1997

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Ann M. Hartman

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The Evolution of a Peace Corps Training Design

Master’s Project
Ann M. Hartman

In partial fulfillment of requirements for degree of M.Ed.

Center for International Education
University of Massachusetts
Amherst, Massachusetts

September, 1997
INTRODUCTION

This project is the product of a rare opportunity for praxis: reflection and action and reflection and action. It is the complex interaction between my graduate school experience and two summers of work as the Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) Training Coordinator for Peace Corps Pre-Service Training in Bulgaria. For the most part, the work served as the action, and the graduate school served as my reflection, but at some moments, the converse is also true. The work helped me to better understand the theory and concepts I was learning in school, and the school helped me to better understand what I was doing in my work. The practice informed the theory, and the theory informed the practice. While this seems obvious, in reality the two were reluctant bedfellows; they resisted my attempts to bring them together. At the same time, never separate really, they evolved together over the past three years. In the four sections of this paper, Background, Explorations, A New Training Design, and Guide to the TEFL Trainer, I attempt to take the readers along on this journey through action and reflection, through a year of graduate school and a summer of Peace Corps Training, a year of explorations about those experiences, and the results of those explorations.

My graduate school experience began first, and started off having little to do with anything related to Peace Corps, training, TEFL or teacher education. Indeed, after several years of work in these areas and organizations, I believed I was coming to graduate school precisely to move out of the above fields and organizations, to bring the lens out and look at the broader systems outside of the classroom, outside certainly of TEFL. What I soon learned through work and school, however, was that I still had much to learn about all of the topics above, and more importantly, that it is not necessary only for me to pull the lens out, but also to turn it inward.

My initial idea for this project was to create a new training design. In many ways the project was that; after a year of reflections I returned to my position of TEFL Training Coordinator and the resulting training design was different. But that is not what you will read here. The new design was nothing radical, and in itself, doesn’t hold a lot of meaning. It is only interesting to look at it in relation to the other training design, and even that isn’t particularly instructive; for the untrained eye they might even look rather similar. Far more important and interesting than the design itself is the reason behind it, the deep, complex set of reflections and explorations that went into its making, and the philosophy which guided its development. This paper goes behind the scenes, the making of the
product with all of its cuts and takes and bloopers, rather than the polished and finished end product.

The first section of Explorations in this paper is about this. So often we get caught up with the products, with what someone came up with, rather than what they thought about in order to come up with it. We want tools and techniques. Theory gets synthesized into practices and techniques and “designs” which in themselves can be dangerous. We need to know the whys in order for the hows to have meaning. In the beginning I had grand ideas of coming up the revolutionary training design for Peace Corps, of discovering and solving the problems in Peace Corps training. Part of the learning process was to reject this idea. It was to realize that each Peace Corps Training had to be sensitive to so many factors: time, context, trainees, trainers, training staff, resources, etc. There is no design, even the fabulous one I envisioned creating, that can and should be liberally applied to each training situation; there is no fixed formula. My explorations on the journey led me instead on a quest for guiding principles, a deeper understanding of theory which I thought I already knew, in order to form a base from which to make decisions. I began to sort out for myself the lamps from the light, the meaning from the acts. Learning number one: Education is not about finding techniques and formulas.

Also in order to reject the idea of creating the revolutionary training design, I had to come to terms with aspects of my self. The desire to create something universal comes from a not uncommon desire for grandeur; an ego-driven need to feel like we have done something of great proportions, something which will have widespread impact. We want to feel useful and powerful. Part of the journey has been to see myself, my internal contradictions, my desires, insecurities, and habits. This inward exploration is perhaps the most important. It is this that I believe is most neglected in academia and in work. Yet it may be this which serves as the greatest obstacle in our ability to really implement the theories and practices which we come to graduate school to learn. Learning number two: Theories are only as good as those who carry them out.

