

# Educating the Educator

R. V. Peavy  
university of victoria

L'auteur s'attache à décrire la personnalité de l'enseignant et les modifications que l'on peut y apporter afin d'améliorer le processus de l'apprentissage. Après avoir discuté de l'enseignement universitaire, de la formation des enseignants, du développement de la personnalité et de l'apprentissage des adultes, l'auteur pose six hypothèses pour appuyer le *processus d'éducation de la personnalité* qu'il nous propose.

Il nous décrit par la suite six sources possibles auxquelles la personnalité peut puiser pour se développer et tente de nous en démontrer la valeur. L'auteur y souligne l'importance de la contribution individuelle dans le processus de découverte, de développement et d'expression du potentiel de la personnalité. Il y indique finalement quelques voies à suivre si l'on veut faire du progrès dans ce domaine.

"Our whole educational problem suffers from a one-sided approach to the child who is to be educated, and from an equally one-sided lack of emphasis on the uneducatedness of the educator" (1, p. 169). With these words Carl Jung pointed directly to the most potent single factor in teaching/learning relationships — the personality of the teacher. By "uneducatedness" Jung was referring to the almost total lack of attention to the teacher's adult personality. He was convinced that "personality" is not an ideal of childhood and adolescence, but is a task which awaits adulthood. And even then the development of personality is possible only through continuous, careful education designed specifically for that purpose.

To this pivotal insight, we can add the observation of Martin Heidegger (2) that the teacher as a person will surpass his students in one fundamental way only — that he will be more teachable than they are, that he will have *learned how to learn*. Further, he believed that this profound accomplishment requires a highly developed openness to thinking, to feeling, to the world — to "being" itself. Surely, this is no task for the youngster.

We are only now beginning to see these insights take hold in various evolving developments aimed at the education of the adult personality. Within conventional academic circles N. F. Maier (3) has urged that university education recognize that university students are adults; that development and change of actual behaviors is required; that adults can learn to learn; that adults can learn creative, relating, communicating behaviors; and that discussion and participation are improvements over lessons and lectures. Another distinguished commentator on university teaching,

William McKeachie, has emphasized that university students are adults, that adult behavior is learned, that changing adult behavior (changing personality) requires participative methods and active practice. McKeachie goes so far as to say that the real problem in educating adults is “How do we (professors) build a different pattern of relationships with our students?” (4, p. 233). In his opinion, this is not so much a matter of university teachers being unwilling to adopt more appropriate relationships with their own students, but that they simply *do not know how*. If this is so, we are right back at the “uneducatedness of the educator.”

In the field of teacher education, Flanders (5) has pointed out the necessity of focussing on the actual behaviors of the teacher or the teacher-to-be in order to bring about self-development. He argues for high-density change environments which will bring about direct changes in the person of the teacher — especially in the interactive and communicative behaviors of the individual. He suggests that the presently available methods — T-groups, microteaching, interaction analysis, and simulated skill training — can be combined to produce an intensive developmental experience and training for prospective *and* practicing teachers. Along similar lines, Rogers (6) has written that when a teacher develops a genuine openness to experience, both inwardly and outwardly, and develops facilitative relating and communicating skills, educative relationships are not simply modified and improved, they are revolutionized. Moreover, the skills to which Rogers refers actually are dimensions of personality, and can be constructively developed by willing adults.

Still within the academic realm, one of the most carefully conceptualized and executed attempts to provide a learning design for the development of personality through group interaction is that of Bales (7) and his associates at Harvard University. Over a 20-year period they have evolved an academic self-analytic group method for the understanding and development of the individual person. Through this laboratory approach, each person studies and develops his own personality, studies the process of the group, and studies the personality of other members of the group. Through participative learning in the laboratory method the adult learner not only acquires knowledge of human behavior and personality in general, but is able to systematically understand, modify, and develop his own interactive behaviors.

Combs and associates (8, 9) have outlined an extensive program of professional education for teachers based on the premises that:

- a) each person is his own method;
- b) each person's behavior is determined largely by his perceptions of himself and others; and
- c) the effective teacher is one who possesses a well-developed sense of self together with a wide repertory of communicating and relating skills (which can be learned).

