Scholarly Summary of “Learning to Respond: Supervising Novice Physical Educators in an Action Research Project”


**Issue/Focus:** Teacher education is largely based on knowledge derived from research and scientific data, ideas that have been proven to work. This gives future teachers an excellent base to start from but leaves a large gap between their education and reality. It is not possible to simply tell someone how to be a good teacher. Everyone develops their own style that works for them, however, there are some key strategies that can be learned through interaction with more experienced teachers. Understanding how experienced teachers can support the development of novice teachers is the aim of the action research project.

**Reasoning:** In the article, Kemmis and McTaggart (1982) reason that action research should lead to the “improvement of practice, the improvement of understanding of the practice by its practitioners, and the improvement of the situation in which the practice takes place.” The idea is that novice teacher’s abilities will evolve better through personal drive to become a better teacher, than competition for better grades in university.

**Assumptions:** This style of learning takes a huge amount of time and energy on the part of both the supervisory teacher and the student-teacher. This article assumes that this process could be used with all teachers, yet there are probably many experienced teachers who barely put in the time to create a positive experience for their students, let alone for new teachers coming in. This also brings up the assumption that we want our new teachers to learn from the experienced ones. There are many teachers whose abilities we do not want to model new teachers after.

**Conclusions:** The initial learning experiences of novice teachers need to be supported more collaboratively in order to facilitate a better learning environment for both new teachers and students. The situations created by the action research project allowed for teachable moments for both the supervisory teachers and the student-teachers. The rigid, structured teaching style that goes by the books in university, was quickly realized to be inferior to the inquiry TGFU style that the supervisory teachers exemplified.

**Significant Information:** The action research evolved in three phases, within each phase as a number of cycles, consisting of plan, act/observe, and reflect. This was the basic growth format, but it is noted that not all individuals experienced the same phase or cycle at the same time, nor in the same way.

**Personal Comments:** This paper provides an excellent goal for communication between supervisory and student teachers. It would be ideal for all teachers to have this experience, however it is a lofty goal due to time constraints. I think the dialogue that
went on between teaching sessions was the most valuable aspect of this action research because it helps acknowledge the different situations and their corresponding solutions. As a student-teacher it is easy to ‘get through’ the volunteer teaching sessions with the kids happy, and both the supervisory teacher and university instructor satisfied; however, in order to really gain insight and experience from the session I think the dialogue is necessary.

How can we better close the gap between university-based education and the realities of teaching in a classroom?