DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 024 630 SP 001 868

By- Johnson, John L.; Seagull, Arthur A.
Form and Function in the Affective Training of Teachers.
Pub Date Nov 68
Note- 5p.
Journal Cit- Phi Delta Kappan; v50 n3 p166-70 Nov 1968
EDRS Price MF-$0.25 HC Not Available from EDRS.
Descriptors- Behavior Change, Education Majors, Professional Education, *Self Actualization, *Teacher Attitudes, Teacher Behavior, *Teacher Education, *Teacher Educators, *Teaching Methods, Teaching Styles

Presently a contradiction exists between form and function in teacher education. Although creativity and self-awareness are voiced as goals for teachers and their students, teachers are all too often educated by means of lectures, a form which holds quiet attentiveness rather than intellectual aggression a chief value. In their own classes, education professors fail to utilize the techniques they advocate: team teaching, programed texts, and group process. Since teachers tend to teach in the form in which they were taught, a dichotomy between actions and words is perpetuated. Consultations with specially trained teachers of disturbed children revealed that teachers found it difficult to make explicit demands on colleagues or children, were unaware of their value as models, feared to generalize from past experience, saw no relationship between rules governing the behavior of normal children and that of disturbing children, and were fearful of negative criticism. If teachers are to be well-integrated individuals able to foster self-actualization in children, the form of teacher education must be amended to follow its function. Teacher education must encourage creativity and experimentation and provide a model for flexible, dynamic, innovative action so that mistakes may be viewed as opportunities for growth and development. (SG)

Form and Function in the Affective Training of Teachers

• JOHN L. JOHNSON AND ARTHUR A. SEAGULL

To Frank Lloyd Wright we owe the concept that "form must follow function." He meant that the shape of an object ought to be dictated by the function it is to perform—as the wheel is round, as a utilitarian office building in a crowded downtown district is tall and without unnecessary adornment. Human relations can also be analyzed from this frame of reference. For example, the teacher who *screams* "No shouting in this room!" is violating a form-function concept. Professional training programs are being scrutinized from this standpoint, too, such as Rogers'[1] critique of clinical psychology training, and Mariner's[2] critique of psychiatric preparation. Both these studies were critical of the effect of the contradiction between the form of the programs (the basic assumptions, as Rogers phrases it) and its actual functioning in producing professionals with explicit values.

This essay will examine teacher education in terms of form and function, where we believe a large discrepancy exists. This discrepancy has an adverse effect on teachers and, ultimately, their students.

We will first outline the goals of teacher education as we see them, and then discuss teacher attitudes and behaviors which we feel have arisen from the form of traditional teacher education and the lack of specific training in emotional skills. Finally, we will suggest some radical changes in the form of teacher education to help teachers relate to children more congruently with our professed educational ideas.

Our data and impressions were obtained during consultation with teachers about specific problems of management and curriculum for disturbed youngsters in the public schools.[3] Our scope is limited to a discussion of the effect of contradictions between form and function in teacher education. Unfortunately, the analysis would seem to apply all too readily to our educational system from kindergarten to graduate school. We feel that the issues and assumptions discussed here imply the need for a revolution in our thinking about the whole of our educative process.

Goals of Teacher Education

Teachers transmit information and inculcate values. One of these values is emotional maturity, and it is to this affective teaching that the present article is addressed.

Teachers should teach children to develop emotional maturity, but in order to do this they must have a similar characteristic themselves. One cannot describe color if blind from birth. But what constitutes "emotional maturity"? We propose that a child (or any person) must learn the following emotional and behavioral "skills" in order to be an effective individual:

1. Awareness of self.
2. Awareness of the process of relating to people and the environment.
3. Taking the interpersonal risks involved in being creative, critical, and independent.
4. Learning to be flexible.
5. Learning to communicate one's needs and desires unambiguously rather than engaging in maladaptive or defensive behavior.
6. Commitment to and involvement in the process of learning.
7. Learning to solve problems through discussion, so structured that solving the issue is primary and evaluation of the discussants minimal.

