

**DISCUSSING TEACHER INDUCTION IN CHINA AND RELEVANT DEBATES
IN THE UNITED STATES WITH A CHINESE TEACHER:
A CONVERSATION WITH YU YI¹**

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The purpose of this paper is twofold. First, it intends to introduce a Chinese teacher induction program to the Western world. As Paine and I discussed in another paper (Paine & Ma, in press), schools in China provide induction support for their novice teachers through a culture of "teachers working together." However, most schools do not have a special program with a regularity or well-articulated principles to do it. Yet during the last decade, however, more and more elementary and secondary schools have established their own on-the-job induction programs for novice teachers. These programs, independent from the teacher education programs in formal institutions for either preservice or inservice teacher education, are designed, executed, assessed, modified and improved within particular schools by school faculty.

In the United States a teaching certificate is required in order to become a teacher; in China the official qualification for a teacher is gained through preparation received in specialized institutions of formal teacher education—the normal school education (high-school level) for an elementary teacher, and, the normal college or normal university education for a secondary teacher. Most novice teachers are officially qualified—they have the relevant diploma required by the government policy. However, the officially qualified teachers who have just left their teacher preparation institutions are not practically qualified teachers yet. They have to develop themselves into competent teachers through teaching practice. The process of "entering the water and starting to swim," in China as well as in the United States is the most difficult and crucial period in one's career as a teacher. In those Chinese schools which have their own teacher induction programs, this process is consciously assumed as a responsibility of the whole school faculty, rather than that merely of new teachers on their own. Both novice teachers and experienced teachers work together on it. It is believed that formal teacher education constitutes only half of teacher preparation. The other half has to be accomplished on the job with the active support and involvement of the teacher community.

The on-the-job induction programs ran by schools had results beyond the initial purpose of introducing novices. Many schools find that the programs have apparently facilitated staff development

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as well. With most teachers in the school more or less involved in the program, the program creates a "learning to teach" atmosphere in the whole school.

The second purpose of this paper is to introduce to the field of educational research the voice of teachers, and especially, that of the exemplary teachers. In this century, with the influential impact of scientific research in several disciplines, a field of educational research has been established and well developed. Although starting from the interest in educational practice and regarding educational practice as its research subject, the field of educational research, characterized as academic, has developed so quickly that it has become a self-contained field that overrides the field of practice in many senses. In the United States, most educational journals and academic works in the research circle are written by, and for, researchers and scholars rather than practitioners such as teachers. The style, language, and topics of writings of educational research have closed the door to the intelligence and wisdom of teachers. In China, where the research community is not yet as developed as in the United States, teachers' voices and insights have more chances to be published. However, these voices, considered as "opinions" rather than "results of scientific research," are ignored and overlooked by the research circle constituted of university or research institution scholars. For those Chinese educational research journals that claim a quality of "academic research," as in the United States, teachers are not the readers. Teachers' voices are mainly treated as data, as raw material for research process, rather than insights with same intellectual status (quality) as research results. The intelligence of teachers from other countries is even more seldom heard in research fields.

Having been both an teacher and an educational researcher, I noticed that teachers are no less intelligent than the authors in the research field at all. The problem is that teachers' wisdom has not been expressed and published in a format that is recognized as of "academic." For years, I have been thinking about introducing teachers' wisdom, as a counterpart of scholars' intellect, to the educational research field. In the last two years, as a Chinese graduate student pursuing my PhD in education in the United States, I was involved in a research project of comparative study of teacher induction in the United States, England and China. In order to search for a research site in China, I went through several Chinese educational journals. In a nonacademic journal I found one article written by a teacher which was attractively thoughtful. I wrote to the author, Yu Yi, and we started to correspond. Last summer, I got a chance to go back China and talk face to face with her on the topic we shared an interest in. During our conversations her outstanding talent struck me. I found it would be worth to introduce her insights on teacher induction to the research field of this country.

