

TEACHING AND TRANSFORMATION

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Abstract

Teachers are involved in the personal transformation of their students whether or not they are comfortable with the idea of “changing” their students. In this paper, the image of an onion is utilized in the discussion of a model of multilayered learning, noting that learning does not take place only at the surface layer of skills and behavior, but also at the deeper layers of perspectives, values and basic assumptions, with different kinds of teaching likely to impact at each level.

Introduction

We need sometimes to pause and reflect on our purposes as educators. What do we think we are doing as educators? What do we hope to do?

Perhaps we start with the notion that we know something worth knowing and aim to pass on this knowledge to our students so that they can have more power or pleasure in their lives. We may believe we possess certain skills that would be good for other people to possess, and we may set out to train our students in these. There may be certain attitudes and values that are important to us, and we may set out to encourage these attitudes and values in our students.

We may see our work in social and political terms. We may be convinced that a just and equitable society depends on the provision and

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maintenance of universal literacy. We may be concerned at the potential for oppression, exploitation, and fragmentation in a society where all do not have the same access to the means of communication or the skills of the workplace. We believe it is good for a society to have all its citizens literate or numerate or skilful or knowledgeable. So we teach our students not simply for their sakes as individuals, but for the sake of us all.

Perhaps we are very conscious of the beauty of language or the thrill of science and the pleasure that our own ability to read and write and calculate and analyze has brought us and brings us still, and we want to share this pleasure with others. On the other hand, our approach to teaching may be shaped by the satisfactions we have found in helping our students to find their own way. Perhaps we have found that it is not the attainment of knowledge that matters in the long run, but the emergence of the person and the opening up to the world that occasionally occurs that fills us with excitement and makes the task worth doing.

Perhaps we think about education the way politicians of all parties seem to think about it – that the only justification for any sort of education is its economic value. It is only worth doing if it makes or saves money, if it adds something to the gross national product. Perhaps we devote ourselves to education as a contribution to the economy! I fancy that this is actually the least likely of the scenarios listed here, but we must acknowledge that in the present political climate, it remains the official one.

Perhaps our purposes and practices as educators are not included in the ones I have listed here. However, whatever they are, I want to suggest some particular ways of thinking about them.

Imitation or Individuation

I suggest first of all that one useful way of looking at learning is to distinguish between learning as *imitation* and learning as *individuation*. On the one hand, we have a tendency to want to become like other people, to learn by copying them. At the same time, we want to be ourselves, to be individuals, to grow in our own way.

Though we do not usually put it this way, most of us educators are basically interested in making other people more like us. We have some

knowledge, some skills, some attitudes, some values, and we think it would be a good idea if our students had some of the same knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes. As educators we are often faced with students who are obviously ignorant in areas that we think are important, students who lack essential skills. Sometimes they have values and attitudes that hinder their attempts to overcome their difficulties. So we make it our task to change them, to make them a little more like us, for it is difficult to give them knowledge and skills we don't have ourselves, and we certainly are not interested in helping them develop values and attitudes that we don't approve of. On the other hand, when we have a student who already has knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes that we think are desirable, we don't try to change them, but rather confirm them in what they are.

Some teachers are perfectly happy with the idea of teaching people to be like them. Others find the idea uncomfortable. In either case, they can't help engaging in it. Even when we are committed to the notion of helping students to find their own ideas and attitudes instead of uncritically accepting ours, when we see ourselves as facilitators rather than instructors, we are still wanting them to share this particular skill (critical thinking) and value (the acknowledgment of people's right to be themselves) that are important to us. We are still, paradoxically, trying to make them a little more like us.

Most education is imitative like this. It's the way the earliest humans learned, before they developed sophisticated language.¹ It's the way culture reproduces itself, with everybody copying everybody. It's the way we learned as infants, and the habit sticks. As a matter of fact, what I am doing right now—inviting you to think about education the way I do, to share some of my information, some of my ideas, some of my approaches to the task—is suggesting that if you are not already thinking like this, you need to copy me in order to get it right.

