Educator's Model of Professional Development

This model says that there are four stages of the educator's professional growth: (1) Content, (2) Process, (3) Perception-timing and (4) Permission.

1. *Content*

Initially for the teacher, the content that she is teaching is 100% of what she is concerned with. This level of development includes the knowledge of the subject and the verbiage of communicating that knowledge. This professional development level is the *what* of the course content.

2. *Process*

As the educator becomes more familiar with the *what* of the subject matter, she starts to focus on and improve in utilizing the non-verbal components of communication. At this level, the teacher increases her repertoire of techniques and maneuvers of *how* the content can be delivered the teacher experiments. The teacher *practices* behaviors like talking/moving slow, visually showing information on the board instead of just being oral, greeting students at the door on certain days vs. not greeting them on other days. In essence, the teacher increases their range of behaviors.

The teacher is starting to move past a philosophical view of education. A Philosophy of Education is like the training wheels on a bicycle, it provides a new teacher with a sense of balance. But like the bike, the person isn't really riding because something external is providing the artificial stability. At the process level, the teacher is moving beyond sayings like, "I always do…" or the equally deadly preface, "I would never…" As a professional she is realizing that experience doesn't necessarily produce wisdom. The only thing that experience provides is habits. The ever-learning teacher continually adds to their toolbox.

3. *Perception – Timing*

Once the teacher has an array of techniques they turn their concentration on to *when* to employ which maneuvers and options. She is more observant of the effect their behaviors have on the class. With a modicum of experience the teacher has *purpose* and is selecting non-verbal behaviors based on whether or not the techniques will move the class in a purposeful direction. There are at least three stages of increasing perception-timing: flexibility, perception of the present and long-term perception.

Flexibility
Initially the teacher has a sense of what their outcome for a given lesson is and is flexible as they progress toward that outcome. They might employ a *Frozen Hand Gesture* to get the class' attention and if that doesn't work the teacher switches to the *Freeze Body* technique. The teacher has *backup* systems.

Perception of the Present
Eventually the teacher moves beyond *flexibility* and can *plan* which skills will serve the teacher's outcome. The educator is proactive. This is a most exciting breakthrough for the teacher's professional growth because the teacher can finally *predict* what is likely to happen. They learn that when they talk and move slowly the room is calmer, and yet there are times when the class is too placid and therefore she intentionally talks and moves fast to increase the metabolism of the pupils. This level of professional growth is *perception of the now:* the wisdom of recognizing what is happening at the moment.

This is the level of professional development we aim for in *ENVoY* and *A Cat in the Doghouse (ACDH)*. *ENVoY* and *ACDH* include a feature not frequently found in adult education; teachers do the skill the *least recommended* way as well as the *recommended* way. The element of doing the *least recommended* format is an integral part of the *ENVoY* and *ACDH.* The intention is to increase the teacher's perception of how her behaviors affect the class. Optimistically, the hope is y doing the *least recommended* methods the teacher will discover new skills instead of just practicing the *ENVoY* skills that Michael Grinder has discovered. As mentioned in the Introduction, we educators have a tendency to swap some of our old, less effective management habits for newer, more effective *ENVoY* habits. Namely, the teacher's management being more visual. So, while we are honored with so many educators and schools endorsing the *ENVoY* and *ACDH* skills and concepts, we are disappointed that teachers are not intentionally doing the *least recommended* in their classroom. We are disappointed because we know that a teacher doing the *least recommended* technique with excellent *timing* is more effective than the educator doing the *recommended* technique with poor *timing.* The purpose of encouraging teachers to do the *least recommended* is not an end in itself. No teacher wants to make a "mistake." Doing the skill, the *least recommended* way, is not a mistake if intentionally done.

Long Term Perception
Sometimes the Perception of the Present can be deceptive because what will work in September might inadvertently set up a disaster in late November. Long-term Perception follows the saying, "Sometimes we toil to plant management seeds early in the school year so we can rest under the shade of the management tree in the spring." The teacher has a sense of the long-term effect of behaviors on dynamics. They are able to *predict* what is likely to happen on a given day but also goes beyond being myopic and can see what the future is likely to hold.