In their view, the *self* of the teacher is of great significance. The self of the teacher is made up of perceptions, values, and attitudes expressed through communication and relationships — all of which can be changed and developed through deliberate, participative education.

Outside the circle of formal schooling, revolutionary and far-reaching developments are occurring in the domain of adult personality development. In modern industry, for example, the mark of informed management is recognition of the significance of the human element (personality) in business. There is an increasing realization that few industries have gone bankrupt as a result of encouraging the personal development of employees. Successful business management places value on flexibility and open-mindedness as well as on the skills of communication and the ability to form constructive relationships.

The personal growth movement has changed its status of glamorous fad (a decade ago) to a world-wide development in personality education. From the laboratory design of the T-group and the intensive experience of the encounter group a seemingly endless array of exercises, techniques, and programs for personality development have evolved. Personal growth centres have sprung up all over the world, and various descriptions of this phenomenon are now available (10, 11, 12). Within formal education, personal growth programs are finding cautious acceptance (13, 14, 15).

A critical question is — how should we conceptualize personality within the context of adult learning? Portmann (16) has written that the “openness of humans in experiencing the world cannot possibly be overestimated . . . [each person] is marked by the most potent of all special characteristics: openness to the world.” Each individual is a centre. *Within* that centre is openness to the inner world of experience. *From* that centre the person perceives and takes action toward his world, thus creating himself. In simple terms, what a person(ality) *is* is a coherence of inward experiencing and outward activity. How one thinks, feels, and imagines combines with relating, communicating, and interacting skills to constitute person(ality). Efforts to educate the adult personality, then, require attention to both (1) the inner experiencing processes, and (2) the outward behaviors — especially communicating and relating skills.

Both the inward and the outward facets of the person are mediated through body. How the person conveys himself through his body has been largely overlooked in education. Yet, the core of the self is the body (17) and the individual's power to *embody* his values is a much more telling feat than his ability to verbalize about them. We know ourselves primarily through the process of living experience rather than through goal attainments or measured outcomes.

We may conceptualize personality as a cohering process of inward experiencing and outward activity. Similarly, the education of personality may also be conceptualized as process. Personality education as process

rests on many premises, some of which are now clear, some tentative, and others to be formulated at some future time. The following 10 descriptive assumptions undergird a proposed *personality education process*:

1. The process has three phases: *discovery*, *development*, and *expression*. These three phases are not always distinct — in fact they may be simultaneous, or at least overlapping. For example, an individual may discover his own heretofore unknown potential for intensive listening. Through educational exercises this capacity can be developed. What remains is the expression and use of intensive listening in practical human activities such as teaching, therapy, family relationships, or friendship.
2. The process is *deepening* and *circular*. For example, when a person discovers and develops concentration, this development leads to further discoveries of concentration power which, through development, lead to yet deeper discoveries, and so on. Personality development is not so much a goal or an accomplishment as it is a deepening, circular process.
3. The process is *centring*. Education of the personality begins from within and aims at a centred presence in which experience and behavior cohere. Concrete inner experiencing and the actual behaviors of the individual are building blocks of the learning process.
4. The process of personality growth can be further described as *becoming*, *actualizing*, *transmuting*, *transcending*, and *growing*. These terms emphasize process characteristics rather than static results or achievements.
5. The process is one which *values* or *prizes* the particular person for what he is and can become. The individual is conceived as a meaning-creating being and as embodying meaning and values through his bodily acts.
6. The process is *awakening*. By making choices, taking responsibility, the individual transcends limits while growing towards an awakened, extended state of being. This process reveals the deep serious quality of human life which, once recognized, can be fully experienced and expressed. *Awakeness* is a mode of existence which is sharply distinguished from everyday, mundane living. It is a state of being which lends, in depth, to greater awareness and recognition of the full range of human experience — perceptual, emotional, intellectual, and imaginative dimensions which tend to lie dormant in mundane existence.
7. The process is *concrete* rather than abstract, *experienced* rather than measured.
8. The process is *individuating* and requires an active, participative, idiographic approach which recognizes the particularness of each emerging person. The educational method is, in a sense, new with each person.
9. The process is *integrating*. By discovering gaps and fragments in the person and by closing these through the development of potentials, and ever-greater unity, wholeness, and richness of personality can be formed.
10. The process is carried forward through *communication* — especially dialogical, interpersonal communication. It is through communication that individuals bind together in co-existence and gear into their physical

and social worlds. Faulty communication is a primary source of conflict and breakdown of harmonious personal and social co-existence.

