Not Making or Shaping: Finding Authenticity in Faculty Development

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Authenticity is defined as a multifaceted concept that includes self-awareness, awareness of others, genuine relationships, awareness of contextual constraints, and living a critical life. Authenticity develops over time and with experience; a developmental continuum for authenticity is discussed. Drawing on a three-year research project on authenticity in teaching in higher education, this chapter suggests ways in which faculty developers can help foster authentic practice.

Introduction

I began my practice as a faculty developer in 1976, nearly 30 years ago. At that time, one of our primary concerns was how to increase faculty participation in our various programs, primarily workshops and individual or departmental consultations. The underlying implication was that we needed to get faculty members to change their practice. In 2004, at the 29th annual Conference of the Professional and Organizational Development Network in Higher Education (POD), I noticed that the same kinds of questions are still being asked. How can we “make” people come to faculty development sessions? How can we reach those people who “most need” faculty development? How can we “shape” people’s attitudes?

I propose that attempting to “make” and “shape” denies the authenticity of the faculty member. My research on authenticity in teaching in higher education reveals that educators, through experience, find a variety of ways of becoming authentic and effective in their practice (Cranton & Carusetta, 2004). At the 2004 POD conference, I also heard a participant say, “If we
praise one person, we leave out those we didn’t praise.” It is a fallacy of
democracy that if we do not treat everyone equally, we discriminate against
some. By attempting to treat everyone equally, by attempting to make every­
one into our own version of what a good teacher should be, we renounce
their uniqueness and their authenticity. If we presume to tell people what to
do, we place ourselves above them—superior creatures who know the
answers and hold the key to good teaching.

In this chapter, I first define authenticity, based both on the literature and
on how the concept emerged from my research. I then describe a develop­
mental perspective of authenticity that I constructed from interviews with
new and experienced faculty members over a three-year time span. From this
foundation, I suggest faculty development strategies that take into account
the uniqueness of individuals and their journey to authentic teaching.

What Is Authenticity?

Authenticity is a multifaceted concept that includes being genuine, showing
consistency between values and actions, relating to others in such a way as
to encourage their authenticity, and living a critical life. Authenticity is
most often mentioned in passing in the literature rather than treated as a
central idea. Brookfield (1995), for example, advises us of the importance of
being authentic in our role as an educator, and Scott (1998) lists freedom,
democracy, and authenticity as the goals of transformative learning. Freire
(1984) refers to authentic witness based on a critical knowledge of the con­
text of practice. Cranton (2001) suggests that authenticity is at the core of
meaningful teaching and contributes to the spiral-like journey of individu­
ation and transformative learning. Perhaps it is Palmer (1998) who has
brought authenticity most vividly to our attention in higher education
through his notion that good teaching comes from the identity and integri­
ty of the teacher.

Being Genuine

Cranton (2001) defines authenticity as the expression of the genuine self in the
community and presents a process by which educators come to know them­
selves and their preferences within the social context of their work. She
describes teaching as a specialized form of communication which has learning
as its goal and points out that meaningful communication rests on the prem­
ise that those involved are speaking genuinely and honestly rather than with
an intent to manipulate or deceive. Brookfield (1990) suggests that educators
reveal personal aspects of themselves and their experiences, insofar as they are comfortable doing that, as a part of being genuine.

However, it is important to go beyond a definition of authenticity that focuses only on the self. Authenticity develops in relationships, through dialogue, and in a social and political context. Educators communicate with learners as a way of fostering their development, and this is done within a framework of the social responsibilities of the educator.

• Showing Consistency Between Values and Actions

Brookfield (1993) proposes that being an authentic teacher includes making sure our behaviors are congruent with our words and admitting we do not have all the answers and can make mistakes. He balances credibility and authenticity; educators should practice what they preach and be sure not to espouse one way of working then behave in a different way in their own teaching. Similarly, in discussing personal authenticity, Ray and Anderson (2000) emphasize that actions need to be consistent with beliefs. They see reliance on personal experience rather than “meaningless hype” (p. 8) and falsely objective journalism as the way to develop authenticity.

