, J. (1984). Inviting school success: A self-concept approach to teaching, 2nd edition. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing.

Purkey, W. W. & Stanley, P. H. (1991). Invitational teaching, learning and living, Washington, DC: National Education Association.

Rogers, C. R. (1969). Freedom to learn, Columbus, OH: Charles E. Merrill.

Rogers, C.R. (1961). On becoming a Person, Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Rogers, C.R. (1957). The necessary and sufficient conditions of therapeutic personality change. Journal of Consulting Psychology, 21, 95-103.

Sizer, T.R. (1984). Horace's compromise. Boston, NM: Houghton-Mifflin.

Whitman, N., Spendlove, D. & Clark, C. (1986). Increasing students' learning: A faculty guide to reducing stress among students. Washington, DC: ASHE-ERIC Higher Education Report No. 4.