Yu Yi, who has taught high school Chinese for over 40 years, now is the principal of a high school in Shanghai. She is honored as a "first-class Chinese teacher [Te-ji Yu-wen Jiao-shi]" selected by her colleagues and Chinese teachers of other high schools in Shanghai. Having published several books on reflection on her own teaching and having edited several series of handbooks for high school

Chinese teaching, she has proved her outstanding talent in teaching. In my first meeting with Yu Yi, she described the on-the-job induction program of her school and their ideas and principles to design and execute it. When reviewing my interview notes at home, I found some latent connections between Yu Yi's views and U.S. theoretical insights in teacher education, such as Dewey's idea of teacher education as laboratory versus apprenticeship (Dewey, 1965/1904), Shulman's conception of pedagogical content knowledge (Shulman, 1987), and Schon's thought of "educating the reflective practitioner" (Schon, 1987). I thought it would be intriguing if the latent connections could be revealed.

Then I arranged the second interview in which I sought Yu Yi's reaction to these American scholars. Most of them Yu Yi had not heard of before. Yet she responded to their ideas extemporaneously without any hesitation. The notes of the second interview excited me. It confirmed my hunch about the latent connections, made it more concrete and vivid. I felt ready to write a paper introducing the induction program as well as Yu Yi's reaction to the American scholars.

The format of a conversation between Yu Yi and me was that of a distinguished Chinese teacher and a graduate student studying in the United States. I assumed that a conversation between such two figures would be helpful to illuminate shades of Yu's insights as of a teacher, as well as to highlight the correspondence and contrast between practical and theoretical fields. Yet some problems emerged. Since I have identified myself not merely a researcher but also a teacher in real life, I had two voices. During my writing, as in my conversations with Yu Yi, my own voice as a teacher could not help but jump out to support and strengthen her voice. In order to leave Yu Yi's voice more consistent as the voice of a teacher, I decided to weave this voice into Yu Yi's voice, instead of letting myself playing two different roles in the paper. In addition, to make the writing concise, I had to reorganize our original conversation and chunked it under several topics.

Two principles were followed when I revised. First, my own teacher voice, when it would appear in the report, only functions to support Yu's original ideas. In other words, while my voice depicts and strengthens her idea, it does not replace her idea or invent anything under her name. Second, I tried not to leave out any of her important ideas out of the paper. I asked Yu Yi to read my last draft carefully to be sure these principles well followed. After reading she confirmed that I had "completely and honestly" expressed her idea, agreed with interweaving my voice with hers, and made some additions to the places where she thought her ideas were not sufficiently expressed.

"Officially Qualified Doesn't Mean Practically Qualified"

M: I heard that your school has a five-year on-the-job induction program for beginning teachers. Since all beginning teachers assigned to your school are officially qualified as teachers—that is, according to government policy, they have had sufficient teacher education preparation in universities—why is it necessary to have another professional training program for them, what is the program, and moreover, why should it last for five years?

Y: You have thrown out three questions all at once. But I can only answer them one by one. Please jump in whenever you want. Our induction program was initially motivated to release a tension in the school brought by the coming of new teachers. Each academic year when new teachers are assigned to our school, we can feel a tension in the school. The inevitable discomfort of these new teachers not only bothers themselves but also affects their students as well as other teachers who share the class of students with them. Leaving the new teachers to struggle with the problems by themselves would take a long time and there would be more unnecessary suffering for themselves, their students, and even the whole school. So we decided to have some program to help them to pass through difficult times—not only to help them but also to help the school overcome the tension. Beyond our original expectations, along with the improvement of the program, it ends up with developing the whole school staff. We find that the program becomes self-education of our teacher community.

M: Can you address briefly how the program has improved?

Y: At first, we intended to have a "teaching research group" to help new teachers. The teaching research group is a group of teachers who teach the same subject the new teacher does. Since they teach the same subject matter, the group can help new teachers prepare the lessons and can discuss with them problems in teaching. Later, we found that the new teachers' problems are broader than subject matter teaching. Also, the relation between one particular new teacher and a whole group is somewhat loose and unfocused. Some kind of one-to-one relation was needed. So, we tried to select some experienced teachers who were recognized as superior in our community to make master-apprentice pairs with new teachers. Of course, the pairs are organized in the same teaching research group. The group still has the obligation to help new teachers.