If we agree that the above is a description of some of the skills a mentally healthy, reasonably efficient person must have, then this implies a revolution in the role of the schools in developing good citizens. *Mental health procedures and skills must be taught in the schools, just as reading and writing are.* And the teachers who teach these skills must have an educational background in which these "skills" are valued and taught.*

MR. JOHNSON (1205, Syracuse University Chapter) is assistant professor of special education at Syracuse University. MR. SEAGULL is assistant professor of psychology at Michigan State University. *The authors wish to thank Joel Aronoff, Paul Bakan, Jeanette Haviland, and Margaret MacLeod DiLoreto for comments on early drafts of this paper.*

*This belief is not universally accepted, of course. There are those who feel that only the home should teach values; schools transmit information. However, *not* teaching values itself transmits a value. Some will question whether mental health skills can be *taught*. We feel they can be, and indeed have found that the response of teachers to learning these skills has been overwhelmingly positive. Unfortunately, we have not yet published on the subject; there is a book in the works in which we hope to describe how it can be done.

The Role Played by 'Form'

University education is primarily "lecture education." What is sometimes not appreciated is that this *form of education teaches certain attitudes*, regardless of content. First and foremost, it teaches the student not to be intellectually aggressive. (Obviously this generalization does not apply to all teachers, some of whom use the lecture method and inspire and change [educate] students.) However, what we are doing here is viewing what the lecture method teaches as a *form*, divorced from any specific content or teacher. Note what it demands, in general, of the student. It emphasizes quietness in the classroom, since the lecture method rewards passive, quiet imbibing of knowledge. Testing for retention of the lecture emphasizes passive regurgitation of information and acquiescence to authority, which fosters loss of selfhood and fear of risk taking. We submit that the values inculcated by this form of instruction are antithetical to those needed to teach people to cope with the complex modern world; for to teach emotional maturity is to teach living with affect, both positive and negative. To the degree that the lecture method inculcates passivity and lack of affect, it misprepares the students for their functional role and diminishes the "natural behavior of learning," as shown below:

Lecture Content Preaches

1. Creativity in teaching independence in functioning; activity (learning by doing).
2. Teach the whole child; increase self-awareness; behavior counts.
3. Individualize teaching; team teaching, remedial education; start where child is.

Lecture Form Teaches

1. Listen and take notes; learn by watching; depend on authorities; give professor what he wants.
2. Students are only part adult; are other-directed; preaching counts.
3. Large classes; instructor and graduate assistants; normal curve and state codes; uniformity of content and grading criteria.

Note from these examples how passivity seems to be the core of educational practices. Yet real learning is active. At its best, and when it is most enjoyable, it is an aggressive grappling with and integrating of concepts. Thus even children with low impulse control must have an opportunity to express "intellectual aggression" meaningfully within the classroom. If the teacher wants real learning, he must be comfortable with an active, noisy, class. But, if his role is to please the principal without expression of selfhood or risk taking, as he has learned so well to do *vis-a-vis* the professor in lectures, then "quiet classroom" becomes the teacher's goal. How can teachers effectively transmit the value of aggressive learning to students when it has no survival value in their own training, and may even be maladaptive?

The form of teacher education systematically trains teachers to accept a dichotomy between actions and words. The same dichotomy is reiterated in the actual attitude shown toward creative-democratic behavior in the classroom, where the more creative individuals (and the divergent thinkers) tend to be less liked by peers and teachers.

Unfortunately, examples of the form-function, action-words dichotomy are legion. One of the present authors (J.L.J.) observed a class of 250 students in "Elementary Education Methods" at their single two-hour *lecture* on individual differences. Students never met in groups small enough to enable individuals to react differently themselves. Other examples abound: "team teaching" taught by a single instructor; "programmed learning" taught from a regular textbook; "group process" taught by lectures from notes.

The tragedy is that potential teachers are aware of the contradiction. They solve the problem by becoming committed to "getting through school," through "defensive strategies of learning behavior that choke off their intellectual powers and make real learning all but impossible."[4] But even more tragic is learning that "playing the game" is the most rewarding educational outcome. Thus, the *form* of our teacher training teaches teachers to flee from conflict as the preferred method of problem solving, and to deny affect. They learn to want what *others* want and accept external criteria to define their own life goals and values as teachers. (See Johnson.[5])

Ultimately, these undesired attitudes are transmitted to children—for teachers who rejected a questioning attitude in their own education cannot support such behavior in their own classrooms. Thus the torch is fumbled from generation to generation.

