

The Meaning and Construction of the Dialogical Teacher Training

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Supported by Young Teacher' Teaching Reform Project of China West Normal University "to Explore the Effective Cooperation Teaching of Public Pedagogy in Normal University" (JGXMQN319).

Received 21 July 2016; accepted 10 September 2016
Published online 26 October 2016

Abstract

Dialogical teacher training is an important way to promote the efficiency of the teacher training. It is based on the interactions between trainer teachers, training contents and trainee teachers, including construction of dialogical relationship between trainer teachers and trainee teachers, dialogical relationship between trainee teachers themselves, and dialogical relationship among trainee teachers.

Key words: Dialogical teacher training; Trainer teachers; Trainee teachers

Wang, S. Y. (2016). The Meaning and Construction of the Dialogical Teacher Training. *Cross-Cultural Communication*, 12(10), 48-51. Available from: <http://www.cscanada.net/index.php/ccc/article/view/8912> DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.3968/8912>

INTRODUCTION

This paper discussing teacher training is the result of its importance and inefficiency. Teacher training is the important way of teachers' professional development, which is also the key link in the process of curriculum reform of the world, especially under the background of the integration of teacher education. But in China, the effectiveness of teacher training has been the focus of controversy. People have criticized that teachers participated in the training have listened excitedly, seen

affectingly and thought about heartily, but have had not any changes when going back to work (Zhou, 2012). In order to build efficient teacher training this paper tries to inquiry the meaning and ways to construct the dialogical teacher training.

1. THE MEANING OF THE DIALOGICAL TEACHER TRAINING

Dialogical teacher training is based on the interactions between trainer teachers, training contents and trainee teachers, including construction of dialogical relationship between trainer teachers and trainee teachers, dialogical relationship between trainee teachers and themselves, and dialogical relationship among trainee teachers. The monologue teacher training had once dominated teacher training in our country. Monologue means trainee teachers have completely followed the technical specifications of the experts and trainee teachers are the objects of training, required to accept knowledge of authority and truth, and their inherent concepts of education and practice knowledge have been excluded. Under the view of the monologue, the ultimate goal of teacher training is to cultivate "speakers" of curriculum experts and "technicians" of teaching through making up the "shortages" and "weakness" of the trainee teachers; the process of the teacher training is to teach trainee teachers constantly to accept disciplines under the supervision of the external environments. Under the view of the monologue, teacher training focuses on the cramming of the external concepts but ignoring the inner concepts of trainee teachers; focuses on the common theories but ignoring the special contexts of trainee teachers; focuses on the expectations of experts but ignoring trainee teachers themselves thoughts. Dialogical teachers training means that trainee teacher is no longer "him" as the object, but "you" as the subject; teacher training is the process of building interact relationships between each other rather

than the relationship between subject and object under the paradigm of instrumentalism. Under the view of dialogue, the ultimate goal of teacher training is to improve trainee teachers' development from passively accepting training to actively pursuing their own developments and view the professional development as the individual' self-development but not the imposed external forces, so that the trainee teachers will purchase their professional developments from external controlled factors to internal will. Therefore, in order to improve the quality of the teachers' training, we should focus on the construction of the dialogical teacher training.

2. BUILDING DIALOGICAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TRAINER TEACHERS AND TRAINEE TEACHERS

Firstly, trainer teachers should make analysis of the needs of the trainee teachers to master each trainee teachers' education background and training needs, which will be the background of building dialogical relationship between trainer teachers and trainee teachers. But at present it is common short of the analysis of the needs of the trainee teachers. A survey showed that 53.9% of respondents said that before training, there weren't any survey about their needs; 35.1% of the respondents said they received survey about training needs; 13.5% of the respondents were asked about like the type of training and teaching methods (Xue, 2012; Chen, 2012). As an effective teacher training project, before the training there should be a deeply analysis of the trainee teachers' knowledge structure, professional ability level, expectations and demands of the training program, which can provide targeted personalized training plans for trainee teachers. Need analysis before training can be implemented by questionnaire, telephone, SMS, WeChat, QQ, etc.. Trainer teachers of the training program should create a QQ group before the training where they can get and communicate corresponding information about the training. At the beginning of the class, trainer teachers should ask trainee teachers in QQ group to present their demands about the train, and they will collect the requirements to find out the universal problems, which will be identified as the focus of the training; and then they will make training menus that can be chosen by the trainee teachers themselves. This process is related trainer teachers with the needs of the trainee teachers and respects trainee teachers' subjectivity, making them not only passively accept pre-arranged course but can develop the training course according to their own professional development needs and goals, together with other trainee teachers and trainer teachers (Zhang, 2013; Cai, 2013).