The other important improvement of our program is the establishment of an annual new teacher award to facilitate the mutual interchange among new teachers as well as among

master-apprentice pairs. During award nomination time, beginning teachers in the program have their classes open to the whole school and present their research articles on teaching and share their notes on readings on teaching. The award committee, consisting of the principal and experienced teachers, decides on first-class and second-class awards. These three steps of establishing and improving our program form the three components of the program. These components have opened communications between the novice teachers and the experienced teachers—the teacher community they are going to join—from different dimensions.

M: Do you mean that a novice teacher is not yet a member of the teacher community? What do you mean by the teacher community, and, when would a novice become a member of it?

Y: By teacher community I mean a group of people who share common professional perspectives and dispositions as teachers. These professional perspectives and dispositions are so subtle that I myself am not able to articulate. However, I believe that both teachers and lay people have an idea of what a teacher is like. In this sense, a novice teacher, although she has the title of teacher, is not like a teacher yet. His or her professional perspectives and dispositions as a teacher have not developed. In fact, novice teachers do not feel comfortable regarding themselves as teachers either. That is why I implied that novice teachers are not real members of the teacher community yet. As for the issue of time, there is not an exact turning point that marks the start of becoming a real teacher. It is a gradual process. Through this process novices become professionals and real members of the teacher community, in their own view and that of colleagues.

M: Thank you for your explanation. So, by communication between novice teachers and teacher community you mean the dialogue between novices who somehow are still nonprofessionals and the professional roles they are to move into.

Y: Yes.

M: Let's go back to the components of your programs. As I understand, the three components represent different levels of communication. First, in the master-apprentice pair, the beginning teachers mainly communicate and interact with their master. Second, in the teaching research group, they have contacts with the group of teachers sharing the same subject matter teaching. On the third level, in the annual award nomination, new teachers communicate and interact with the entire teacher community in the school: with other new teachers as well as other

experienced teachers. On all the three levels, new teachers, as well as experienced teachers, work on how to improve teaching quality.

Y: Yes, after five years, we find that many apprentices excel their masters and they have developed the habit of self-improvement in teaching. At that point, we feel that we can say that the process of teacher preparation has been accomplished.

M: Do you mean that the teacher preparation process is not really accomplished in teacher education programs in universities?

Y: Yes, wait, I know why you are puzzled. Teacher education seems not to be the duty of schools. Schools are supposed to "use" teachers who were educated and prepared by teacher education institutions. Unfortunately, this is what is wished for but not the reality. In fact, formal teacher education conducted in special institutions can only accomplish half the task of teacher preparation; the rest of it must be achieved in schools where people really teach. In addition, since teaching is a lifelong career in China, teacher education and teachers' self-education should never stop. This process can only take place in schools.

M: It sounds to me that you have mentioned two kinds of teacher education in schools: the training of beginning teachers and the continuing self-education of experienced teachers. Can we discuss them one by one? Since I am more interested in beginning teachers, can you start with them first? Why do you think that formal teacher education can only accomplish half of teacher preparation? What are the purposes for the part that should be accomplished in schools?

Y: It is not a secret that formal teacher education can't provide practically (not officially) qualified teachers. When new teachers begin their career, in most cases, neither the school nor themselves are satisfied. For new teachers, they usually feel that everything in the classroom is so "messy" that what they learned in educational courses does not help at all. In the meantime the teacher community is not satisfied with the work of these new members either.

M: It is easier for people to imagine how uncomfortable the beginners would be. But in what aspects are the beginners inadequate in the view of teacher community?

Y: I haven't done any special research on it. Yet I can tell you my general impressions. First of

all, new teachers are usually not competent at classroom management. Their classrooms are usually too lax or too dull to support students' intellectual activity. They are particularly incapable in dealing with unexpected events. Second, they usually don't know how to arrange the teaching material for a class. They may not be bad in subject matter knowledge, but most of them have no idea how to represent it. Also, they don't have any idea about how much material can be dealt with in a class, what part should be emphasized and what part can be addressed briefly.