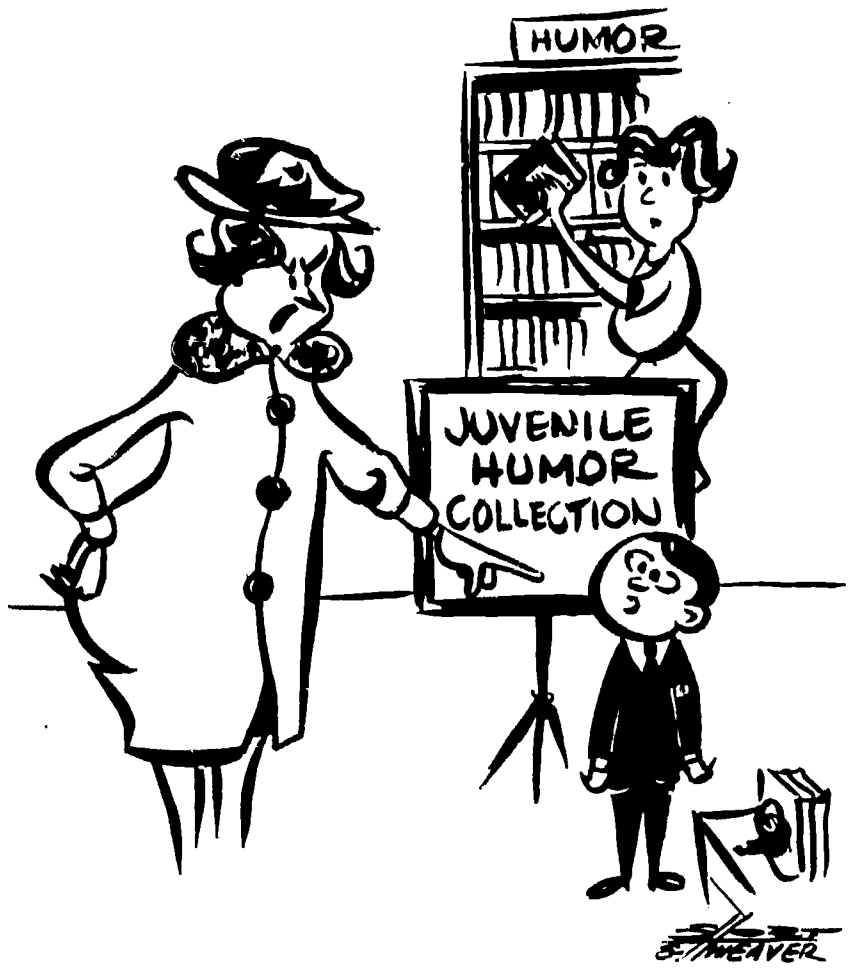
Observation of Teacher Deficiencies

During our consultations with specially trained teachers of disturbed children, we observed the following: (For a description of the group of children and teachers, see Seagull and Johnson, "Second Stage Intervention. . . ."[6])

1. The teachers found it difficult to make explicit demands on colleagues or children. Their hesitation was closely linked to an inability to take interpersonal risks ("Will they like me if I demand something?"), including a reluctance to establish firm and effective limits within the abilities of the individual children. (This was an interpersonal risk, since the teacher might demand limits and fail.)

There was communication between teachers and students, but much of it was nonverbal and ambiguous. For example, there developed what we grew to call "mutual nonaggression pacts" where, by tacit agreement, neither party to the treaty caused more than a specific amount of trouble. Thus a disturbing, hyperactive child who found arithmetic difficult regularly "arranged" to be sent into the hall for misbehaving while that subject was taught. There he could remain calm for long periods if "forgotten."

2. Teachers were unaware of their value as models. For example, a teacher allowed the school custodian to interrupt her reading lesson



"You're going to be happy or I'll break your neck!"

by moving in 30 chairs for a group of unannounced visitors. What did the watching children learn about selfhood and legitimate self-assertion when the teacher was unable to remonstrate? She need not have dealt with the janitor, who after all was merely a messenger. But she felt she was unable to call the principal or otherwise correct the situation either immediately or later. Her restraint and flexibility, praiseworthy as they are, taught the children "timidity in the face of authority," real or imagined. The university cannot disavow interest in the teacher's personal development if it is interested in educating mature, strong children.

3. The teachers feared to generalize from past experience; each temper outburst or learning problem was considered unique. It was only "the expert" who could help, so that each incident required new direction and technique:

> The student's failure to apply what has been previously learned in one situation to a dissimilar one which exemplifies the same principle or even to a similar situation need not reflect stupidity, psychopathology, or those normal regressions we anticipate in students in certain phases of their training. Failure may simply mean that the student has not been given an adequate opportunity for educational working-through. Giving a student such opportunity with patience and forbearance on our part rather than activity may lead to mastery.[7]

4. The teachers saw no relationship between the rules that govern the behavior of normal children and that of disturbing children. The teachers tended to act as if "problem children" were qualitatively different, so that when a "disturbed youngster" rifled the lunch of the teacher and ate all her cookies, she accepted this behavior because the child needed "oral gratification."