¹ The evolutionary psychologist Merlin Donald labels the earliest phase of psychological evolution *mimetic*. Though we now have more complex ways of learning, imitation (which is not necessarily conscious) remains our default position. Donald argues that consciousness is not a strictly individual phenomenon, but that our consciousness is embedded in the collective consciousness of our cultural group.

However, that is only one aspect of what is going on here. There is another aspect to the teaching-learning interaction between you and me that is just as important.

While I am busy telling you things that I think are important, you are busy sorting and selecting what I tell you. Some of it you may accept as being obviously true; you know it already. Some of it you may put on hold; you need to reflect on it a bit more before you decide whether to accept it. Some of it you may immediately reject as rubbish. Some of it you may filter or distort, so that what you hear and accept is different from what I think I am saying. Any tendency you may have to become more like me is impeded, or at least strongly influenced, by your tendency to become more like yourself. Learning as *imitation* has to contend with learning as *individuation*.

I admit that *individuation* is an awkward and ugly word, but I can't find a better one to express what I mean. I need a word that means our tendency to become ourselves, rather than to copy something else. There are other words that express something of the same idea, e.g. *self-actualization*, *self-realization*, *self-emergence*, even *growth*, but they do not seem more satisfactory. Carl Rogers (1951, p. 487f) pointed out that this "actualizing tendency" has two distinct dynamics. The first is to protect or defend ourselves, to survive. The second is to enhance or improve ourselves, to grow. These are different aspects of being and becoming ourselves in our individual, personal way.

This tendency to survive and grow, to fully become the person that we potentially are, is sometimes compatible with our tendency to copy others, and sometimes not.

We don't have to invent everything for ourselves. We are glad to have the knowledge and skills that others can give us. We don't have to solve every problem from scratch when others can show us how to do it. But even when we choose to copy others, our tendency to grow in our own way may ensure that we personalize that knowledge, that we possess that new knowledge in our own particular way and practice that new skill in our own particular style. Copying others may help us grow in our own way.

On the other hand, *individuation* and *imitation* are sometimes incompatible, and we have to choose. When the things that others are showing and telling us do not match our experience or do not fit in with

who we think we are and who we want to be, we can insist on going our own way and refuse to learn from them. Certainly, when our students are refusing to learn what we want to teach them, it may be frustrating for us, but from their point of view it is entirely reasonable. What we are teaching them may threaten their present understandings, their value systems, perhaps their notions of who they are. Under this sort of threat, they naturally choose to survive as they are by rejecting or ignoring what we are trying to teach them.

On the other hand, when we are offering them ideas and skills that meet the needs they feel and match the direction they want to grow, they will seize on them and make them their own. There may, of course, be conflict between what they think they need and what they really need to be fully human. Their notions of what they need and value have already been largely borrowed or copied from others. Rogers (1961) talks about the tension between our actualizing tendency and what he calls our “conditions of worth.” At an early age, we absorb from our parents and others a notion of how we must behave to be worthwhile persons. We “introject” these values and grow up thinking that they are our own. The children and adolescents we teach are still absorbing “conditions of worth” in their interactions with their peers, the media and the broader culture. As teachers, we have to start with the needs they feel, rather than the “real” needs of which they may be barely aware or which they may actively resist. Rogers (1951) argues that “behavior is basically the goal-directed attempt of the organism to satisfy its needs as experienced, in the field as perceived” (p. 491). No matter that their perceptions of the world and themselves may be distorted, the “field as perceived” is the place we have to start—empathically and nonjudgmentally.

Incremental or Transformative Learning

There is another distinction between two kinds of learning that I think is worth making here. It is the distinction between *incremental* learning and *transformative* learning.

Incremental learning is learning that is simply added on to what we already know. We teach our students to recognize words they could not previously recognize; we teach them to do calculations they could not do before. We give them information that is new to them; we teach them to express their ideas and feelings in the written word. They now have more knowledge and skills than they had before, but they need not have changed as people. They have certainly changed, but the change is in the quantity of their knowledge and skills, rather than in the quality.