• Relating to Others

Jarvis (1992) sees people as being authentic when they choose to act so as to “foster the growth and development of each other’s being” (p. 113). Jarvis sees this as an experimental and creative act where educators consciously have the goal of helping another person develop. In other words, teachers and students learn together through dialogue as Freire (1984) advocates, and the result of authentic teaching is that “teachers learn and grow together with their students” (Jarvis, 1992, p. 114). As we know from Buber’s (1961) work, it is only through relationships with others that authenticity can be fostered. Brookfield (1990) also emphasizes building trust with students and respecting students as people. He provides educators with a practical focus—what we can do in the classroom to be authentic.

Freire (1984) outlines six attitudes that need to be present for meaningful and authentic dialogue (dialogue which is not oppressive) to occur: 1) love for the world and human beings, 2) humility, 3) faith in people and their power to create and recreate, 4) trust, 5) hope that the dialogue will lead to meaning, and 6) critical thinking and the continuing transformation of reality. Authenticity develops in relationships among people and is expressed in dialogue.

Hollis (1998), a Jungian, helps integrate an understanding of persona (the masks we wear) with the importance of relationships in authenticity. To
enter into an authentic relationship requires self-understanding. "The quality of all our relationships is a direct function of our relationship to ourselves. . . . The best thing we can do for our relationships with others, and with the transcendent, then, is to render our relationship to ourselves more conscious" (Hollis, p. 13). The quality of relationships depends on how well we know ourselves and how authentically we bring ourselves to the relationship.

Although Jung (1921/1971) does not write directly about authenticity, the notion of persona plays a vital role in his understanding of human psychology. The persona is that aspect of an individual's psyche that lives up to what is expected and proper. We cover up our inferiorities with a persona; we are vulnerable without it. As Sharp (1998) says, "Civilized society depends on interactions between people through the persona" (p. 27). It becomes unhealthy when a person believes he or she is nothing but a persona or mask—no more than what is shown to others. This is inauthentic.

Leading a Critical Life

Jarvis (1992) suggests that authenticity is linked with reflective learning. People need to develop as autonomous and rational individuals within their social context. When people's actions are "controlled by others and their performance is repetitive and ritualistic" (pp. 115–116), they are inauthentic. Heidegger (1962) sees authenticity as involving critical participation in life. By critical participation, he means we question how we are different from the community and live accordingly; we do not do something just because it is done that way by others or believe what others believe without considering whether it is true for us. This is a good way of understanding authenticity because we need to know who we are and what we believe and then act on that. However, this does not mean that we make such decisions in isolation. Authenticity involves knowing and understanding the collective and carefully and critically determining how we are different from and the same as that collective. Sharp (1995) suggests the first fruit of consciously developing as an authentic person is the "segregation of the individual from the undifferentiated and unconscious herd" (p. 48). In Jungian terms, this is individuation, and it includes not only separation from the herd, but also a simultaneous rejoining in a more meaningful way with the collective of humanity.

Thinking along parallel lines, Freire (1984) argues that authenticity comes through having a critical knowledge of the context within which we work and seeing the principal contradictions of that society. To be authentic, the educator is bold, dares to take risks, and recognizes that he or she will not always win over the people.
In order to create a genuine self, we need to critically participate in life rather than run with the unconscious herd. Part of this journey is understanding how others are different from us without attempting to make them into our own image; that is, we help others discover their authenticity as a way of fostering our own authenticity.

Research on Authenticity

Using a grounded theory methodology (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), my colleagues and I interviewed and observed 22 faculty members from three university campuses over the course of three years. Participants came from the following disciplines: administration (business), philosophy, computer science, education, forestry, kinesiology, nursing, English, biology, psychology, botany, classics, and economics. There were 13 women and 9 men. Seven participants were new faculty in their first or second year of full-time teaching, and 15 were experienced teachers. We report on the full details of the methodology elsewhere (Cranton & Carusetta, 2004).

In order to search for developmental trends, we followed the transcripts of individuals over the three years of the project and also looked at differences between new and experienced participants. The conceptualization of authenticity that emerged from the research included five interrelated categories: self, other, relationship, context, and critical reflection.