There are at least six resources of the person out of which a more effective and mature self can be developed. There are many opinions on just which aspects of personality can be developed — and differing perspectives on whether or not personality *should* be changed. Certainly, no person should be forced into a program of personal development against his will. Each person should be free to reject any educational method which, for whatever reason, is unacceptable to him. My own experience in personal-growth work has indicated that once individuals realize that there are genuine possibilities for change and growth, and once they have developed trust in their teacher and in the methods he employs, there is no lack of motivation to change. Within each human there is a hunger, usually suppressed, to become more of that which one is capable of becoming. Once the possibility for growth is opened, most adults display a resolute courage to move forward.

In outlining the six potential sources for personality development, I will present those which have proved valuable in my own work. They also have direct relevance in the daily work of the classroom teacher, and are personal resources which, if developed and expressed, enhance the person of the teacher.

1. *Sensory contact and awareness.* Through the use of specific exercises and techniques, an individual's level of sensory awareness (hearing, seeing, touching, smelling, kinesthesia) can be increased and made more acute. Sensory awareness is the basis for an integrated sense of bodily self, including posture, gesture, and movement. Sensory and body awareness are basic to non-verbal communication.
2. *Concentration.* The capacity for increased concentration begins with sensory contact and is influential in virtually all other learning. Through concentration, the energies of the person are focussed without distraction upon some object, event, idea, or activity. Through concentration, a person is centred into an attending, absorbing "whole."
3. *Feeling, mood, emotion.* Although they overlap, feeling, mood, and emotion are differentiable, so that the place of each can be understood in the development of mature personality. Feeling states, particularly, have profound significance in interpersonal relations, in the communication of meaning, and in imaginative production. It is now recognized that mood is an essential part of the general process of understanding. Educational techniques exist for the integration and development of feeling, mood, and emotion within the context of adult personality.
4. *Imagination.* Imagination is interwoven with all aspects of daily living. There are great differences in the imaginative expressions of different individuals although not necessarily great differences in potential. The ability to imagine not only results in creative expression, but also aids in the solution of conflict, adds to the effectiveness of human relationships,

and contributes to a sense of personal worth, well-being, and enriched communication.

5. *Thinking*. Fundamental to virtually all learning is the ability to think and conceptualize. While thinking is the underlying process in almost all school activities, little or no attention is given to teaching thinking itself. There are three distinct types of thinking: logical, divergent, and existential. Each is important in living, each can be learned, and most persons have a far greater potential for thinking than is realized.

6. *Communication and relating skills*. Most human activity requires communication and occurs in a network of relationships. Virtually all human communication is rooted in listening. Listening is interwoven with sensory and body awareness, with concentration, with feeling and mood, with imagination and thinking. From a centre of listening, the individual relates outward in every extension of his being. An impressive array of educational exercises now exist for the development of relating and communicating skills.

If we undertake to develop the human potentials implied in the six categories above, just how shall we proceed? To begin with, I suggest that we cannot discover, develop, and express personality potentials merely by reading about them, nor by being told about them. What is required is an experiential process through which the individual participates in his own growth. Lectures and demonstrations alone will not suffice. Active, participative methods of learning are needed, which recognize variation in individual learning rates and goals. While certain learning experiences can have common benefit to many, what is called for above all else is a developmental experience which is unique for each person. Person(ality) is variable and unrepeatable!

One of the most comprehensive outlines for the education of personality is that presented by the Italian therapist and educator, Roberto Assagioli (18). His approach, known as "psychosynthesis," has as its central aim the discovery, activation, harmonization, and integration of all the qualities and functions of the individual into one functioning whole. Psychosynthesis principles and exercises are applicable to therapy, to the prevention of personal breakdown, and to the continuing education of the adult person(ality). Assagioli is to be especially credited with discerning that adult extraverts are inclined toward the development of specialized efficiency, while adult introverts are drawn to the development of inner spiritual perfection and personal wholeness; and for pointing out that any program of adult personality education must take these major differences into account so that a suitable education for each person can be provided.

