



THE TEACHER—AND

HOWEVER one may choose to describe the learning process in the context of the classroom, there necessarily has to be concern for the relationship between the teacher and the pupil. Such a relationship requires the individual to have certain skills and abilities and to communicate himself to the other person through his expressed attitudes and behavior. The responsibility for the teacher is as profound and as diverse as the many pupils with whom he is involved. The commitment of the teacher extends to his being able to facilitate the learner's ability to translate into behavior both cognitive and affective learnings. In brief, then, the teacher as the professional must be accounted for in terms of the teacher as the person.

The development of this "person-professional" teacher is not the total responsibility of the teacher education institution. It is an ever-continuing development, and the continuing responsibility for development is vested in the individual person of the teacher and is shared by society as a whole. Society, through the auspices of teacher education institutions, educational agencies, and the like, needs to provide vehicles for the continuing development of the teacher. This will in part be in the form of institutes, workshops in advanced methods and newly discovered knowledges, postgraduate study, and financial support for programs directed at professional growth and competency.

Specifically, the individual school or

school district can contribute to the continuing development of the teacher through the vehicle of sensitivity training. Sensitivity training has been used, confused, abused, and misused. Appropriately it should be viewed in terms of its potential as a tool for facilitating the growth of the "person-professional" teacher. Sensitivity training herein is understood to be a process relying heavily upon the principles of group dynamics and communication and having explicit behavioral goals postulated as ultimately having a positive relationship to the learner in the educational experience. As such it is concerned with the interrelationships between the teacher and the pupils. It is also concerned with the communication process.

Focus Upon the Teacher

Given the assumption that teachers are qualified in some content area, they still should be afforded the opportunity to participate in some type of human relations or sensitivity training (Amidon and Flanders, 1963). "Teaching becomes the translation of knowledge—knowledge about subject, about pupils, about learning and teaching—into action through a personal teaching style" (Corrigan, 1967, p. 4). The outcomes of sensitivity training are construed to be a necessary though not sufficient condition for learning.

Though this author has to date found



SENSITIVITY TRAINING

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no study (demonstrating the relative effectiveness of sensitivity training in accomplishing its goals) reporting negative findings, the most conclusive finding appears to be that the findings are inconclusive. However, some researchers have reported positive results for sensitivity training as it relates to the teacher-learner process (Bowers and Soar, 1961; Grossman and Clark, 1967; Kraft, 1967; Lee, 1967; Mann and Borgatta, 1959; Miles, 1960; Webb, 1967). Caution is advocated in evaluating the findings of group research because of the difficulties inherent in researching outcomes of group process (Campbell, 1968).

The teacher is the focal point in this process. The vehicle of sensitivity training concerns itself with the vehicle of the "person-professional" for the learner in the classroom. It is imperative that the teacher understand the purposes of sensitivity training as well as its potential for use in the classroom.

The teacher needs to be aware of the purposes, must understand the relationship to the classroom learning situation, and must be given the necessary skill to be able to translate the outcomes of the training laboratory to classroom behaviors. Thus, the teacher needs to be *versed in* sensitivity training as well as be a participant. The mere "doing" of sensitivity training by the teacher must necessarily involve a "knowing about the doing" on the part of the teacher.

A more specific conceptualization of the

relationship of sensitivity training to the teacher-learner process is needed. Sensitivity training is concerned with relationship variables and behaviors. The theoretical concepts developed by Freud (1959), Lewin (1946), Pascal (1959), and Swensen (1968) have meaning for sensitivity training. Their theories suggest or imply that effective teaching is a function of stresses and supports, good and bad behaviors, personality variables, and environment. In these theories, stress is described as being those external forces which negatively affect the learning process, and support is described as being those external forces which positively affect the learning process (size, facilities, resources, financial support, other-attitudes, etc.); good and bad behaviors include the communicative and interactive behaviors of the teacher and pupil in both dyadic and group contexts (atmosphere or climate, task and maintenance functions, participation, influence, decision making, feelings, communication skills, etc.); personality variables are considered to be the unique attributes of the "person-professional" and the "person-learner" that account for their individual impact on the learning process (physical characteristics, emotional characteristics, social characteristics, abilities, past experiences, etc.);

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Effective Learning = f

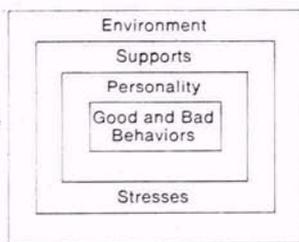


Figure 1. Factors in Effective Teaching

and environment represents not only the sum of the aforementioned but also the interactive effects. A formulation of the foregoing could be represented as in Figure 1.

Concern with Learning

An underlying assumption is that all of the factors are important to the learning process and that all of the dimensions of the formulation model have relevance for both the teacher and the learner. The formulation model is intended to be an aid in guiding the use of the sensitivity training approach to the learning process. It is the position of this paper that sensitivity training has appropriateness for the "good and bad behaviors" dimension of the model. Change in the "stresses and supports" and the "personality variables" can be more effectively and appropriately accounted for by approaches other than sensitivity training. The "environment" factor is outside of the purview of sensitivity training because of the inherent limitations of the vehicle. It is probably at those times when sensitivity training has been inappropriately used in these latter areas that the controversial value of the vehicle has been evoked.

Sensitivity training should be concerned with the process of the learning. It is concerned also with the effective communication within the classroom group. Sensitivity training seeks to add further meaning to the social influences operating in the group. It has for its aim and objective the acquisition of increased skills related to interpersonal be-

haviors and relationships. It concerns itself with the atmosphere in which the learning is happening. It has meaning for the leadership and membership characteristics of the learning group. In short, sensitivity training is directed at the subtle complexities of the teacher and the learner being in a relationship to enhance the learner's more effective learning.

It is important that the teacher be afforded the opportunity to become more expert in the learning process for the learner's sake. Who in education has not listened to the student describe the teacher who "really knows his stuff, but can't get it across" or the teacher who "is a really nice guy, but you don't learn anything from him"? It is the facilitation and enhancement of the interactive process of the several persons and the content in the learning setting that are appropriately the concern of sensitivity training. Two-dimensionally, we can divide the learning situation into content and process. For sensitivity training to be effective, it needs to be directed at a third dimension, the interaction of the content and the process.

To illustrate, sensitivity training would include the following specific techniques:

Laboratory settings for the study of group process

Laboratory training in communication

Seminars in group theory and research

Ongoing supervision and consultation

Feedback and listening exercises

Simulation techniques in the modeling of behaviors

Role-playing techniques

Case-study approaches

Study of real-life situations using video

"Share-ins" where the teachers would have an opportunity to talk about individual concerns and be listened to as well as be able to receive assistance through the resources of the several other "person-professionals" present.

The ultimate goal of sensitivity training is not the development of more effective teachers, but rather the development of better learners. There is no doubt that the mere

physical presence of the teacher in the classroom has an impact on the learner. It must make some positive difference in the life of

the student that the teacher is there. Sensitivity training as a vehicle has potential for contributing to this difference.

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