: Self
Faculty spoke about their awareness of themselves as people and as teachers, how they came to be a teacher, what that meant for them, their values, their passions, the conflicts they experienced between the realities of teaching and their values, and the ways in which they brought themselves as people into their practice. They spoke of teaching as a calling or a vocation, as something that gave meaning to their lives. Most faculty spoke about the importance of bringing their sense of self into the classroom, though the degree to which people felt comfortable with revealing aspects of their personal lives varied. Everyone had stories to tell about how they became who they are as teachers, including stories about individuals who helped shape their perspectives.

: Other
Faculty recognized the importance of understanding others, especially their students. They showed a strong interest in and awareness of their students' characteristics, needs, and learning styles. Some participants also were aware
of and concerned with students' personal problems and lives outside of the classroom, but others preferred to stay more distant.

: Relationship
The most commonly discussed facet of authenticity was the relationship between teacher and student. This was broadly defined to include helping students learn, caring for students, engaging in dialogue, and being aware of exercising power. Faculty talked about the nature of their relationships with students, and many struggled with where the boundary of their relationships should be, especially in light of their responsibilities for evaluation and grading. Underlying many of our conversations was an intense and powerful sense of caring about students and their learning. We also found a variety of perceptions of how power contributed to or inhibited relationships between educators and students.

: Context
The context within which faculty work influences their perceptions of themselves, their students, and their relationships with students. Context consists of several levels:

- The content of the teaching
- The discipline or subject area
- The physical classroom, including the size of the class and the room arrangement
- The psychological environment within the learning group
- The department in which people work and its norms and expectations
- Institutional norms and policies
- The general community or culture and the roles people expect faculty to maintain

Typically, faculty worked to create a comfortable atmosphere. They tended to speak positively about their departmental contexts in terms of the support they felt for being who they were and teaching in a way that suited their preferences. At the broader institutional level, people expressed some of the usual conflict between teaching and research responsibilities.
Critical Reflection

Critical reflection was a strong theme throughout our conversations with faculty. Participants in the project questioned their teacher roles, the effectiveness of the methods they used, their ability to promote student learning, and evaluation and grading issues. Critical self-reflection and critical reflection on faculty relationships with students were the most common, but participants also reflected on student characteristics and the context of their teaching. Newer faculty were more interested in learning about and conforming to the social expectations of their role; more experienced faculty were more likely to differentiate themselves from collective norms.

The Development of Authenticity

For each of the five facets of authenticity, we found a developmental progression that tended to move from fragmented, authority-based perceptions to more integrated, constructed understandings.

In their perceptions of self and self as teacher, the less experienced teachers tend to separate who they are as a teacher from who they are outside of their practice. Their teaching self was often described as an authority figure. New faculty reported on teaching according to what they had read or learned in a faculty development workshop. Acquiring techniques and tips and developing a "toolkit" were mentioned as priorities. New faculty were less comfortable in telling personal anecdotes in class or letting students see who they are. More experienced participants did not make this separation, or if they did, they did so deliberately and after considerable reflection on where and how they saw their teaching-self as different from their personal-self. Mature authenticity also involved a deep and often intense questioning of self.

The spectrum of awareness of others (primarily students) ranged from specific, unquestioned perceptions where all students are seen to possess the same characteristic through to a complex, multifaceted awareness of the diversity of others and a concern for students' personal development. For example, a young social science professor perceived her students solely in relation to their year of study (first-year students are like this, but third-year students are like that), but a professor of English literature who had been teaching for more than 30 years was deeply concerned that students get to know each other as individuals. In between, we saw people with an understanding of individual differences in learning styles, usually related to the acquisition of knowledge, and a consciousness of students' level of development and their engagement in critical reflection.
Faculty in the beginning phases of authenticity described their relationships with students according to concrete rules. They saw themselves as maintaining a distance, staying on one side of a line that separated their educator role from their students or basing the nature of the relationships on their position as teacher. They did not raise power issues, and when asked, they said they were not aware of power differentials in the classroom or they did not have power, even though they also talked about maintaining control and authority. New faculty were often concerned about being in charge of the events in the classroom. Those participants who demonstrated a more mature authenticity tended to emphasize students' development through relationships. For example, a senior nursing faculty member saw her primary goal as helping students make fundamental shifts in perspective in collaborative working groups. Experienced faculty were conscious of how their own development was influenced by interactions with students, and they expressed complex and sometimes contradictory perceptions of their relationships with students. In between these two points of view, we found faculty who had thought about their relationships with students and had a rationale for the way they chose to establish connections and those who allowed for a variety of ways of relating to students in different contexts.