Third, in interacting with students, they tend to overreact—they usually say too much, at the inappropriate time and with an inappropriate reaction. Fourth, as for correcting students' work, they tend to simply take out everything "wrong" according to their own point of view, but don't know how to give students appropriate suggestions on what is there and developing students' original idea. I think these are the "common illnesses" of beginning teachers. One may enumerate more such "illnesses." All of them show that new graduates from formal teacher education programs are not practically qualified as a teacher. In the minds of experienced teachers, they are not really qualified members of our community yet.

"We Pay More Attention to Root Causes Than Symptoms"

M: So, in your on-the-job induction program, do you work on these "common illnesses"?

Y: Yes, but we do not intend to eliminate them directly and immediately.

M: What do you mean by "do not intend to eliminate them directly and immediately"? Don't you want to "cure" the "illnesses" as soon as possible so the beginners would become practically qualified teachers sooner?

Y: It takes time to develop a mature teacher. Some schools have a three-year induction programs to help beginning teachers. We decided to let our program last five years. In fact, the defects of beginning teachers that I mentioned above are only the noticeable "symptoms". While impatient patients and mediocre doctors are usually eager to eliminate symptoms, brilliant doctors do not merely, do not even mainly, concentrate on alleviating symptoms. They pay more attention to the causes of the symptoms. "The more haste, the less speedy the recovery." Brilliant doctors certainly get the better result.

M: Excuse me. Why do you say that the problems of new teachers are "symptoms"? If these

problems are symptoms, what is the root cause of them?

Y: Well, it appears that the problems of beginning teachers are that they don't know "how to." It is obvious that they don't know how to arrange the class, how to deal with discipline problems, how to organize and represent the teaching material. However, the reason that they don't know "how" is that they do not really know "what" they should do and "why." They don't really know what a good class should be and why. When people don't know the goal, how can they know how to get there? Therefore, while "don't know how to" is the symptom, "don't know what to do" and "why" are the root causes.

M: You have emphasized the word "really." Do you mean something special by it?

Y: Actually, new teachers coming from universities, probably also their university teachers, assume that they already know what a good teacher should do and why—that is what the teacher education program deals with. For them, it seems that the complex situation in real teaching makes them lose their sense of what is good and how to focus on that. But I don't think this is an appropriate explanation. Although university graduates may theoretically and rationally know what a good teacher should do and why, they do not know it practically and emotionally. In fact, unless individuals know a thing both theoretically and practically, both rationally and emotionally, it is hard to say that they really know it, especially for such a practice as teaching.

M: You have mentioned some terms that I haven't even heard defined in the research field, such as "practically" and "emotionally" knowing. Yet I can understand what do you mean. How do you help new teachers to know "practically and emotionally what they should do and why"?

Y: Sometimes, you know that you know something and you can prove your knowing by articulating your knowledge in words; sometimes you know that you know something, but you are not able to articulate exactly your knowledge in words—though you can prove your knowing with your practice, and you can communicate your knowledge within a certain circle of people. The second way of knowing is what I mean by practical knowledge.

M: It intrigued me when you said that the practical knowledge can't be articulated but can be communicate within certain circle. How can you communicate something that can't be articulated?

Y: It can be communicated through observing each other's practice, not using language at all. Also, we use some terms to express some special knowledge shared in certain circle. For example, if I tell you that I feel that the class I gave yesterday was not "*huo* [vivid] enough," you may think my comment is vague because you do not have an idea of what do I mean by *huo*, and how much is "enough." However, my colleague, especially those who share a similar understanding of teaching, know exactly what do I mean. Here we are using, or I should say borrowing, some term of common language to communicate the special knowledge shared in our small circle. While one's rationality plays an important role in theoretical knowing, one's feeling and passion significantly contribute to practical knowing. While theoretical knowledge is abstract and can be exactly expressed, practical knowledge is concrete and tacit. But it does not mean that practical knowledge can't be communicated. In order to let new teachers know practically what a good teacher should do, why, and how, our program has a threefold purpose.

M: What do you mean by a threefold purpose? Can you describe them one by one?