4. Permission (Receptivity)

Trying to define "permission" is difficult for a number of reasons. The biggest reason is that the concept of *permission* is a paradigm shift. When the cognitive modus operandi starts to change, we are more aware of what the new paradigm is not rather than what it is. This and the next page is a summary of some of the emerging elements of *permission.*

Rapport/Short Term vs. Relationship/Long Term

Permission is not rapport. Rapport is often equated with getting a "yes." The ability to pace and lead another is often short term. Footage of an interaction can be analyzed and the degree of rapport determined. *Permission* is a sophisticated concept because it is only understandable when viewed from longer time perspective. *Permission* values *relationships* over the *issue* level.

Meta Model

Permission is sophisticated because skills and strategies are never found in isolation nor in the same order.[1] Furthermore, the skills and strategies are usually from a variety of models, notably Fisher & Ury (3 Levels of Communication), J. DeLozier & J. Grinder (3 Perspectives of Communication), and Herb Cohen (3 Variable of Communication). The model of *permission* is part of Michael Grinder's model (3 Levels of Professional Development).

Breathing/Fluidity

The most reliable physiological evidence of *permission* is deep breathing. Since the by-products of deep breathing are more respectfully viewed than actual deep breathing, we are interested in these by-products: fluidity of movement, fluidity of finding words and stillness.

Observing

The ability to notice *permission* comes from the perceptual training being outside yourself. Essential to this is the ability to non-possessively "see and hear" without interpretations.

Power/Influence

Our position will give us *power.* What we really want is receptivity from our subordinates. Our world is shifting from *power* toward *influence. Power* can never empower; only *influence* does this. In terms of positional communication, information, cooperation, and receptivity are like water, they don't flow uphill. *Permission* and *influence* are kissing cousins.

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[1] From Susan Albert

Proactive vs. Reactive Timing
The urge to "fix it" places us in a *power* position. The *permission* equivalent is "acknowledging." If we don't have time, we miss the opportunity to acknowledge and have to solve. The most obvious example of timing is the strategy for dealing with *attacks*.

Feedback/Visual
Information that is presented orally inadvertently creates a dependency in the recipient of that information. The visual format is one of the prerequisites for *permission* to blossom.

Decontamination
A higher position tends to make the person have special challenges to obtain permission. Being able to sort when the individual is being in their best position and when they are being a person is the key. The process of sorting the nonverbal behaviors of position and person is decontamination.

New Age Guilt (N.A.G.)[2]
Our current paradigms include a tenet that "We have all the resources needed to do anything that someone else can do." For this reason, we become interested in modeling others. When we don't get the results that we anticipate, we tend to blame ourselves. We literally *nag* ourselves, hence the title. The internal self-flagellation come from the corollary tenet, "There are no resistant clients, only inflexible professionals." *Permission* is a model that remove New Age Guilt.

Group Dynamics
Loosely applying Margaret Wheatley's concepts to group dynamics, we would find that the "whole is greater than the sum of the parts." There is an entity apart from the members. From the *permission* perspective, "It is never my group, it is the group's group."

Closing Thought
By the time a paradigm can be fully described, the shift is already behaviorally employed. Our *mission* is to increase our *permission*.

The above perception levels are an understanding of what happens when the teacher selects and implements a skill. On the above levels, it appears that the teacher had a *choice* of selecting a skill. The impression is that the teacher is *in charge*. Most educators refer to their pupils as, "My class." This level of educational wisdom leads an educator to believe that they can obtain results and, in fact, are responsible for obtaining results.

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[2] from Greg Meyer, Australia

In contrast, *Permission* is a very different level of professional development. As the instructor develops perception and timing, the ultimate goal is broached. On this, the ultimate level of professional growth, the teacher knows her position will give her *power,* but what the wise instructor wants is permission/receptivity. At this level the question is, "If it is appropriate to employ certain techniques." For example, a teacher can have all the high expectations in the world but without relationships with her class, there is no increase in student performance. As Dr. Comer says, "No significant learning occurs without a significant relationship."[3]

Likewise, the permission level occurs when the teacher recognizes the numerous choice points during a lesson that they have. The teacher knows the *recommended* technique but may select not do it because in a given circumstance no maneuver will work. In essence, a *recommended* technique doesn't exist.