In their awareness of the influence of context on practice, faculty mentioned a diverse collection of factors, ranging from the subject area to departmental, institutional, and social norms. New faculty tended to develop rules about the context of teaching. Context was seen to be inflexible and unchangeable. A faculty member from a business program created and followed a rule that required him to explain new material to students. Although new faculty members were aware of the influence of context, they did not see that there would be anything they could do about it. In the next phase, the awareness was more complex, but still maintained a cause-and-effect influence on teaching. For example, if the class size was too large, then it was impossible to have students work in groups. At the more mature levels of authenticity, participants questioned the influence of context, struggled with it, and looked for ways to challenge it so that they could fully express their own values and beliefs. An experienced literature professor challenged and bypassed policies on dropping courses.

Everyone involved in the project engaged in critical reflection on practice, but the nature of the reflection varied. Faculty members in the beginning phases of authenticity tended to reflect on the use of specific techniques and strategies and to look for solutions to teaching problems: what is happening and what can I do about it? For example, a young humanities teacher was looking for practical solutions to the problem of disappointing term papers.
At the other end of the continuum, the focus was on questioning the premises underlying educators’ conceptualization of themselves, their students, and the context within which they work. A senior scholar in the humanities demonstrated “premise reflection” in his struggle to question the meaning of “good teaching.” In between, we found people paying attention to how they came to be the teacher they are and thinking more broadly about the techniques of teaching. These faculty members also reflected on institutional norms and others’ expectations of what a good teacher should be like.

Helping Authentic Teachers Develop

More and more, I find it presumptuous to say that I am a “faculty developer,” which seems to imply that I can “develop” others. I deliberately chose a heading here that emphasizes helping teachers develop—it is they who develop; it is I who provide suggestions, resources, and activities for that journey. I argue that we often, in faculty development work, try to make faculty members teach according to our own perceptions of what is right and good or, less overtly, try to shape their attitudes and beliefs to be more in line with our own notion of best practices. As an alternative, it is my intent here to challenge faculty developers to work with faculty members to develop their authentic way of being a good teacher. I use the five facets of authenticity as a framework for this discussion.

Development of Self and Teacher as Self

Elsewhere, I propose a variety of strategies for helping faculty members develop self-awareness as a way of becoming more authentic (Cranton, 2001). I draw on some of those ideas here. In order for educators to bring a genuine sense of self into their teaching, a good self-awareness is helpful. To this end, I suggest that faculty members engage in a variety of activities:

- List and reflect on nouns or noun phrases that define their self, and if it is comfortable, share and discuss that list with a friend or colleague.
- Complete a psychological type preference, learning style, or teaching style inventory and discuss the results with a friend or colleague.
- List and reflect on significant experiences that have changed the way they see themselves and their teaching.
- List and reflect on 10 personal and 10 professional values.
Finding Authenticity in Faculty Development

- Write an educational autobiography.
- Consider areas of discrepancy or fragmentation between personal and professional preferences, behaviors, and values.

If the educator is willing, it can be useful to discuss the results of such activities with the faculty developer or with colleagues in a workshop. The goal should be to increase self-awareness and especially to determine how a sense of self is brought into teaching.

Development of Awareness of Students as People

In developing authenticity in teaching, the focus cannot be only on the self. This path takes us into what Taylor (1991) calls narcissistic authenticity—the notion of self-determining freedom where individuals make judgments for themselves alone without external impositions and find a license to do their own thing and find self-fulfillment at the expense of others and society. At a broader social level, the purely personal understanding of self-fulfillment denies commitment to a community. Increasing awareness of others in the teaching and learning environment is part of being able to engage in authentic relationships, which form the basis of authentic teaching. In order to help faculty members develop an awareness of students as people, faculty developers could suggest some of the following:

- Arrange to have students complete a learning styles inventory or psychological type preference assessment and discuss those results in groups in the class.
- Encourage students to talk about their experiences as they relate to the course content.
- Take time to meet individually with students outside of the class to get to know them; have an open door.
- Chat with students informally in the hallways or cafeterias; join students during a break for a cup of tea.
- Collect frequent feedback from students about their reactions to the course, their feelings about how things are going, and their suggestions for changes.
- Set up a listserv or a web-based discussion forum for students to exchange and discuss ideas.
When faculty are encouraged to get to know their students as people, the focus of teaching moves away from the *performance* of the faculty member to the characteristics and desires of the students—a transition from teacher-centered to student-centered learning almost follows automatically. Teaching comes to be about relationship and communication, rather than the handing over of information to a relative stranger.

**Development of Relationships With Students**

Whatever faculty do to develop an awareness of their students as people will feed into the development of a relationship. It is only when we objectify people—see them as objects or see them only in relation to their role—that we have no relationship. Relationships cannot develop between roles or personas. Students cannot make a connection with an educator who only plays the role of teacher, and teachers cannot make a connection with students when they see them as a generalized category. Awareness of the humanity of the other is the basis for relationship, and I argue that relationship is the foundation of authentic teaching. Palmer (1998) says that when he “asks teachers to name the biggest obstacle to good teaching, the answer [he] most often hears is ‘my students’” (p. 40). They are unmotivated, illiterate, cannot engage in meaningful discussions, and on the list goes. When we stereotype students, Palmer suggests, we widen the disconnect between students and teachers.

What we cannot do is tell faculty members what kind of relationship they should have with students. This presumes that there is one good relationship, a sort of persona of a relationship. In our research, we met educators who had a variety of ways of relating with students, each of which was true to the person’s values and preferences. They ranged from fairly close and personal relationships, which included inviting students to dinner or other social gatherings, to more distant collegial relationships where the connection was based on a common interest in the subject area. The tasks of the faculty developer might include:

- Helping faculty members determine what style of relationship with students is most congruent with their values and personal preferences.

- Engage in discussions and activities which tease out the assumptions people make about how teachers and students “should” relate to each other—what are the social norms related to student-teacher relationships? Critically question those norms.

- Use videos, films, or novels that depict different relationships between educators and students.
• Encourage faculty to discuss with colleagues how they establish good relationships with students—share stories and experiences, work toward an understanding of alternative ways of connecting with others so as to find the way that best suits the individual.

Palmer (1998) writes that when “authentic community emerges, false differences in power and status disappear” (p. 138). Much of academic life is based on autonomy. We may collaborate on research projects or writing articles, but in the end, we go up alone to have our publications counted and our reward given. When this sense of autonomy is taken into the classroom, as it often is, we set ourselves as independent from and apart from the students. But when we find a genuine and open way of relating to students so as to create an authentic sense of community, learning can occur at new and deeper levels. I propose that faculty developers can help faculty do this, and that it has nothing to do with technique and everything to do with being oneself.

: Development of Awareness of the Teaching Context

Teaching is a social process that takes place within a context. The discipline, the institution, the community, and state and society all form a context for teaching, though most of us are more aware of the immediate context than the larger one. Faculty developers can be helpful in increasing awareness of the influence of context on authenticity in teaching. Institutional policies and procedures can pose some serious constraints to authenticity, and when people are unaware of them, it can be hard to sort out what the problem is. I make a few suggestions for faculty developers here:

• Help faculty members find out about both the written and the unwritten policies of their institution—everything from attendance policies and syllabus requirements to rewards for good teaching and the budgetary and resource availability.

• Encourage faculty members to explore written and unwritten departmental policies as they may differ from the overall institutional norms.

• Help faculty members determine where they stand in relation to institutional policies (are there policies with which they disagree, are there policies which violate their values?) and act as an advocate for change for faculty.

• Plan cross-departmental and cross-institutional discussion groups where faculty can compare contexts.
• Encourage people to participate in conferences on teaching either in their discipline or more general meetings such as the Professional and Organizational Development Network where they can learn about a variety of teaching contexts.

• Explore with faculty the types of communities to which they belong—communities based on shared interests such as professional associations, communities based on shared experiences such as attending school together, and geographical communities.