By contrast, transformative learning is learning that changes someone significantly. One of the students assumes and states that violence is a legitimate way to solve disputes in marriage. We don't feel able to take a neutral position in such a matter, so we challenge the assumption and point out that such violence is both immoral and illegal. This is not just a piece of add-on knowledge. Learning it requires a substantial change in the way such a person understands the world. The person cannot accept what we are saying without giving up something they "know" already. It means a change in the quality of the person's knowledge, not just a change in the quantity. It means a change in the kind of person he or she is. However, no matter how desirable such a change may be, and no matter how strongly we put our argument, our students are actually not likely to experience such a change just because we argue that they should.

I suggest that in the kind of work we are engaged in, we are often inviting our students to such transformation. We are trying to teach knowledge and skills that conflict with what they already "know" about themselves. We are engaged in changing people. We are engaged in shifting them from a sense of themselves as illiterate, ignorant, or bored to a sense of themselves as literate, knowing, or engaged. Not surprisingly, we sometimes find this difficult. And it is difficult because we are not just "adding on" something to what is already known. When we are trying to teach someone something significant, as we often are, we must often deal with the fact that what we teach must connect with, and often conflict with, what is "known" already. Learning, if learning occurs, is not just add-on but transformative.

Piaget (Piaget and Inhelder, 1969) found a way of talking about this. He suggested that we can distinguish between two kinds of learning, which he called *assimilation* and *accommodation*. We assimilate knowledge

when we take it in while remaining essentially the same. We just fit it comfortably into the things we already know (sometimes distorting it a bit so that it will fit). Our worldview doesn't change, let alone our sense of who we are. We just have more information. On the other hand, accommodation involves change. We are constantly interacting with the world as we experience it. We sometimes have an experience that puts us in a new space. Our experience doesn't fit what we already know, so we have to change to fit the world as we are experiencing it. We can't just take in some new information and remain the same. The experience changes us. It may be only a slight change, and we may not even realize we have changed, but we have changed nevertheless. Piaget suggested that we are constantly cycling between assimilation and accommodation as we adapt to the changing world around us.

We can think of transformation as accommodation writ large. Piaget was only thinking about learning in cognitive terms. When we talk about transformation, we include emotional, attitudinal, and behavioral change as well. When people theorize about transformative education, they usually think of transformation in positive terms and are inclined to imagine it as involving a major shift in worldview and attitude. Yet it isn't necessarily life-changing, and it isn't necessarily positive. Our sense of who we are and what life is about changes gradually as we grow, through a lot of barely perceptible transformations. Occasionally, however, something happens that occasions a major shift in our sense of who we are. A traumatic event (an accident? the breakdown of a relationship?) may shatter our personal world and leave us feeling hopeless, vindictive, depressed, guilty, or ashamed. We are suddenly in a different world. Or we may have an experience (falling in love? an unexpected success?) that causes us to see ourselves and our world in a new and more positive way.

A great deal of thinking and writing about teaching seems to assume that incremental learning is the only kind of learning there is. Teaching is imagined as passing content and skills from the teacher to the student, and various classroom management and student assessment strategies are then designed to make sure the students assimilate exactly what they are told. This is a serious error. Transformative learning is going on all the time. Positively, when a child who thinks she can't "do maths" finds a teacher who lets her find out that she can. Negatively, when a bullied

child concludes that life is violent and unfair and that nobody (certainly not teachers) really cares what happens to you.

Though what we might call “negative transformation” may be the child’s authentic response to “the field as perceived,” this is only part of the story. The person-centered approach, as Rogers (1961) understood it, demands a faith in the reality of the actualizing tendency—“*man’s [sic] tendency to actualize himself, to become his potentialities*. By this I mean the directional trend which is evident in all organic and human life” (p. 351, italics in original). This is not a blind faith. Teachers, no less than counselors, find plenty of evidence of its existence. They find, as Rogers did, “that it exists in every individual, and awaits only the proper conditions to be released and expressed” (ibid). They know from experience that when the “proper conditions” of a caring and trusting relationship can be established, children find the freedom to abandon the defenses that stand in the way of their transformation into being more fully themselves.