These conditions existed partly as a result of the university's unnatural separation of curriculum areas—separate courses on "human behavior"; "the exceptional child"; "the emotionally disturbed child." The regularities of behavior, the interaction of development and learning, and the underlying realities of teaching were functionally ignored and the difficulties of teaching "people with problems" were amplified.[8]

5. Teachers were fearful of negative criticism whenever we discussed their own or their children's needs. They were uncomfortable until they learned that such discussions could be a springboard for personal or professional growth, without implying a value judgment about them. (For a teacher's reaction to this consultation process, see Mary Ellen Knapp Williams, 1967.[9]) The teachers were defensive at initial meetings. (Their favorite opening was, "Who's on the firing line today?") They brought up problems only when catastrophe threatened or had already struck, and resisted teaching these discussion methods to the children because they had never experienced such teaching themselves.

However, we should emphasize at this point that the rapidity of self-growth and the utilization of consultative processes in these same areas showed that the staff recognized the value of such experiences, and indeed learned to utilize them very quickly. It was not the lack of sophistication among the teachers which created the problem, but simply their lack of reality-oriented education.

Suggestions for Improvement

1. The form of teacher education has a profound though generally unplanned influence on the values of prospective teachers. Since this is so, a more conscious concern with the teacher's personal growth and value system is needed to insure that the influence is in the desired direction, i.e., more congruent with our professed ideals of democracy and independence. Students must learn to deal with emotions—their own first, and then those of others, disturbed and normal.

2. Training must encourage creativity and experimentation, which implies a toleration of false starts and mistakes. (A step in this direction is the elimination of grades from practice teaching experience in some universities.) More exten-

sive use should be made of assigning university professors to public schools so that students learn from recent experiences rather than that of "many years ago."

3. Teacher education must emphasize that both the technical and emotional *processes* of teaching and learning are as important as the course *content*. The process of having a professor's frank discussion of his own successes and failures in the classroom teaches volumes about professional use of case material and nonevaluative discussion. And would not *exposure* in their own training to micro-teaching, classes conducted by the inquiry method, and programmed textbooks teach meaningfully about newer technical methods?

4. Regular, nonevaluative, nonjudgmental small-group discussions about the basic issues of life that affect teaching would be especially helpful.

For example, what is the role of humor and personal style in teaching? We found that teaching children was considered "deadly serious business." When the teachers realized at our meetings that they were allowed to teach in a personal style, innovations appeared in the classroom, such as a pupil-run "psychiatric booth" as in the *Peanuts* comic strip. The non-serious context of this booth allowed disturbed children to speak seriously to each other about their problems and fears.

Another unanswered problem which could well be aired in group meetings is that teachers of teachers are usually males while teachers of children are usually females. The whole issue of the feelings of the female student toward a male professor is too often ignored or shunned. Such a reaction actually teaches the prospective teacher a disastrous head-in-the-sands approach to crucial interpersonal relationships. The teacher who models her own teaching after what she experiences in the university classroom denies the children a chance to understand themselves and their growing needs. Teachers who learn to fear their feelings teach the negative value that feelings should not be acknowledged, discussed, or mastered.

Another problem which would bear extended exploration is that for many individuals teaching is a means of upward mobility. Defensiveness about their social class origins may make teachers less sympathetic and more critical toward the culture of the working-class child.

5. Teachers must learn how to learn. Enjoyment of learning is crucial in real education. The applicability of programs of inquiry training such as suggested by Suchman[10] would seem to be very much needed in the current teacher education program.* What he notes about pupil education could as well apply to teacher education:

> The pupil must become more active and aggressive in his learning role. Direction of the concept type of formation process should be his own, and he should come to regard his environment (including the teacher) as a potential source of information which can be obtained through his own active inquiry. The teacher must abandon his traditionally directive mode and structure an environment that is responsible to the child's quest for information.[11]

And, without his own training as a model, only the rare teacher can achieve such a learning environment in his own classroom.

