



Image taken from Teacher Education on Design: Leading Rehearsals. Depicts an example of a rehearsal where teachers are practicing teaching and pretending to be students

"We don't think that more time [teaching] translates to more learning"

Rehearsals

AKASH GARG

The core idea of Hala Ghouseini's and Elham Kazemi's research is the concept of rehearsals for teaching. These rehearsals consist of meetings between teachers where some teachers act as teachers and some teachers pretend to be students. When someone thinks of "rehearsals" they generally think of a dance recital or a play. Any performance requires some form of rehearsal before the actual performance. In this way, teaching is thought of as a form of performance. Rehearsals allow teachers to better understand the perspective of their students.

According to Dr. Ghouseini and Dr. Kazemi, teaching is combination of a complex mental task and routine. Just as a performer does not think through every single movement while doing them, teachers need not think through every problem while teaching. Instead, teachers develop a set of routines in their career of teaching (Lampert et al., 2010). Rehearsals allow teachers to share their routines with other teachers without having every teacher develop their own. Ghouseini and Kazemi claim that this process allows novice teachers to achieve mastery, because they can start off by learning the routines, and then later applying complex changes to fit their own teaching style.

These routines are referred to in the research as schemas, allowing teachers to develop a choreography for teaching. Examples of schemas include the call-on scheme, where one student is asked to identify and solve a problem, and another to evaluate, and the revise routine, where students are asked to solve the problem again in a new way (Lampert et al., 2010). This step of developing and refining choreography is a step separate from performing. That step for teachers

are rehearsals. As was stated by Dr. Kazemi and Dr. Ghouseini in an interview, “We don’t think that more time [teaching] translates to more learning.” (Kazemi et al., 2016) What does translate to more learning? Dr. Kazemi and Dr. Ghouseini claim that “practicing collectively” (Lampert, 2010) serves this purpose.

Therefore, simulated environments are set up such that teachers can practice their teaching with other teachers. Teachers, when developing routines, often carry biases with them that become part of the routine. A benefit of these simulated environments is that teachers can correct these biases in the process of sharing their routine (Kazemi et al., 2016). Therefore, rehearsals not only help novice teachers, but also expert teachers improve their routines by removing biases from them.

The purpose of having teachers pretend to be students is to allow teachers to understand what it is like from a student’s perspective. As Dr. Kazemi said, “teachers need to learn to play.” (University of Washington College of Education, 2016) An example was given in a ted talk by Dr. Kazemi of children fingerpainting. When children fingerpaint, they are not so much invested in the final product as they are invested in the joy of the activity. Similarly, teachers should also “learn to play.” (University of Washington College of Education, 2016) By gain a perspective as students through simulation, teachers can improve their own teaching style.

Rehearsals are a valuable addition to the concept of teaching teachers. By setting up simulated environments, teachers can practice teaching before doing it in front of students. Schemas can be recorded and provided for novice teachers. In all, it is a very useful tool for teachers to perfect their craft.



Picture of Dr. Kazemi (left) and Dr. Ghouseini (right). Taken from Purdue Honors College Visiting Scholars Series Website, <https://honors.purdue.edu/community/spring-2021-visiting-scholars/>

References

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