Sometimes I feel startled, as though awakened in the middle of a dream by a question searing my consciousness, "What on earth is holding us back?" Surely we must know that knowledge — now doubling in each decade — by itself is not sufficient, that what we need in this world are not simply recollectors stuffed with knowledge but persons so developed that

they can discover knowledge and values, transmit meaning, and create lives that have personal and social significance — people who can imagine, think, relate, communicate, and feel, with an intensified awareness of themselves as individuals, of others as brothers, and of the social and physical world we live in. The therapy for the good society remains today, as in Plato's time, the deeply developed, communicating adult whose coherence of self is so vivid that he will not consent to his own betrayal. One means for working toward this end is continuous education of the adult person(ality).

To take steps in this direction would be neither without precedent nor without company. I have already mentioned the pioneering work of Combs and Flanders in the mainstream of professional education and the careful scientific work of Bales and Maier in their studies of how personality is learned and how adults communicate and solve conceptual and relational problems. Allen Tough (19) of the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education has reported an extensive inquiry into the adult's learning projects, indicating numerous innovations which are needed in order to recognize the adult as learner and as person in the educational process. To this can be added the considerable amount of writing and research which has been stimulated through the National Training Laboratories on how adults learn and change their personalities (20). A steady stream of publications recognizing the interactive importance of affective and cognitive facets of the teacher's personality and which stress the importance of the teacher's personal growth is now appearing within education, and a rich and multi-dimensional literature is developing in connection with the personal-growth movement outside of formal education. From these various sources any educational group choosing to do so can build a program or initiate training for the deliberate and continuing development of the personality of the teacher.

I suggest that we in education should turn our attention *directly* to the problem of the "uneducatedness" of the educator. We must be concerned both with our own continuing personal development and the personality development of our students. We can hardly escape the conclusion that we have an effect on our own students, not only through the knowledge which we transmit to them, but even more through our communications and relationships with them. Few among us wish otherwise than that our students-become-teachers will have healthy, wise, and informative effects upon their own pupils. And how else might we better ensure such effects than by becoming highly "evolved" models ourselves — with the characteristic of being more teachable than our own students are?

## REFERENCES

1. Jung, C. *The development of personality*. (Trans.) London: Routledge, Kegan Paul, 1964.
2. Heidegger, M. *What is called thinking?* (Trans.) New York: Harpers, 1968.

3. Maier, N. Innovation in education. *American Psychologist*, 1971, 26, 722-725.
4. McKeachie, W. *Teaching tips*. 6th ed. Lexington, Mass.: D. C. Heath, 1969.
5. Flanders, N. *Analyzing teaching behavior*. Menlo Park, Calif.: Addison-Wesley, 1970.
6. Rogers, C. *Freedom to learn*. Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill, 1969.
7. Bales, R. *Personality and interpersonal behavior*. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1970.
8. Combs, A. *The professional education of teachers*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1965.
9. Combs, A., with Soper, D. W.; Gooding, C. T.; Benton, J. A., Jr.; Dickman, J. F.; & Usher, R. H. *Florida studies in the helping professions*. University of Florida Monographs. Social Sciences, No. 37. Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1969.
10. Gustaitis, R. *Turning on*. New York: Macmillan Co., 1969.
11. Howard, J. *Please touch*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1970.
12. Schutz, Wm. *Here comes everybody*. New York: Harpers, 1971.
13. Borton, T. *Reach, touch and teach*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1970.
14. Brown, G. *Human teaching for human learning: Confluent education*. New York: Viking Press, 1971.
15. Silberman, C. *Crisis in the classroom*. New York: Random House, 1970.
16. Portmann, A. The special problem of man in the real of the living. *Commentary*, November 1965.
17. Morris, C. *The open self*. New York: Harpers, 1948.
18. Assagioli, R. *Psychosynthesis*. New York: The Viking Press, 1965.
19. Tough, A. *The adult's learning projects*. Toronto: Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, 1971.
20. Golembiewski, R., & Blumberg, A. (eds.). *Sensitivity training and the laboratory approach*. Itasca, Ill.: F. E. Peacock Publishers, 1970.