These explorations led to changes in my approach to training. These were not radical, and without explanation, might be so subtle as to go unnoticed. They are also very relative to me, my first experience, my personality, level of education, experience, etc. They are presented at the end in part because it is where they fall chronologically, but also because they must be taken in context in order to be understood as something different, something worth noting. Hopefully, with this background, the reader will see and appreciate the
subtle differences in my Technical Training Overviews and Summaries from the two years. This section, called, A New Training Design, is the synthesis of the explorations, taking my new understanding of theory and turning it back into practice.

The other part of this synthesis is the final section of this paper. I have been doing research on my practice for the past three years. I have watched and listened and analyzed, I have read and researched, I have talked informally with training professionals from all over the world, and I have acted and reflected and acted and reflected. Through this, I have gained an awareness of the complexity of the process of creating a training design. I have come to believe that education is not about employing techniques, but is a sensitive, thoughtful decision-making process, requiring a deep understanding and self awareness on the part of educators. Thus, rather than a training design, the one time product of my decisions based on the constraints and resources of my particular situation, I have tried to document the decision-making process itself. In the final section, the “Guide for the TEFL Trainer”, I use what I have learned from this somewhat limited but unique experience to lay out the complex tapestry of decisions that made up my training design. For me, ultimately, this was more useful. It is this awareness that I bring to any training situation, not a training design, and it is this awareness I hope to continue to foster throughout my professional career.

SECTION I: BACKGROUND

I came back to graduate school to expand my horizons, to learn more about the things that I had seen and done as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Bulgaria. I had realized that classroom teaching wasn't what I wanted to do, and had become enthralled by the issues I had seen in development. Graduate school exceeded my expectations. I was exposed to concepts and ideas that changed my whole way of seeing the world and myself in it. It was, what those in academia might call, a paradigm shift. On one level, these ideas were very academic; analyses and theories about development and the structures of capitalism and our society. This was easy for me to grasp, and served as the base of my learning for the first year. I enveloped myself in the thrill of tearing apart the development strategies of today, and analyzing what I had seen others doing in the field.

This, I discovered later, was the easy part. It is easy to look at what others are doing, to criticize and analyze. The other part of my education was about less tangible concepts:
participation, theory vs. practice, power with vs. power over. These notions were much more slippery, and much more difficult to know with any certainty. These are the concepts which force us to look not at the rest of the world, not externally, but at ourselves and our own practice. It is my interaction with these ideas that really form the basis of this journey.

This interaction had many phases. First, was acceptance and intellectual understanding. I understood what these concepts were, and I think that I fully believed in them. I could explain the ideas and could identify them in situations. The next stage was a bit more difficult. As people began to discuss examples of these things, I felt more and more alienated. As I was forced to reflect on my own experience, I began to see (with great horror and embarrassment) that I really had not done these things in my work. Rather than cut myself some slack for not knowing about these ideas, I began to feel isolated from the others, different, an impostor. Everyone else had done all of this, if they knew that I hadn’t then I wouldn’t even be here! These feelings of inadequacy and alienation led to a period of resistance and rebellion. I played devil’s advocate and believed that I was providing the rational voice in a crowd of idealist fools. I pretended that these concepts didn’t apply to the work I had done or was about to do.

Yet, on some level I also believed that I understood these concepts and that out in the world I would apply them, just because I now knew about them. At least part of my cynicism was my feeling that I already knew these things, and couldn’t understand why we had to keep rehashing them over and over, why we kept probing and talking about it all. It all seemed obvious. Of course we should have participation, of course I should be culturally sensitive and appropriate, of course I should have power with and not power over. I thought that agreeing with these concepts meant that I understood them, and that, being a good person, with only the best intentions, I would carry them out.

