

Professional Reflections on “*Personality Development Training for Professional Teachers: IT IS IMPORTANT*”

Dr.Pimurai Limpapath, Ph.D., Faculty of Education, Rangsit University

For the last two decades, in parallel with teaching in diverse disciplines both in Thailand and the United States, I have done a great number of professional trainings for both the government and the private sectors. One popular topic has been identified among trainees as “Personality Development.” One can perhaps guess the reason for its popularity. From observation of their own behaviors, people have become more aware of the causal relationship between emotional intelligence and personality. Personality development undeniably plays a vital role in a person’s ability to succeed in whatever career he or she chooses to pursue. Interesting enough to say, this topic has turned to rank at the top as mostly needed among professional teachers both in schools and in higher education institutions. Why is it so? Professional teachers expectedly perceive personality development training as one of the keys to their success in their career. It is therefore interesting to explore justification for such expectations.

First of all, it is important in the first place to understand what “personality” means to a person. Chamorro-Premuzic and Furnham (2010) define *personality* as characteristics, behaviors, thoughts, and feelings of a person. It appears to be a crucial predictor of job performance, and to many others can be built up and developed in a person as wished. In particular, personality can cause either success or failure, depending on what side of personality a person holds dominantly-- positive or negative (Khurshid, 2011). Practically, when applying this concept to personality development, a trainer can help develop stability of a trainee’s thoughts and feelings so that desirable or positive sides of target characteristics and behaviors will evolve naturally.

As for teachers, though with certain kinds of positive characteristics, they are still in need of personality development training to support their abilities in dealing with human interactions effectively, especially with learners at different age levels. For instance, being stimulated in various kinds of teaching and learning situations, trained teachers are encouraged to go through obstacles, either individually or together as a team. While experiencing both sides of personalities—positive or negative in nature, the teacher trainees can see things, think, and feel differently. Going through those situation-based experiences, they are prompted to behave differently in a better way. As a result, those trained teachers are assisted to develop the *inner* and the *outer* sides of their personalities realistically and effectively; this is for them to become more positive as professional teachers toward their teaching and learning environment.

Another crucial point here is that when thinking of personality, most people tend to think about *outer* personality. Some people pay attention to only the outer look. There is nothing wrong about that; however, there are a lot more to learn about personality development. The areas of interest in personality development include both the inner and outer – thought and feelings, communication system, body language, speech, behavior, and characters.

It should be noted that many areas of expertise are needed to make it happen in one's newly developed personality traits, and a training program is not a miracle. I have to make it clear here that certain ingredients be required when it comes to professional training. First, it must be theoretically based. Second, as such, a professional trainer has to be well-prepared and well-planned in his or her training program for a particular group of trainees, and definitely with expected outcomes. Third, the trainer in an attempt to bring about the positive sides out of the trainees, he or she must be "ethically mindset" in terms of what techniques to use and which theories to be applied. This means that the trainer must be knowledgeable in what he or she wants to do with trainees, both theoretically and practically. This is because the trainees' psychological and physical well-beings must be put in priority.

My final remark is that in my training, I always foster the notions of personality development as in a nutshell: personality development is important to every single individual. As for teachers, I would remind them in training that personality development is salient not only for a teacher as a professional but also for a teacher as a person; it is to boost stabilities in various aspects of one's life including cognition, sociability, and morality. It has never been too late to anyone to make changes as desired in life—no matter what or how. It does not matter at what level of one's career, it is possible for one to do something to achieve a better or more desirable personality than what one has been endowed. Thus, for a person to become a professional teacher, he or she is definitely to polish his or her thought, feelings, traits and behaviors and shine through. This is meant for teachers to improve the quality of life and work at will.

For *RJES* readers who want to read more into personality development for proper professional behaviors and quality of teaching and learning, you may consider the studies by Zebrowitz, Hall and Rhodes (2002), Khurshid (2011), Medinschi and Artene (2012), and Limpapath and Chalermvongsavej (2015).

The Author

Dr.Pimurai Limpapath, Ph.D. is Director of M. Ed. Program in Bilingual Education, Faculty of Education, Rangsit University, Thailand. Her specialization is in the areas of intercultural communication and language communications. Her research and publications deal with intercultural communication, psychology and communication, personality development training programs, and issues related to educational psychology.

Comments: We welcome your comments and also any information that are pertinent to this topic in your context. Also please let us have your suggestions for the next round of "Professional Reflections."

Address your email to Dr.Pimurai Limpapath at <drpimandassociates@gmail.com> or ruja@rsu.ac.th or rujajinda@gmail.com.

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