• Engage in activities with faculty which define the educational values and social norms of relevant communities and discuss how those values and norms influence teaching.

• Collect information about broad social expectations of educators—news stories, teacher movies, government policies, and funding for higher education reflect attitudes toward teaching.

Oddly, teaching is often seen as a solitary activity. We are “alone” with our students in our classroom, and talking about teaching is not a priority in most departments. If faculty do not share experiences about teaching, especially across disciplines and institutions, it may be difficult to know how influential context actually is. Whatever faculty developers can do to encourage exchange of information and consciousness-raising in relation to educational social norms will be useful. The greatest constraints to authenticity that faculty experience come from their teaching context.

3. Development of Criticality

There has been considerable attention paid to critical reflection on teaching, and most faculty developers encourage reflective practice. Brookfield (2005) outlines four traditions of criticality:

• Ideology critique (ways in which people recognize uncritically assimilated and unjust dominant ideologies or sociocultural distortions)

• The identification of psychocultural assumptions that constrain how we see ourselves and our relationships

• Analytic philosophy and logic through which we become more skillful in argument analysis

• Pragmatic constructivism by which people construct and deconstruct their experiences and meanings
Each of these traditions has its place in developing authenticity, but perhaps ideology critique, whereby faculty examine the context of their teaching, and the identification of psychocultural assumptions, whereby faculty question their self-awareness and their relationships with students, are most relevant here. Brookfield (1990, 1995) also provides practical strategies for becoming a reflective teacher, many of which will be familiar to faculty developers. I make some suggestions here:

- Build critical reflection activities into workshops and seminars; for example, have faculty complete critical incidents where they describe a best or worst teaching experience and analyze it for underlying assumptions about teaching.

- Encourage faculty to keep a journal or a shared journal (with a colleague or friend) in which they write about and consider assumptions underlying their practice.

- Help people write a philosophy of practice in which values and assumptions are articulated and critically questioned.

- Provide reading materials or videos in which alternative approaches to teaching are presented.

- Ask faculty to immerse themselves into an aesthetic or artistic experience as a way of imagining alternatives to their current practice; this type of experience can help people break away from linear problem-solving approaches to teaching.

- Provide the opportunity for role playing or critical debate in which faculty try on perspectives different from their own.

Mezirow's (1991) concepts of content, process, and premise reflection are helpful here as well. In content reflection, people ask, "What is the problem here?" and in process reflection, they consider, "How did this get to be the way it is?" Premise reflection leads to an exploration of the assumptions underlying the situation, as people ask, "Why is this important in the first place?" To translate this into an examination of teaching, the reflective process might look like this: "My students cannot write a coherent essay. What is going on here?" Process reflection could take the form: "My colleagues all say that students can't write anymore; they are practically illiterate. How did this situation come about? Is this true of all students? How could this be the case?" And finally, the premise reflection questions might include: "Why is writing important? Whose responsibility is this? Why am I
accepting my colleague's point of view? What are some alternative ways of understanding this situation?"

Leading a critical life as an educator means separating out who we are from who others think we should be by critically questioning ourselves and our practice. Faculty developers have an important role to play in facilitating this aspect of becoming authentic.

Conclusion

Several years ago, I worked with a colleague who, at the end of a class, was so stressed and exhausted that he had to lie on the floor of his office for a time. I knew him outside of the classroom, and I knew how he taught. In order to try to live up to what he thought were the expectations of a professor, he taught in ways that were completely incongruent with his nature. Stress is just one danger of inauthentic practice. Communication with students is put at risk; students may see the inauthentic teacher as a fraud; and it is quite possible that no one will appreciate the effort to follow social norms anyway.

In doing research on, writing about, and teaching courses related to authenticity, I am always struck by the powerful draw that this concept has for people. In three years, no one dropped out of our research project, even though folks were extremely busy with many other things. Some people came in for interviews, even though they were on sabbatical. My courses on authenticity are always oversubscribed and workshops well attended. I suspect that in a time where the academic culture encourages fragmentation of knowledge and disconnected lives, it just feels good to think about integration of facets of our self and authentic connections. I hope that this brief foray into authenticity will assist those who help faculty to develop.

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