The Learning Onion

We may find it useful to think of our students’ knowledge as layered. Imagine it to be something like an onion.²

There is a surface layer of skills and behaviors, the ways our students behave, the things they have learned to do and say, for better or worse. We can see what these are by observing them.

Below this there is a layer of information, ideas, and beliefs. The things they know and think. We can find out about these by asking them.

Below this again, there are values and attitudes. These are somewhat harder to get at, but if people reflect they can usually become aware of what they value, of how they judge that something is good or bad, right or wrong, nice or nasty, important or unimportant, and it is possible for

² I have borrowed the image of the onion from Lundberg, who uses it to discuss the layers of organizational culture, which he labels artifacts, perspectives, attitudes and values, and basic assumptions. See Lundberg, 1985.

us to help them do this and to see the implications of these values for their behavior.

There is a deeper layer still, a layer of basic convictions and assumptions, the things people take completely for granted. Central to these are their basic assumptions about identity, about who they are. These are often difficult to get at, simply because they are taken so completely for granted and rarely reflected on. They have not been consciously learned but have generally been absorbed from family and the wider culture from an early age. Children do not learn to be racist or violent by observing the world and coming to logical conclusions about it. They learn it the same way as other children learn to be generous or friendly—by growing up in a world that takes these things for granted.

So, how does this structure of knowledge change?

Firstly, it seems that it is the lower levels that control the whole structure. Each layer expresses the layer below it. We make certain unreflected assumptions about who we are and what the world is like; these assumptions are reflected in our value systems, in our tendency to see some things as better and more important than others; these values are expressed in our beliefs, ideas, and opinions, the thoughts we have about the world; finally, our thoughts and opinions find expression in the things we do and say. The surface layers can change to some extent (we learn some things and forget others) without affecting the deeper layers. On the other hand, change in the deeper layers generates change all the way through.

Secondly, it seems that while the surface layers can change readily enough as long as the deeper layers are not affected, learning that involves change in the deeper levels is strongly resisted. If a student can add on a new skill or a new bit of information without any change in his or her values, attitudes, and assumptions, learning is pretty straightforward. On the other hand, if taking on this new skill or accepting this new information requires a change in values, attitudes, and sense of self, the student will resist the new knowledge. We hang on very tightly to our values and assumptions, especially to our assumptions about ourselves. We might even argue that when people change, it is usually in order to remain the same. If we are forced to change the things we do and say (for example, by our teacher or employer), we look for

ways of changing that leave our values, our assumptions, and our sense of who we are unaffected.

Transformative Teaching

One thing that teachers get used to is the way some students resist learning. They have seen themselves for so long as people who can't or won't do certain things that, even when they have come to a class and asked to be taught, even when they declare that they want to learn, they still keep resisting the teaching. For someone who is illiterate, for instance, learning to read and write is actually threatening, because it would destroy their idea of who they are. They don't yet know any other way to be. They have, as Rogers suggests, selected from their many sensory experiences those that fit into their self-concept "because they are consistent with the self-structure and thus reinforce it" (1951, p. 504). If they perceive themselves to be illiterate, experiences that demonstrate their inability to read will be "accepted into consciousness and organized into some relationship with the self-structure either because they meet a need of the self or because they are consistent with the self-structure and thus reinforce it" (1951, p. 504). Experiencing something about themselves that is inconsistent with the self-structure can be threatening. Such experiences will be either "ignored because there is no perceived relationship to the self-structure" or "denied symbolization or given a distorted symbolization" (ibid., p. 503).