Secondly equal relationship is the key to build dialogical relationship between trainer teachers and trainee teachers. Now there are mainly three kinds of methods

of teacher training: expert lectures, demonstration and group discussion. The expert lectures are almost the common methods of all teacher trainings, but it makes the trainee teachers feel oppressed. Training experts often only from themselves subjective perspective focuses on profound theory knowledge of discipline, which leads to the discourse hegemony in the training. In this monologue training based on the relationship of "me—he", trainee teachers was forced to accept high, big and empty theory, ignoring their own teaching practice knowledge and context experiences and they just could accept passively not any chance for inquiring or communicating. Therefore, in order to build dialogical relationship experts should be regarded as information providers not the authority of knowledge; trainee teachers should be regarded as the interlocutors with equal status not as the passive followers of experts. In the training classroom, when the "dialogue" occurs, the trainee teachers can put forward their own problems of teaching practice and confusions of theoretical study to discuss with experts; and the whole "lecture" training is no longer in the form of experts "monologue", but completed by consultation and cooperation. As a result, the teacher training based on the perspective of dialogue is the process of constructing new meanings by trainee teachers and experts in equal status.

3. BUILDING DIALOGICAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TRAINEE TEACHERS AND THEMSELVES

Firstly there should be a dialogical relationship between old theories and new theories of trainee teachers. Teachers' education concepts are individual and tacit knowledge which are becoming in the process of education and self' social development and directly affect the teachers' perceptions, judgments and teachers' teaching behaviors. It is the soul of teachers' competence to make modern education ideas which are also the foundation and guide of teachers' teaching. Nowadays with the advancement of the eighth new curriculum reform in China, there are many new education ideas constantly emerging, which is the most important reason to implement teacher training to promote the renewal of the teachers' education ideas. However, in the current teacher training it always ignored the trainee teachers' original concepts of education and its profound influences on teachers' individual education behavior; did not wake up trainee teachers' individual awareness of these tacit education concepts; did not reveal their tacit education ideas; did not make its transition from tacit state to dominant state, failing to help trainee teachers to internalize the new ideas and knowledge of the new curriculum reform. As a result, for many trainee teachers after having the teacher training to return to school, they are still affected by the old and tacit education concepts.

Although they can list a lot of theories, concepts of new curriculum reform, their actual teaching behaviors are hidebound without any change. Therefore, in the current teacher training, in order to achieve effective results, it must promote dialogical relationship between the old and the new concepts of trainee teachers; go deeply into the trainee teachers' tacit education concepts to reveal and clarify their implicit education knowledge to promote and update their education ideas.

Secondly there should be a dialogical relationship between theories and practices of trainee teachers. Knowledge view of constructivism clearly points out that the knowledge can't be in the form of entity outside of the individuality, even though the language gives certain external form to knowledge and gets a common identity; it does not mean that the learners have the same understanding of the knowledge, and the real understanding is only built by learners themselves based on their experiences, depending on the specific situations of the learning process (Guo, 2012; Liu, 2012). And in the current teacher training, it paid attention to the general theory but ignored the combination of the theory and practice of the trainee teachers, alienating its true education life and constructing the gap between their theory and practice. Trainers are only interested in the introduction of all kinds of theories into the training process, entail the trainee teachers to accept them, but ignore the trainee teacher's own teaching experiences, and consciously obliterate the context and difference of trainee teachers' practical experiences, which seriously hinder the trainee teachers' full and profound understandings of education theories and promote the popularity and overflow of the knowledge view of objectivism. As long as any advanced educational theory is far away from of the education practice, it is just a castle in the air, only with the ornamental function, not practical function. Practice is the criterion for testing all truth, and teachers' work is a kind of highly specialized and personalized practice. Therefore, the current teacher training should aim at building a dialogical relationship between theories and practices of trainee teachers to help them to construct their own teaching theories and technologies in the unique, unstable and even conflicting situations of teaching.