About this time I was hired by Peace Corps Bulgaria to be the English as a Foreign Language Training Coordinator for the 1995 summer Pre-Service Training. Armed with indignation about the role of Western Development in foreign countries, a firm belief in cultural sensitivity and an understanding that I should be doing something participatory; I left for Bulgaria just at the end of my first year of graduate school in May, 1995.
Peace Corps Training

Institutional Aspects
Peace Corps Pre-Service training is known for its rigor, cutting edge language programs, and long history. The Bulgaria training was eleven weeks of language training, cross-cultural adaptation, health, and technical training based on the assignment of the volunteer. In this training there were three technical components: Small Business Development, Environment, and, my area, Teaching English as a Foreign Language. Each technical component had a coordinator, as did the language and cross-cultural components and there was a training director who was responsible for the entire operation. My role was as the Coordinator of the TEFL technical component. There were 46 trainees in total, 20 of whom were TEFLers.

Peace Corps Pre-Service Training (PST) is only one part of a much larger training experience for incoming Peace Corps Volunteers (hereon referred to as “trainees”) (Programming and Training System Manual, p. 145). Of these events, PST is typically the longest and most significant. The training lasts for two to four months depending on the country of service and the nature of the assignment. There are two broad goals: to prepare the trainees for their two years of work by providing them with technical skills, language training, cultural adaptation training, and health information, and to provide a time for Peace Corps and the future volunteers to assess whether or not this is an appropriate professional and personal match before they make a two year commitment.

Regardless of the context, Peace Corps has a set of Training Goals and a Training Philosophy to which each PST should adhere. Please see Appendix 1 for a copy of Peace Corps’ “Training Philosophy” and “Peace Corps’ Training Goals” (Peace Corps Programming and Training System Manual, pg. 137-139).

As trainers our job has both a content and an implementation mandate: to understand the future work and living situation of the trainees and to develop a training design which will prepare them for this; and to do this in a way that respects the knowledge and backgrounds of adult learners. This is also true in another way. It is not enough for them to get information about the above mentioned areas, they must leave the training with the skills to negotiate a new culture, be a leader in the community, implement and assess projects, and get all of their personal and professional needs met on their own in a different language and
Peace Corps Training is an enormous and complex undertaking. It is not easy to plan or to implement. There are many models for the training process. The one chosen for this summer was that of an 8-5 training day comprised of 4 session blocks. Language learning had the most sessions, usually two or more per day. Technical had 5-7 sessions per week, and the rest were cross-cultural and health. A sample daily schedule from the 1996 PST was as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:00-8:30</td>
<td>Check In</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:30-10:30</td>
<td>Language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:30-11:00</td>
<td>Break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:00-12:30</td>
<td>Language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:30-2:00</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:00-3:30</td>
<td>TEFL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:30-4:00</td>
<td>Break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:00-5:30</td>
<td>Cross-cultural</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The trainees stayed with host families, and came each day to a training site for sessions. The site was a sports training facility made into a nice set of classrooms and meeting rooms, in a very small, sleepy, resort-style town. The town didn’t offer much by way of resources for training purposes; no community activism per se (most people are summer residents on vacation) and no school community. For this reason most classes were held in classrooms with resource people brought in.

We as training staff recognized that this was a less than ideal situation. We needed more possibility for community activities, contact with schools, immersion, etc. Trainees needed to get out of the classroom and get more exposure. The training day is very structured and very full. This leads to trainee burn-out, and the legitimate complaints of information overload, exhaustion, and being treated like children. The training is very regimented, more so than many of them have had since high school. There are rules for behavior and the trainees tend to grow frustrated by the lack of freedom and independence the schedule affords. However, the structure is both constraining and freeing. On the one hand, the regimentation limits freedom and creativity and independent investigation, but seen another way, the structure is freeing; it gives control and structure to an otherwise new and chaotic environment.

Within the structure, they are freed of all responsibilities except learning, learning the language technical and other cultural skills they will need to negotiate in their next two
years of service. The structure provides similar advantages and disadvantages to each of
the training coordinators.