Rogers (1951) points out that it may be "nearly as difficult to accept a perception which would alter the self-concept in an expanding or socially acceptable direction as to accept an experience which would alter it in a constricting or socially disapproved direction" (p. 506). We sometimes come across children or adolescents whose public identity is bound up in being the one who gives teachers a hard time, or the one who does not learn, or the one who hates math. Giving up one's identity, even an uncomfortable identity, is frightening. So is giving up habitual self-destructive behavior.

Some of our students have basically the same values and make basically the same assumptions as we do, and teaching them presents no problem. Learning what we want to teach them poses no threat to them.

The knowledge and skills we teach them can confirm them in who they are and enrich their understanding and behavior. We are dealing with incremental skills and knowledge that do not threaten the deeper levels. They do not have to reorganize their whole view of themselves and their world in order to take in this new knowledge. They just add it on.

On the other hand, what can we do for someone who refuses to accept the information and skills we are offering? What can we do to change attitudes and behavior that are self-destructive or antisocial? Some students' basic assumptions about themselves and the world may be threatened by the knowledge we are presenting.

I believe that it is possible to change deeply held values and assumptions. Our presentation of the new information may be so persuasive, and their practice of the new skills may be so satisfying, that they can let go of their old values and assumptions about themselves and take on new ones. They may actually completely reorganize their view of themselves and their world. People do change, and change deeply. Sometimes this transformation comes through suffering a traumatic experience, and the change may be for better or for worse. And sometimes this transformation comes through education.

I suggest that it also comes through relationship. The more threatening the change, the more supportive the relationship needs to be. We know that "falling in love" can be life-changing. We often see the transformation of values and behavior that come when people find themselves truly loved. Rogers is adamant that relationship is the core of effective counseling. Significant learning in therapy depends on the therapist both being "freely, deeply and acceptantly himself [sic]" and "experiencing a warm caring for the client—a caring which is not possessive, which demands no personal gratification" (1961, p. 283). When he speaks of teaching he makes the same point. Significant learning can take place if the student has the good fortune to have a teacher "who can warmly accept, who can provide an unconditional positive regard, and who can empathize with the feelings of fear, anticipation, and discouragement, which are involved in meeting new material" (ibid., p. 287). Rogers' (1961) notion of "significant learning" is identical with what I call transformative learning: "By significant learning I mean learning which is more than an accumulation of facts. It is learning which makes a difference—in the individual's behavior, in the

course of action he [sic] chooses in the future, in his attitudes and in his personality” (p. 280).

What Teachers Do

The educational exercise we call *training* focuses on the surface layer of the onion, giving people skills. Generally this is regarded as simply incremental learning; it simply adds to the number of things a person can do. Yet often it involves much more. Sometimes, learning a skill involves me in changing my idea of what I am and what I can do. Sometimes, I cannot learn the skill unless I make these changes.

The educational exercise we call *instruction* aims at the second layer, giving people information. Generally the instructor believes that he or she is adding this information on to what people know already. But this too may involve much more. It may involve reorganizing one’s whole structure of knowledge to accommodate the new information.

There is more to education than adding on information and skills to what is already known. The things we know and feel about the world are not just a collection of disconnected fragments. They are all connected in a complex structure. Certainly we can sometimes tack new pieces of knowledge onto this structure. Often, however, we cannot take on a new bit of knowing without reorganizing the whole thing. The skillful trainer and instructor know that learning a skill or gaining new knowledge sometimes involve unlearning what we already know, changing the way we think about ourselves, changing our attitudes, becoming aware of our assumptions about who we are and what we can do, and changing these accordingly. It involves a change in the structure of what we know (including what we know about ourselves).

If we are interested in an education that makes a difference to people, an education that has an enduring effect, we must take into account the deeper layers of the onion.

Training is a good way to teach skills and *instruction* is a good way to impart information, but neither of them are particularly good ways of teaching values or changing attitudes. In fact, telling people what values and attitudes they ought to have is often counterproductive. Attacking

people's deeply held convictions is generally a good way to strengthen them. Attempting to change what someone knows at the surface layers does not cause much upset. Disturbing their sense of who they are arouses a great deal of anxiety, and they often deal with this anxiety by defending themselves against this knowledge. When our sense of who we are is under threat, we are inclined to opt for survival rather than risk it all for growth.