Y: First of all, we let new teachers know the value of the teaching career, the calling of teaching, through concrete samples of great teachers. What is good teaching? What is a good teacher? I have read numerous theorists' arguments. My own idea on this issue is that, although it can be articulated in different ways or emphasized in different dimensions in different epochs, there always is a basic presupposition of what good teaching and a good teacher is in people's minds. There is a basic value of teaching which does not change through time, nor across cultures. This imagination is contained in the career of great teachers over the world.

We can make a long list of these great teachers. From the great ancient Chinese teacher Confucius to the great ancient Western teacher Socrates, from the Czechoslovakian educator Johann Comenius to the Italian educator Maria Montessori, from the Russian educator Anton S. Makarenko to the American educator John Dewey, et cetera—they all are great teachers and educators recognized in the field. It is in the career of these great models of teachers and educators, in their ideal and practice, that the basic value of what good teaching is, and what a good teacher is is embodied.

We assume that knowing the career and life stories of these great examples is an important way to get to know practically what a good teacher is and why. Especially when teachers are in

their practice, there are so many vivid events in their work that will induce comparison between themselves and the great educators. This comparison, I think, will light the sparks in novices' mind of practical knowledge of what a good teacher is. We have our new teachers read and learn about a few great internationally recognized teachers and educators. We don't require them to summarize what a good teacher is in words. We believe that once they are touched and moved by the career of these great teachers and educators, especially when they are facing their own students in the school, they will have an idea of what a good teacher is in their mind. This idea will contribute to a goal they set for their own career.

In addition, good teachers in our school or schools nearby are also real examples of good teaching for our new teachers. We encourage new teachers to have personal contact with them, to get to know them. Through these particular life stories of good teachers, who are well recognized over the nation or the world and who are near us physically, we expect our new teachers to attain a practical understanding of what a good teacher should do and why. I regard this understanding as a necessary supplement of their theoretical learning in universities.

M: So, first of all, you have beginners perceive the basic value of the vocation of teaching through life stories of great teachers.

Y: Yes, secondly, we want our beginning teachers to know what are the necessary dispositions for being a good teacher. We regard it as a means to reach what and how. I usually tell new teachers that the most important disposition of a good teacher is to keep on pursuing new learning and improving yourself. In China teaching is a lifelong career. This career is like a long-distance race, not a short-distance race. Teachers need "sustaining power" for their continuing development. What we pursue is "the delayed effect" or "sustaining power."

M: What do you think teachers should learn during their whole career?

Y: Generally, I think we should be ready to learn everything. Of course, as a teacher, learning will be focused on our vocation. Teachers have a twofold commitment. We commit ourselves to the subject we teach, as well as the students we teach. In a particular way, our learning will relate to these commitments. I am a teacher of Chinese literature; I feel that I have a commitment to Chinese literature as well as to my students, especially, their intellectual and emotional life related to Chinese literature. I believe that a teacher who knows what a good

teacher is and has the disposition of learning unceasingly will spontaneously know what he or she should learn.

M: What you said reminds me of the idea Dewey (1965/1904) proposed in his article "The Relation of Theory and Practice in Education." He said that unless a teacher continues to be a student, a student of subject-matter and a student of mind-activity, he can't grow as a teacher, an inspirer and director of soul-life.

Y: It is absolutely true. A good teacher should always be a good student, a good student of teaching.

M: You said that you have a third purpose to your program.

Y: The third purpose is to develop particular skills and teaching routines. It includes how to plan a class, how to write class notes, how to arrange teaching materials, how to correct students' works, how to design a test, how to grade students, et cetera. At the start, beginners are required to follow their masters, but they are open to make changes and improvements later on according to their own idea. They can even abandon all these routines later on. You must know the Chinese saying "There is no regular method in teaching." Yet at the beginning, new teachers have to have something to emulate and to rely on.

M: Do you have any chronological order or priority in these three purposes in the program?

Y: We do not have a strict chronological order for these purposes, although we do rank them differently according to their importance. As for time spent, novices may spend more time on learning and emulating teaching routine and skills at the beginning and spend more time on reflective and creative study later on.