Vignette: Thanksgiving

Ms. Flex has developed a routine of cueing the primary class for attention by doing the *ABOVE (pause) Whisper* technique. However, it is the last day before the Thanksgiving holiday. The students are so rambunctious that using the technique wouldn't be very effective. And because the *ABOVE (pause) Whisper* has been such a very effective technique, using it now would only contaminate the technique. Therefore, the teacher foregoes what would normally be an effective methodology. Instead the teacher uses the backup variation of *ABOVE (Pause) Step-down to a Whisper.[4] The teacher spots a student with a sealed drinking bottle across the room. She rushes to it with enthusiasm, squealing loudly, "Look! Look!" Grabbing the container, the teacher has everyone frozen and riveted on her. Ms. Flex then proceeds to slow down her movement, lower her voice volume and speed. Moving toward the front of the room, she says, "This is exactly what we need for our lesson today!" By now she is back at the front of the room, her voice is at a whisper as the class leans forward with curiosity, "What could this water bottle possibly have to do with our lesson??" Silently placing the container on the board, the teacher traces the bottom, thus forming a circle. Slowly turning around and facing the class, she now has their metabolism at the desired stillness she wants. The teacher cleverly announces in a low voice, "We are going to explore the number zero today."*

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[3] 1995 Dr. James Comer, Yale University, Conference in Houston, Texas.
[4] *ENVoY,* page 20, #2.

By preserving the *ABOVE (pause) Whisper* technique, the teacher will be able to use it with its full effectiveness when the class returns from vacation. The permission level is the evaluative stage of the teacher's professional development. And with it comes a very different view of success. Previously the teacher thought they were successful when their desired outcomes were obtained. Now the teacher is operating on the permission definition of success, "How did I manage based on the level of permission I was able to obtain?" In a pejorative sense, it is no longer "my class" because the class has an existence apart from me.

Vignette: It won't work

Later that same morning the class is ready to go to music. Ms. Flex employs the procedure where students silently walk in a straight line with hands to themselves. The excitement of the season, augmented with the possibility of the first snowfall of the year, results in chaos. She has to stop the line twice and angrily raises her voice just to get their attention. After dropping them off at the music room, she collects herself and realizes her normal routines are not working. She realizes that she's going to end up struggling to control them, yet she doesn't have a backup plan for this situation. When she picks them up at the end of the music period she, in a whispery tone, starts signing, "This old man, he played one…" the class joins in. Knowing she is violating the norm that she has taught them of "Silence in the hallways," she takes a longer, circuitous route back to the classroom. Once back in the classroom she tolerates a noisier than "normally allowed" classroom.

The teacher arrives at an understanding that the control of the classroom isn't solely determined by "me." "I" cannot control the class. In fact, sometimes I cannot even control myself. A more sophisticated definition of manipulation and ethics is found. As Nelson Mandela says, acknowledging one's abilities is a humbling experience. On the hard days our emotional chorus is, "Sometimes I can manipulate myself and in so doing influence others." At the end of the day as Ms. Flex drives home, she reflects on how well she didn't manipulate her eyes, voice, body and breathing to influence the class. She wisely reflects and rehearses how she plans to handle the situation on the last week before Winter Break.

On the permission level of professional development, the instructor assigns value to her effort not the results. This is where true professional comfort is found. While the teacher seeks to operate via rapport, she is comfortable with power and authority when influence and relationship are absent. The instructor knows, answering the questions, "How much influence do I have?" determines how much power I will have to use.

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Vignette: "Frankly, I can't adjust."