Fortunately, training and instruction are not the only forms of teaching. We also teach by *modeling*, by showing our students how to behave. In our teaching, we do this explicitly by demonstrating a particular skill we want them to learn. More importantly, we constantly model attitudes and values and ways of relating that they may "pick up" without being terribly aware that they are doing so. I suggest that this is the way we have all "picked up" most of what we take for granted in our values and attitudes. And it is still the way our students learn many of the significant things they learn from us. Learning unreflectively through imitation has been our default position since the stone age. (See Donald, 2001).

We can teach also by *telling stories*. There are many kinds of stories we can tell, and many ways we can tell them. Perhaps the most useful stories in the teaching context are stories about how other students have learned. The attitudes and values embedded in a story are "picked up" without the need for teasing out lessons or morals. Stories act on us on the imaginal level, and we can learn from them, as we did when we were children, without being terribly clear about what we have learned.

We also teach through *experience*. Most of what we know we have learned by observing life and participating in it, without any need for teachers to tell us what to think about it. Skillful teachers use their students' capacity to learn naturally from experience. They bring experience into the classroom, where they can help their students reflect on it. In experiential learning, values and assumptions may be changed the way they were learned in the first place, by being engaged in life, reflecting on it, and discovering what "works."

We also teach by *coaching*, which combines demonstration and rehearsal of skills, instruction on principles, reflection on experience, and feedback on attainment. Effective coaching functions through an interaction between coach and student that is continually shaped to meet

the needs of the particular student. (This is different from *training*, where all the students are supposed to learn the same skills at the same rate.)

We can teach by *facilitation*, by giving people the opportunity and the resources to learn what they need to learn, instead of setting out to teach them some particular thing that we happen to think is important. The facilitator focuses on providing the resources for learning, providing a suitable environment for learning, providing support for learning, and trusting each student to learn whatever is most appropriate for her or him at the present moment. Facilitation aims at encouraging learning as *individuation* rather than as *imitation*; it aims at removing or minimizing obstacles to learning on the assumption that if people are really free to learn whatever is there to be learned, they will learn whatever they most need to know. And if they decide not to learn at all, it is their responsibility and not the teacher's.

We can teach also by engaging in a *collaborative exploration* with our students. If we abandon the notion that we are the ones who know and our students are the ones who are ignorant, great possibilities for learning open up for us. We can join with our students in a dialogue in which we and they are teachers and they and we are learners. We don't have to deny what we know. We have our particular contribution to make to the group's learning, just as each of our students has a particular contribution to make. We are confident that if we are all honest and humble about what we know and curious about what we don't know, and if we all take responsibility for what happens, learning will be exciting, significant, and empowering.

I don't pretend that this is a complete list of ways of teaching. I simply want to illustrate the notion that there are different ways of teaching and that different ways of teaching have different purposes and effects. There are some kinds of information that are effectively learned by rote, though this is now a very unfashionable way of teaching. There are other things that cannot be learned by rote, or even by instruction or training. If we are really interested in transformative learning, if we want our classes to make a difference to people, we need to sometimes work at the *storytelling, experiential, facilitation, exploration* end of this list. (We will be *modeling* anyway, for better or for worse.)

If we accept the suggestion that education often involves transformation, we need to keep reminding ourselves that positive

transformation rarely takes place in situations of threat. People under threat learn (if they learn at all) in order to survive, not in order to change. We need to acknowledge that resisting our teaching about (say) violence or racism is perfectly reasonable behavior on the part of students whose violent or racist values and assumptions (and sense of who they are) are being threatened (or who think their values and assumptions are going to be threatened). If the content of our teaching is indeed threatening to particular students, we need to make the context of our teaching as supportive as possible—giving serious attention to building good teacher-student and student-student relationships, accepting our students as they are without judging them, listening with real attention to what they say and taking it seriously. I believe that personal change almost always takes place in the context of a relationship, and the better the quality of the relationships in our class (including the quality of our relationship with each student), the more open our students will be to changing the quality of their knowing and not just the quantity of their information. Note that I am talking here about the quality of relationship, which is a very different thing from the intensity of relationship. I am talking about things like mutual respect, tolerance, concern, honesty, and attention to each other, which we model in our own behavior and affirm in the behavior of our students.

