

Learning to *Be* – as a Teacher

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Part 1:

Character in the Teacher's Sense of Identity

Part 2:

Becoming Capable in Five Domains of Relationship

**Teachers
are born,
not made !**

"Teachers are Born."

This decides everything in
favour of nature, and
against nurture.

"Teachers are Made."

This can decide everything
important in favour of
shaping teachers to a pre-
defined pattern.

*Teaching is more a
matter of being than
of having.*

Only when competencies and qualities of character become embodied in one's *ways of being* as a teacher can we truly speak of the education of character in teacher education .

“Goodness, then, being of two kinds, goodness of intellect and goodness of character, intellectual goodness is both produced and increased mainly by teaching, and therefore experience and time are required for it. Goodness of character on the other hand is the outcome of habit, and accordingly the word ‘*ēthos*’, character, is derived from ‘*ēthos*’, habit, by a slight modification in the quantity of the vowel.

(Aristotle, *Ethics Nic.* 1103 a1)

“Only in his entire being, in all his spontaneity, can the educator truly affect the whole being of his pupil. For educating characters you do not need a moral genius, but you do need a man who is wholly alive and able to communicate himself to his fellow beings. His aliveness streams out to them and affects them most strongly and purely when he has no thought of affecting them.”

(Martin Buber, “The Education of Character”, 1939/2002:134)

1. a commitment to **clarity and depth of understanding** in relation to the defensible purposes of teaching;
2. the **patience, perseverance and firmness** necessary to draw learners, as active and responsible participants, into a vibrant learning environment;
3. the **courage, or moral energy, to put one's own truth claims at risk**, to tackle challenges and obstacles and to take new pedagogical initiatives – of one's own, and with colleagues;
4. a **warm-hearted frankness, coupled with respect** for each pupil's privacy, distinctness and dignity;
5. a disciplined **originality** which recognises that one's own knowledge is ever on-the-way, and in need of development;
6. a judicious **faith in pupils**, even in unpromising circumstances;
7. a **setting-aside of proprietorial claims** on pupils' minds and hearts, coupled with a constructive sense of self-criticism;
8. a deep and enduring **sense of care** for students, recognizing the claims of both equity and difference (i.e plurality) .

“Perhaps the greatest of all pedagogical fallacies is the notion that a person learns only the particular thing he is studying at the time. Collateral learning, in the form of enduring attitudes, of likes and dislikes, may be and often is much more important than the spelling lesson or the lesson in geography or history that is learned. For these attitudes are fundamentally what count in the future. The most important attitude that can be formed is that of the desire to go on learning.”

(John Dewey, *Experience and Education*, 1938/1997:48)

Five Key Domains of Capability

1. The teacher's relationship with the subject, or range of subjects s/he teaches
2. The teacher's relationships with his/her students
3. The teacher's relationships with colleagues
4. The teacher's relationships with parents/guardians and wider range of others
5. The teacher's relationship to herself/himself (i.e. the teacher's self-understanding)

The importance of Martin Heidegger's thinking:

- (a) Being as *be-ing*; the importance of the shift to the verb sense of the word;
- (b) the new emphasis on *a relationship to be experienced*;
- (c) being as an ever-renewed and unfinished venture, or challenge.

Competences and Capabilities : a key distinction, parallel in some respects to that between *having* and *being*.

Competence as functional capacity

Capability as creative capacity

The quality of learning experiences in teacher education: Commitments,

Capabilities and relationships of learning:

Being a teacher as an engaged and unfinished experience: viz. enhancing one's capabilities and commitments in *five key domains of relationship*:

1. The teacher's relationship with the subjects s/he teaches
2. The teacher's relationships with his /her students
3. The teacher's relationships with colleagues
4. The teacher's relationships with parents, guardians and wider range of others
5. The teacher's relationship to herself/himself