Thirdly there should be a dialogical relationship between trainee teachers' "ideal self" and "realistic self". At present, with the advancement of elementary education reform in our country, teachers also are endowed with more and higher expectations, and teacher training has become an important way to shape ideal teachers which are also the society's expectation. However, it is a topic for the teacher as a biological and social being to enjoy professional dignity and joy in the field of education in recent years. With the oppression of the materialism and utilitarianism, technology principle and efficiency principle, teachers' professional dignity have slide, self-happy have been scarce, and there is a big gap between

teachers' "ideal self" and "realistic self" to be overcome, which should be the important subject of teacher training. Teachers' professional work will reflect the essence of education only when they feel the value of self-existence and enjoy the happiness of life; teacher training will promote the trainee teachers' self-development only when it can build dialogical relationship between trainee teachers' "ideal self" and "realistic self" to shorten the gap. If it leaves teachers' actual situations to trumpet ideal teachers according with social expectations, at the end the ideal will be the fantasy. Therefore, the current teacher training should not only focus on the social expectations of teachers, but also pay attention to the teacher's own expectations. The goal of teacher training is not only the ideal teachers according with social expectations but also to provide ladders to help trainee teaches transfer from reality to ideal.

4. BUILDING DIALOGICAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TRAINEE TEACHERS

Firstly it is very important to build dialogical relationship between trainee teachers in the process of teacher training. Social constructivism founded by Vygotsky has clarified that knowledge is the information with mutual recognition of both sides, so in the teaching process it is very necessary to enchant fully "social exchange" of language to promote the formation of knowledge on the basis of full consultation and dialogue (Liu, 2011; Gao, 2011). In the perspective of the theory of constructivism, although knowledge is actively constructed by subjects themselves, it is also not constructed at will, but in the process of communication, cooperation and exchanges with others, especially the deep dialogue between peer groups. There are some certain differences between trainee teachers in the knowledge structure and teaching ability, ways of thinking and cognitive styles, thus there are some corresponding different ideas about education. Trainee teachers can get full and comprehensive understandings of new ideas by building dialogical relationship between trainee teachers who may understand the different aspects of the same idea. At the same time, trainee teachers are equal, and there are no authorities or bureaucracy between them. So they can share views and information about education experiences through discussion; they can get common development by sharing and communication about education experiences, faith and value, which provide the opportunity to promote the development of the advanced thinking. Therefore, in the current process of the teacher training it is very important to actively build platforms to promote dialogues between trainee teachers. After each expert lectures, watching course, trainee teachers should be organized to discuss in the form of group work to communicate training

learning experiences and advices. The dialogue between trainee teachers should be an important supplement of the teacher training to promote trainee teachers' knowledge construction.

Secondly, it is very important to keep the dialogical relationship between trainee teachers after the teacher training to build learning community of trainee teachers. Because trainee teachers are from all over the country, in order to ensure the continued dialogue between them after the training, teacher trainers should also be committed to build trainee teachers' learning community to maintain a dialogue after returning to work. Learning community is a kind of organization based on the common missions and aims, the people of which share interests in study, jointly inquiry the journey of knowledge and understand the way of the world to go towards the same goal of education by interaction and participation (Xia, 2012; Li, 2012). Trainee teachers are all in education practice, and have common mission and vision. In order to achieve the same goal, they need to explore with more like-minded people to share, and the learning community provides a platform for them to study with each other about the education practice. By means of learning community, trainee teachers transfer the public knowledge in the learning community into personal knowledge; by discussion, they transfer the personal problems in education practice into public problems to be resolved by the wisdom of the team. In the environment of learning community, the trainee teachers have learned from alone to together, from closed to open, and constantly promote their own professional development in the dialogue process.

CONCLUSION

Teacher training is an important way to promote teacher's professional development, dialogical teacher training is an important way to promote the efficiency of the teacher training. So it is very necessary to build dialogical relationship between trainer teachers and trainee teachers, between trainee teachers themselves and between trainee teachers.

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