Frank has taught junior high for six years. He is quick to recognize a change in the seasons of the classroom. Today they are off the wall. For whatever reason, the students need a lot of control. Frank has already raised his voice twice. He can feel his blood pressure rising. He catches himself and calmly reflects, "I know they need me to change the curriculum to match their mood. Darn, I would like to change the curriculum but we have to cover the end of Chapter Six to stay on schedule for next Tuesday's final test." So, he has the class turn their chairs so they face the sideboard. He then teaches them from this spot. And while they see him as being in a "bad mood," he actually is fine inside because he is comfortable using power for the rest of the period.

Strategies for the Decision-making Process

The following are strategies and patterns to employ. Because we are grappling with the area of group dynamics, the following information could apply to an individual, a subgroup or the whole group. To simplify, the phrase "person" will be used to denote all the possibilities.

It is more likely that the *appearance of phantom people* will occur during the person's sense of *time* is essential in assisting the person: when the person is not comfortable in the *phase* back to the current one.

For example, a teacher is talking to a credible administrator who values definitiveness. The teacher says, "You are committed to making decisions. Because of your willingness to make difficult decisions, the staff has a sense of safety. (The administrator is comfortable with the Deciding phase. The teacher has acknowledged this. Next the teacher will tie the Deciding phase to the Gathering phase.) This current situation warrants more information to be patiently gathered so that the decision will not only be definitive but final and wise."

Gathering Phase: Credible Person

The tendency of this person is to skip this phase and get to the next phase, **Evaluating,** where the person's non-verbal mannerisms are perceived as valuable by other "*evaluators/deciders."* The pattern is to keep this person's impatience in mind (and a tendency to be committed to "truth" and think in terms of non-individuals, e.g., figures and numbers). Then indicate, usually with a *credible* voice in the 3rd *perspective,* how it is in the person's best interest (e.g., long-lasting solution because the appropriate information has been *gathered*) to spend more time in the phase. Any maneuvers which increase the person's voice pattern towards being more *approachable* will increase the flow of information. Keep the person breathing deep.

Gathering Phase: Approachable Person

The tendency of this person is to spend a long time in this phase. This is where the person's non-verbal mannerisms are perceived as valuable by other "*gatherers."* He might actually be reluctant to move into the next phase. The pattern is to keep this person's comfort (and tendency not to want to "impose" on others and to think of the individual(s) who would be adversely affected by any of the choices of the next phases) with the *gathering* phase in mind and reassure them as to the following points:
1. The purpose of *gathering* the information is to move towards *evaluating/deciding.*
2. We rarely have the *time* to *gather* all the possible information.
3. During the *implementing* phase, we will have the opportunity to *gather* feedback.

Evaluating & Deciding Phases: Credible Person
This person is in his glory. The pattern is to keep them mindful that while the ability to eliminate information and therefore narrow choices down is admirable, the purpose is to constantly check to see if the needed information has been *gathered.* If not, return to the initial phase of the decision-making process. Help the person understand how individuals and their needs are what make the *decision* work during the *implementing* phase.

Evaluating & Deciding Phases: Approachable Person
The person shies from these phases. Keep the person breathing. Call upon the person's humanitarian motivation; "We are trying to figure out how the greatest number of people can be served," and "No *decision* is a *decision* and people will be affected." Help the person understand that during the *implementing phase* the opportunity for feedback is really the recycling of the *decision-making process* back to the *gathering phase.*

Implementing Phase: Credible Person

The *credible* oriented person is drawn to and able to be promoted to higher positions. The higher the position the less the person knows what is really going on. The higher position is often more *time* pressure oriented and therefore jumps from one decision to the next decision with little *time* given to how the decision was carried out. As good as the credible person gets at analyzing information and making decisions, without the feedback loop of the *implementing* phase, the person cannot improve their decision-making abilities. Use a factual 3rd *perspective* to have the person understand it is in his future best interest to be attentive to the *implementing* phase.

Implementing Phase: Approachable Person

The *approachable* person is in heaven when involved with the feedback portion of the *implementing* phase. Use the same caution mentioned in *the Approachable Person During the Gathering, Evaluating and Decisional* phases.