COOPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT or THE ART OF TEACHER MAINTENANCE

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Sources


• Selected other sources => see bibliography at the end of the presentation

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Goals and outcomes

• **Goal** => *to present CD as a form of effective, accessible, continuous, and structured, but personal and informal, teacher development*

• **Outcome** => *a refreshed sense of ourselves as teachers, enhanced self-reflection*
WHAT MATTERS MOST IS HOW YOU SEE YOURSELF.
Teaching/learning

- Teaching is about learning
- Challenge: theory vs. practice
- Teacher cognition – what teachers know, believe and think (Borg 2003)
- Teachers as learners
**Teacher training, education, development**

- **Training** = acquisition of skills and competencies necessary to conduct successful teaching (*Richards & Farreells 2005: 6*)

- **Education** = a set of schemata and procedures to cope with new problems (*Widdowson 1983:19*)

- **Teacher development** = teacher-initiated and teacher-sustained, autonomous, self-monitoring process (*Eldridge 2005: 6*)
Current, prevalent interpretation of PD => either “training” or “education”:

“visible professional development activities” (Johnson 2006: 243)

Daily teaching *modus operandi*:

practical considerations and issues

classroom experiences

problems, questions, doubts
“Teacher ways of knowing”

• Theory informing practice and vice versa => “praxis of teaching” (*Johnson* 2006: 243) => teacher knowledge

• Teacher knowledge => active, personal approach to continuous learning through “teachers’ informal social and professional networks” (*ibid.*), starting from and based on self-reflection as a valid, reliable and legitimate source of knowledge

• Teacher as a “transformative intellectual” (*ibid.*)
Teacher learning - complementary approach

Continuous teacher development built upon self-reflection, shared with colleagues within an informal professional setting, relevant to classroom practice; active, personal, autonomous, transformative and integrative

Cooperative Development (CD): a mixture of awareness-raising and disciplined discourse; a way of working together with one or more colleagues in order to develop as a person and teacher in your own terms.
Cooperative Development (1)

We learn by speaking => working to put our thoughts together so that someone else can understand them.

Cooperative Development focuses on the power of learning through articulation.
Think, hear, say

“How do I know what I think until I hear what I say?”
You never listen to me!

You never say anything.
Cooperative Development (2)

• Central idea => to set aside some time, on a regular basis, when we talk to a colleague, consciously changing the usual rules of engagement (discussion, argument, criticism — competitive development)

• A new set of norms for communicative interaction to encourage independent self-development:

One person **SPEAKS** – in order to develop => **SPEAKER**

The other person **UNDERSTANDS*** – in order to support that development => **UNDERSTANDER**

* It means more than just listening!
Cooperative Development (3)

• The Understander makes every effort to avoid a natural tendency to judge, and the Speaker knows that.

• The non-judgmental nature of the CD discourse is built on three underlying principles:

  *respect, empathy and sincerity*
Session framework

• The Speaker => freedom to express and explore thoughts on an area of teaching he/she chooses.

• The Understander => works to understand and reflect back the developing ideas to help the Speaker build self-awareness about the area and determine a plan of action, if necessary.
**Session format**

- Decide on the duration
- Decide on the roles
- Determine boundaries
The Speaker...

- Speaks
- Clarifies
- Explains
- Develops
- Sets goals
The Understander...

- **Attends** => listens attentively, without judgement
- **Reflects** => captures the essence of the Speaker’s thoughts by rephrasing them
- **Thematises/Challenges** => indicates possible connections with other topics/issues
- **Focuses** => summarises and invites the Speaker to concentrate on one area/course of action (goal)
Helpful questions/expressions

• You mean...?
• So, it seems you have a problem with...
• You think it is...?
• Do you have any thoughts about how to resolve this issue?
• Just a minute, let me see if I’ve got this right. ..
• OK, what I hear you saying is this: ..
• Let me be sure that I’m with you here. ..
• Can I just check something with you? ..
• So, if I’m understanding you properly, ..
• OK then, this is the message I’m getting. ..
• Right, so it looks like this: ..
The Art of Teacher Maintenance

• To what extent should one “maintain” one’s own teaching?

• Philosophy of life based on **motorcycle maintenance** / teaching and learning

• Learning about teaching through “training” or “self-reflection”?

• Quality and joy of teaching = combining “technology” with “zen”, or training with self-development


Edge, J. 2007e. Course design and evaluation. Unit 8. The Education of Language Teachers. MA TESOL Course Unit. University of Manchester.
Selected bibliography (b)


Thank you!
(Optional)

Selected CD Tasks: Interaction

• **Speaker:** Articulate briefly your position and be prepared to develop it in interaction with the Understander.

• **Understander:** Listen actively. Make the Speaker feel well listened to. Reflect the Speaker's ideas and feelings (*restate them*). Listen for opportunities to thematise and challenge (*indicate possible connections with other areas*).

• **Observer:** Offer feedback based on your notes taken during the exchange.
SELECTED CD TASKS: task A

• Individual preparation

Think of a personal anecdote from your own history as a teacher that allows you to complete one of these sentences:

• **There was one time in class when I felt truly...**

• **There was one time in class when I felt as though I...**
Complete the following sentences for yourself or see if you can add a similar sentence or two of your own.

1. As a teacher, the type of activity I most enjoy is...
2. As a teacher, the type of activity I least enjoy is...
3. One aspect of my teaching that I’m really pleased about is...
4. One thing I don't like about my teaching is...