"Pedagogical Way of Knowing Will Happen in Teaching Practice"

M: You have addressed what you do in your induction program. Do you think that what you have done must be carried out after formal teacher preparation? Is it possible to design a teacher education program that can accomplish the whole process of teacher preparation in universities?

Y: I don't think that teacher preparation can be totally accomplished in universities. The way that

people study in universities is very different from the way that future teachers are supposed to use what they have learned in the teaching context. In universities, they learn knowledge discipline by discipline. Think about several rivers running on a plain: They may run to the same destination, yet the currents are separated. That is the situation of learning in universities. When the rivers get to the ocean, they merge into one current, and all the original currents combine together. This new current of ocean is the situation of teaching in schools. What beginning teachers would encounter in the teaching context is that all they have learned discipline by discipline and course by course have to go together and be reorganized into a new, dynamic entity.

M: As you referred to the topic of weaving separated disciplines together, I recalled that an American professor termed the way teachers need to know subject matter knowledge as the "pedagogical way of knowing" (Shulman, 1990). You may not have heard the phrase before, yet I have a hunch that what you were talking about resembles the "pedagogical way of knowing."

Y: Well, I think so. Although I do not know what the professor specifically means by this phrase, I like what I can perceive through the phrase—the combining and integration of one's knowledge of different disciplines on a particular standpoint. "Pedagogical way of knowing," if it is not restricted to subject knowledge, is to reorganize one's previous knowledge from the standpoint of teaching and make it into an entirety. In fact, this is not a unique epistemology in teaching. Artists, once they are producing their work, integrate all kinds of their knowledge from the standpoint of artistic expression. The same happens with people in certain professions.

Have you heard a story of the famous ancient Chinese calligrapher Wang Xizhi? One day on his way to visit his friend, he followed two geese several miles to observe the movement of their neck. He was inspired by the delicate action of the goose's neck and wanted to apply it into his calligraphy. We teachers, too, tend to relate various facts in our ordinary life to teaching. In fact, teaching changes our way of knowing—the way of knowing the knowledge of the subjects that we teach is a most obvious example.

M: It is interesting to hear you discuss the idea of "pedagogical way of knowing." What Dr. Shulman (1990) proposed is not the same thing that you described, but there is some overlap, and I see an underlying relation between what you said and what he said. As I understand it,

Dr. Shulman proposed research in the pedagogical way of knowing to improve preservice teacher education. In other words, he intends to introduce the pedagogical way of knowing into preservice teacher education programs. What do you think about this idea?

Y: I think that the integration or weaving together of different kinds of knowledge will happen in practice. Knowledge of different disciplines, logically independent from one another, is not like toy bricks which you can put together at any time you want. There must be a special power to pull them together. What caused Wang Xizhi to approach the goose's neck movement in a calligraphical way? It is his devotion to the art of calligraphy. Calligraphy, the art he pursued in his mental, emotional and aesthetic life, had the power to pull his knowledge together. Yet this only would happen when Wan Xizhi practically and actually concentrated himself on calligraphy.

In practice, one will feel the real necessity and natural motivation to integrate or weave different kinds of knowledge together. Also, only in the practice, will one have a real standpoint from which formerly separated knowledge can be integrated. That is why I think that the "pedagogical way of knowing" will happen when teachers really devote themselves to teaching practice rather than in another context. I don't think that planning to be a teacher could wield enough power to cause the "pedagogical way of knowing."

M: You have raised a very interesting issue which I feel may include more factors, such as teachers' dedication to their career.

Y: Yes. Also, unless teachers have their own group of students, unless they have a real task of teaching a subject matter, their real commitment to both would not be established. Otherwise, I am afraid that a program for cultivating pedagogical ways of knowing will be something like "scratching an itch from outside one's boot."

"Communication With the Community is the Moment for Reflection"

M: You have argued that beginning teachers have to learn teaching while at work, but why should they need experienced teachers? Don't you think that they can survive in practice by themselves?