If we are interested in transformative education, we need to put relationship at the center of the process. Carl Jung was talking about therapy when he wrote, “For two personalities to meet is like two different chemical substances: if there is any combination at all, both are transformed.... You can exert no influence if you are not susceptible to influence,” (Jung, 1966: para. 163), but I believe that if we want to talk seriously about transformative education, we need to accept that this is as true of education as it is of therapy. We need to be prepared to let go of what we “know” and of our fixed notions of who we are if we are to have any chance of witnessing significant change in the assumptions and attitudes of our students. We need to put relationship and dialogue at the core of our interactions with our students.

William Glasser (1998) suggests another way of thinking about this. He suggests that we all live in two worlds—our quality world and our nonquality world. Our quality world is the world of people with whom we find we have control, belongingness, freedom, and fun. Our

nonquality world consists of people who provide none of these things. The people in our quality world have influence over the ways we feel and think. We care what they say. The people in our nonquality world may be able to force us to do things, but they can't make us listen to them and we're not interested in imitating them. Many (we hope most) of our students experience a quality world at home. They may not need our classroom to be part of that world, but they will certainly find it irrelevant if it is not. If they do not experience a quality world at home, they will seek it elsewhere—perhaps in our classroom, perhaps in a group of peers or a teenage gang. If their peers offer them a sense of personal power, belongingness, freedom, and fun, and they do not find such a quality world in the classroom, it is unlikely that their teachers will have much influence on their values and attitudes, no matter how much training, instruction, and modeling appears to go on.

In Conclusion

Teaching in any field and at any level will potentially involve both incremental and transformational learning. It can also involve an invitation both to imitation and to individuation. However, there are some fields where individuation and transformation are at the very center of the teaching/learning process. Teaching a student to read when they “know” that they can't or teaching math to a student who “knows” that math is impossible for them involve personal transformation just as much as teaching a bully that bullying is not just “unacceptable in this school” but is actually wrong.

There may appear to be some contradiction between the notion of inviting people to change and the notion of inviting them to be more fully themselves. For myself, I don't find a contradiction here. My experience leads me to accept what thinkers like Carl Jung (1966), Abraham Maslow (1954), and Carl Rogers (1961, 1980) assert: that we are unfinished people, that there is in all of us a tendency, a drive even, to become more fully ourselves. To become ourselves, we have to change much of what we think we are, to change the things we have learned to believe because others believe them, to change the ways we have learned to behave because others approve of them. We spend our childhood and

adolescence borrowing ideas, values, and behaviors from others and using them to define who we are. Then we can spend the rest of our lives finding that there is more to us than the personality we have built with so much effort and deciding whether we can risk changing. This is a process that takes a lifetime, with or without a midlife crisis to accelerate it. For both Rogers and Jung, it was perfectly clear that therapeutic change does not involve the client becoming a different person. Rather it involves becoming more fully the person they are. As teachers, we may apply the same idea when pondering how to move a child out of habitual antisocial or self-destructive behavior.

What teachers do with students may be for better or for worse. I am not suggesting here that teachers should go out and try to engineer (or manipulate, or facilitate) significant changes in the personalities of their students. I am only saying that teachers cannot help having a significant impact on people's lives, that they are as much engaged in the quality of their students' knowing and living as in the quantity of their information and the level of their competence.

Teachers often meet students in the middle of one of the critical decisions of their lives and cannot help being involved in it. They obviously cannot assist people to grow when they determined not to, but they can occasionally experience the excitement and satisfaction when *something happens*, when something they say or do ignites the fuse that leads to a student's transformation.

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