6. Teachers must be taught the reality of classroom management through observing, teaching, and

*It may be that enjoyment will become a more important factor than retention of knowledge, for we may be on the brink of a revolution in the concept of what information teachers, or anyone else, needs to know. With the use of computers and information retrieval systems, we can, with proper programming, give digests to teachers in a few moments on any conceivable topic they might need for their classrooms. One such example is the Toronto Board of Education, which will supply within 48 hours a photocopy of any article a principal or teacher requests. Conceivably, with the use of typewriter-size consoles presently available, a teacher could type out the subject she needed to learn about and have a central computer, perhaps in a different state, print out all the information she would need, plus ideas for teaching, etc.

"Computerized . . . Analyzed . . . Homogenized . . . Systematized . . . Standardized . . ."

analyzing classroom behavior in a variety of settings early in their training. This experience ought to be more directly supervised by the university rather than by distant, randomly assorted cooperating teachers.

7. Teachers should be taught to view classroom disturbance as a learning opportunity. For example, if one child's tantrum disrupts the other children, why not teach the children to cope with being distracted?

8. Supervision should become a process in which the form of interaction is used to teach about the problem under discussion. For example, a teacher who could not understand how anger interfered with a child's learning could recognize this only after she became aware of her own anger at the consultant. To this end, education might look to social work and clinical psychology for learning how to differentiate supervision from technical consultation and evaluation. The supervision should be "an enabling process rather than [a process characterized by] formal, authoritative direction."[12]

9. We are not proposing that teacher education stress only affect and process. Teachers must, for instance, become much more sophisticated in substantive areas, such as learning theory and its application to the classroom.[13] Teachers should be taught about small-group interaction, motivation, and methods of experimentation geared to *teacher solution* of classroom problems. Further, teachers should be taught that they have something to contribute to consultants and colleagues.

Implications and Conclusions

The problem of educating teachers cannot be divorced from the larger issue of educating citizens for self-realization and democratic beliefs. But the question we raise is whether the teacher's education facilitates his growth and development as an individual.

Accepting the school's role of really teaching values implies that *understanding behavior and emotions must become part of every curriculum, just as reading and writing are.*

But do we really want authentic and well-integrated teachers and creative, autonomous children? How comfortable are we with students who are honest, who question, and who are not simply passive, dependent variables?

Interaction implies that we are willing to learn and change as we ask our students to do. If we decide that we really want teachers who are self-actualized and live according to our ideals, we must be certain that the form of our education is congruent with its function and content.

Are *we* really willing to practice what we preach?

---

[1]C. R. Rogers, "Graduate Education in Psychology: A Passionate Statement," *The Clinical Psychologist*, 1967, Vol. 20, pp. 55-62.

[2]A. S. Mariner, "A Critical Look at Professional Education in the Mental Health Field," *American Psychologist*, 1967, Vol. 22, pp. 271-81.

[3]Arthur A. Seagull and John L. Johnson, "Second Stage Intervention: Reality Based Consultation for Teachers of the Emotionally Disturbed," in *Intervention Approaches in Educating Emotionally Disturbed Children*, Peter Knoblock (ed.). Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1966.

[4]John Holt, "The Fourth R—Rat Race," *The New York Times Magazine*, May 1, 1966.

[5]John L. Johnson, "Classroom Behavior Styles Reported by Teachers of Emotionally Disturbed Children." (Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Michigan State University, 1965)

[6]Seagull and Johnson, *op. cit.*

[7]Bernard Bandler, "Ego-Centered Teaching," in *Ego-Centered Case Work: Problems and Perspectives*, by Howard Parad and Roger Miller. Northampton, Mass.: Smith College School of Social Work, 1963.

[8]Jack I. Bardon, "The Education of People with Problems—Expectations and Limits," *Welfare Report*, Vol. 14, pp. 92-97.

[9]Mary Ellen Knapp Williams, "Help for the Teachers of Disturbed Children in the Public Schools: The Use of Consultation for Problem Solving and Personal Growth," *Exceptional Children*, October, 1967.

[10]J. Richard Suchman, "Reading/Inquiry Training: Building Skills for Autonomous Discovery," *Merrill-Palmer Quarterly*, 1961, Vol. 7, pp. 147-71.

[11]*Ibid.*

[12]Arthur C. Abrahamson, *Group Methods in Supervision and Staff Development*. New York: Harper, 1959.

[13]C. A. Weber, "Do Teachers Understand Learning Theory?," PHI DELTA KAPPAN, 1965, Vol. 46, pp. 433-34. □