Y: We believe that working with an appropriate, experienced teacher is productive. Any learning starts with two things: imitation and the communication between someone who doesn't know

and someone who knows. Take the example of your writing a research paper. If you never had read any research papers, would you know how to write one by yourself? In fact, you read, and you are required to read, many research works. Through these demonstrations of papers you not only get what authors say, but also how they say it, what language they are using, and how they organize their argument. Through reading many papers, you get to know how to write a research paper. Then after writing a course paper you get feedback from your professor. You may reflect on your writing by yourself, or, you may go to see him or her to discuss the comments. You will have your own idea in your paper, but you have it expressed in a common frame that people are using. You do not create the frame. If everyone wrote in his or her unique way, using his or her unique language, the research papers would be hard to understand. The same is true for teachers.

The problem is the university is an institution for academic learning, so it is an appropriate place for learning how to do academic work like writing research papers. But universities are not places where you are supposed to do school teaching, so teachers have to learn it in their workplace, the position where they are supposed to work independently. Unfortunately, people, especially university people, do not see this point. No one in a school of education would assume they can write without any learning from reading. But many of them ignore the learning of new teachers from experienced teachers' teaching.

M: But don't you think that all beginning teachers have been exposed to teaching for many years? Lortie (1977), a famous educational sociologist in the United States, thinks that everyone who has been through school has a "passive apprenticeship" of teaching. Don't you think so?

Y: It is true that every educated person has been exposed to teaching practice for decades. But it is definitely different observing teaching practice as a student, as a student teacher, and as a beginning teacher. They look for different things, so they see, in fact, different things. Do you think that an ordinary audience and an actor who starts to learn the role of Hamlet in another company would see the same from a performance of Hamlet? That is the difference between the teaching observation of a student and a student teacher and a beginning teacher.

For the actor who also plays the role of Hamlet, he would spontaneously compare and contrast the actor's performance with his own experience and it will usher in a significant reflection. Of course, to be exposed to a teaching demonstration is not the whole story. We regard the observation of teaching as one moment for reflection and communication within the teacher

community. Being observed by a mentor or by another teacher is another moment that will stimulate interaction between new teachers and the teacher community, too.

M: Donald Schon (1987), who regards teachers as "reflective practitioners," proposed the idea of dialogue between the "coach" and the student teacher. He assumes that a dialogue that will educate a reflective practitioner should have three essential features: (1) it takes place in the context of the student's *doing*; (2) it makes use of actions as well as words; and (3) it depends on reciprocal reflection. He claims that professional education should be redesigned to combine the teaching of applied science with coaching in the artistry of reflection-in-action. For him, the process of inquiry is a trilogy: knowing-in-action, reflection-in-action, and reflection on reflection-in-action.

Y: I think Schon is right. The three features are relevant. I especially appreciate the phrase "reciprocal reflection." In fact, mutual communication provides the opportunity and condition needed to facilitate reflection in depth. In other words, when you allow new teachers to survive on their own, reflection based on communication is lacking. In our program, the demonstration and reciprocal reflection are not limited within the master-apprentice pair. It is more extensive. In the teaching research group, novices have dialogues with other members of the group. For the annual new teacher award nomination, they communicate with other novices and other teachers in the entire school.

"There are Three Conditions for Realizing Dewey's Proposal"

M: You said that class observation is a moment for stimulating reflection. Do you think that it will always happen? For example, is it possible that a new teacher who is suffering discipline troubles comes to observe your class with the purpose of simply "taking" methods to solve his current problems? Some people suspect that improper teaching observation would inhibit individual creativity in new teachers. I like Dewey's explanation of the teaching observation of student teachers:

The student should not be observing to find out how the good teacher does it, in order to accumulate a store of methods by which he also may teach successfully. He should rather observe with reference to seeing the interaction of mind, to see how teacher and pupils react upon each other—how mind answers to mind. Observation should at first be conducted from the psychological rather than from the "practical" standpoint. (as cited in Borrowman, 1965, p.151)

Do you think Dewey's suggestion is only an ideal, or, can it be actually realized? When a beginning teacher comes to observe your class, with the prior concern of his or her "symptoms" rather than root cause, what does he or she really want to see? I am afraid that what they ought to see and what they tend to see would not necessarily match, and the latter, which is more urgent and more emotionally pressing, would prevail.

