



Teacher Educator Story 2



Read through this story and see what teacher educator dilemma(s) you can spot.

For many years I worked as a teacher in secondary education and a school-based teacher educator (SBTE) overseeing the placement of students in my school. Four years ago I started to work as an institute-based teacher educator (IBTE).

Somewhere mid-October I went to the first meeting of the team with SBTEs of different teaching schools with whom I work as an IBTE. This SBTE-team had already had several meetings this academic year. Only recently I received the invitation to attend this meeting. I notice that I'm somewhat nervous. The reason is that I know that this SBTE-team has had an unpleasant experience with a colleague-IBTE of mine who attended the meetings in the past. The SBTE would rather train the student teachers alone, without cooperation of a colleague-IBTE of the teacher education institute. But that isn't what the partnership is about, so an IBTE must join with the SBTE-team. That IBTE is me! My assignment – especially directed by my institute - is to join and NOT be the all- or better-knowing IBTE; OK – that's the role I must play. I'm a little nervous, and ask myself: will I be accepted by them?

After the introductions (who is who, and the goal of the meeting), I receive the material that's going to be used by the students in the upcoming weeks. Just to get insight into the process of how this material is developed, I ask for the minutes of the last meetings. It turns out there are none, but they seem to like the idea of making notes during every meeting and add it to a list of agreements made. So, would they live up to expectations? I'm feeling a little bit awkward, and am thinking 'I hope they don't think that I think that they aren't professional'.

While they are talking about several things that are nothing to do with me I browse the material the SBTE-team has made for the students. Coincidentally the references get my attention because they don't conform to referencing that we require the students to use, so this referencing system should also be used correctly in teaching materials for students, developed by SBTEs. Realizing that I'm instructed not to be the wise IBTE, I hesitate to mention it. I am waiting for the right moment, so I'm glad that one of the SBTEs brings up some minor things that should be changed. During tea break I tell the SBTEs 'While you have to make some changes as asked, perhaps you could also take a look at the references. A couple of books aren't referred to properly, using the referencing system. I just noticed'. One of the SBTEs says thanks. It seems OK.

After the break we discuss the material, especially the themes and contents concerning the first meeting for the student teachers at their schools. Listening to what is said I realize that they don't consider the authentic context of the school as a valuable input to learn from. That is a pity; that is one of the main reasons for workplace learning. What to do? How to act? Gosh...!! I decide to tell them how I as an IBTE work with students at the institute when these themes are on the timetable and how jealous I am of the SBTEs because they have their own authentic and rich environment (that is also the environment of the student teacher) to refer to whilst discussing the themes. One of the SBTEs gets the point and reacts: 'We could ask the students to do some observations and afterwards we can discuss what they saw with them and their mentors'. All of a sudden the SBTEs have a lot of interesting new ideas about connecting the themes to the context and the learning opportunities that the school can provide. They write them down. Their enthusiasm does take me along... The meeting ends. The SBTEs thank me. I am invited to come again. Phew!



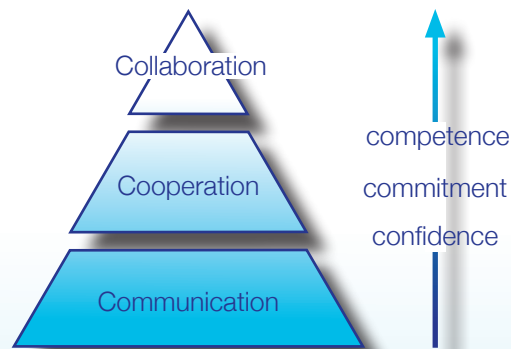
Perspective taking

Suppose I was in your shoes...

- Who are the participants in the story?
- Look at the story from their perspectives.
- What does each person have to gain or lose?

'Good communication is required for working at a basic cooperative level... Cooperation occurs between partners who are working as free agents and choosing to work towards a common goal...[Collaboration] is not only working towards a shared outcome, but having a shared process to get there'

(White and Dickerson, 2016:65).



'Collaboration is a complex, sophisticated process. It requires competence, confidence and commitment on the part of all parties involved. Respect and trust, both for oneself and others, is key to collaboration. As such, patience, nurturance and time are required to build a relationship to the point where collaboration can occur'

(Henneman et al., 1995:108).



Collaborating

- To what extent are the teacher educators gaining in confidence, commitment and competence in this story?
- How is this reflected in the move from communicating to co-operating and then deeper collaboration together of these individuals?



- Henneman, E. A., Lee, J. L. and Cohen, J. I. 1995. Collaboration: a concept analysis. *Journal of Advanced Nursing* 21, 103-109.
- White, E. & Dickerson, C. 2016. Supporting the re-balancing of initial teacher education within university and school partnerships. *Journal of the World Federation of Associations of Teacher Education*, 1 (2) 64-76. <https://www.worldfate.org/journal.php>