Y: I don't think what Dewey proposed is a Utopia. From our experience, given that the observers are beginning teachers with their regular concern of classroom arrangement, there may be three conditions for realizing Dewey's proposal. First of all, beginning teachers should be told what they should observe—those that Dewey suggested—and they should be told not to expect to solve the problem overnight. A metaphor I usually like to give to my students is that we eat food, yet we do not expect that food be applied by our body directly, we have to digest it. I ask them to take some time to "digest" my class. They may not accept my suggestion immediately. As you pointed out, what they ought to see does not always match what they tend to see. But being told is better than nothing.

The second condition, which I assume is most important, depends on the experienced teacher and his or her class. For a good class, its active mental activity of teacher and students, its characteristic of active engagement or as the Chinese say "mind reacting to mind" will strike the audience. In a good class, the so-called class management skills are so delicately submerged in the mental activity of the teacher and students that cannot even be perceived by observers. In such a classroom, even though the beginning teacher starts with the motivation of collecting methods or skills, he or she will be soon involved in an atmosphere of "mind reacting to mind." I claim that beginners should observe good classes, in order to cultivate their high-quality connoisseurship of teaching.

M: When you say "connoisseurship," do you mean, as people usually say, the same thing as the capacity to appreciate art works, such as a piece of good music or good painting, et cetera?

Y: Yes. Someone who is unable to appreciate good music can never become a good musician, same with teachers. Before being able to teach well, they have to know how to appreciate high-quality teaching first. They may not be able to reach that quality in a short time, yet they get personally to perceive what a good class is, or what a good class should be. Some people

criticize young teachers for being "fastidious but incompetent." But what is wrong with being fastidious in one's appreciation of teaching? I regard it as a good start for being a good teacher.

We are selective when we choose mentors for new teachers. An experienced teacher does not equal a good teacher. Some experienced teacher are mediocre. We do not choose them as mentors.

The third condition is to reflect on the observed class. After the class, when the impression is still so "fresh," beginners should discuss with the teacher who taught the class. They should say what they like in the class and why, also they should raise points which they don't understand or don't like. The teacher, of course, will explain and discuss with the beginning teachers. I believe that if class observation meets these three conditions, Dewey's idea will be realized.

M: What you said is very inspiring. You have pointed out that it is the substance, rather than the form, of mentoring that makes the difference. In fact, by working with a good mentor, a novice's individual creativity would be excited and supported rather than inhibited.

Y: Exactly right. In fact, we are clearly aware that what we ourselves have accomplished counts a lot for our own innovation and creativity. I never want new teachers to follow me step by step. Qi Baishi was definitely right: "One who learns from me will survive, one who copies me will die."

M: I would like to discuss this topic further. Since we are running out of our time, let's do it next time. Now let me ask you the last question.

"On-the-Job Induction Cannot Replace Formal Teacher Education"

M: Your induction program sounds thoughtful and practical to me. Do you think that the current formal teacher education is still necessary for new teachers coming to teach in your school?

Y: Yes, I think it is necessary. I said earlier that formal teacher education in universities accomplishes half of the task of teacher preparation. The other half is to be realized in school teaching. I don't think either of them can replace the other half. Although I am not satisfied with the present teacher education in our normal universities, I believe that the theoretical

framework they can provide is indispensable for new teachers to develop and form their teaching knowledge later on. This job is what we are not able to do in school teaching. The formal teacher education in normal universities is like the foundation of a house and our instruction program is like the construction of the building above the ground. Both sides are similarly important.

M: It seems to me that we are right on the way to the topic of our next conversation—the relationship between preservice teacher education and inservice teacher education. I enjoyed our conversation and appreciate everything you have said. Thank you.

A Short Conclusion

It seems to be a bit strange to discuss big theoretical debates with a classroom teacher. It seems to be even more strange to discuss these American debates with a Chinese teacher. However, my conversation with Yu Yi shows that a teacher is not just a passive receptor and executor of theory, as many of us in the research field assume, but a critical discussant and an active contributor of theory. A teacher's understanding of theoretical issues even surmounts cultural differences. Without the revelation of the wisdom of teachers, the genius of educational theory will be the single hand that is never able to clap.

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