TEFL Training 1995
The TEFL technical component, for which I was responsible, operated within the above
structure. In just over 100 hours, the trainees had to learn the content, methods, and theory
of teaching a subject area that is completely new to them. My agenda at this time was to
make training more in tune with the culture and educational context of Bulgaria and Eastern
Europe. Much of the past training in this post had drawn from Peace Corps’ long
experience in Africa, Asia and Latin America, culturally and economically vastly different
from Eastern Europe. In addition, the TEFL techniques taught were often based on ESL
techniques developed in America which center on the validation of the mother tongue and
learner generated materials as well as a dependence on immersion in an English speaking
world, rather than EFL techniques for students in other countries. I had been hired in part,
in the hopes that with my experience as a volunteer, I could make the TEFL training more
relevant to the Bulgarian context.

What follows is my handbook overview for the TEFL component. It is the description of
the program for the incoming volunteers. It gives a sense of what this training design
looked like.

TEFL Technical Training Component
The Peace Corps project plan for PCVs in the Bulgarian schools involves three main tasks:
the improvement of student language skills, development of resource materials, and
sharing methodology and experiences with colleagues. The bulk of your time in the
schools, however, will be spent in the classroom with your students. Therefore, the main
goal of the technical component of training will be to prepare you to be effective and
comfortable as teachers of English as a Foreign Language in the Bulgarian schools. This
training will provide you with the opportunity to begin to develop the knowledge and skills
you will need to do your job well. Feeling confident and comfortable teaching a new
subject takes time, especially in a new culture; your process of skill development and
knowledge acquisition will probably continue throughout your whole volunteer experience.

Education in Bulgaria is a serious and highly sophisticated endeavor; you should consider
your PC assignment a professional teaching position for which you must be well-prepared.
Many of you have background in education methods and teaching experience, thus, the
thrust of this technical training will be on TEFL techniques and methods especially as they
are used in and can be adapted for the Bulgarian teaching context. Through visits to schools
and currently serving volunteers, panel discussions, lectures, group work, peer teaching
and finally a practicum with Bulgarian students, you will be exposed to a wide variety of
techniques and will get concrete practice in using these techniques. It is hoped that the
TEFL component can draw on the skills and abilities which you already possess and
facilitate the sharing of this knowledge with each other through trainee-led sessions and pair teaching techniques.

There are four phases to the technical training:

**Phase One (Weeks 1-3):** The goal of this phase is to provide you with knowledge of the context in which you will be applying your TEFL skills. You will gain an understanding of Bulgarian education, English teaching in Bulgaria, the PCV role in the schools and the resources available to you as teachers here. You will also have an introduction to some basic concepts and principles of language teaching and their applicability in this context.

**Phase Two (Weeks 4-6):** This phase will contain most of the sessions concerning TEFL methodology. As you learn techniques for teaching the four basic skills, presenting and explaining grammar, and testing, you will be practicing them by writing lesson plans and teaching your peers. You will also be working to develop curriculum and teaching materials that you will use when you teach in the Model School of Phase Three.

**Phase Three (Weeks 7-9) Model School:** You will work in pairs to teach the materials which you have developed to two classes of Bulgarian students which will be of the same ages and levels as the students you will teach at your site. You will teach one lesson per day for the three weeks, and will have the opportunity to try teaching two different levels. The focus of this phase will be on classroom management and teaching performance. Each of you will teach 15 hours.

**Phase Four (Weeks 10-12): Preparing to go to Site.** After working with Bulgarian students in model school and taking a trip to your site, you will have a chance to identify areas in which you need further information or practice. You will learn about resource management and development, secondary projects, and techniques for working with colleagues. You will develop materials for your first semester of teaching at your sites and will have a chance to assess your ongoing professional development goals.

**TEFL Technical Training Competencies:**

The following competencies are based on the goals of Peace Corps’ TEFL Project Plan in Bulgaria and also on the expressed needs of TEFL PCV teachers who have served in Bulgaria. We are articulating them here so that you know what we, the training staff, expect you to gain from this training. They are the criteria by which we are assessing your ability to work effectively in Bulgaria. They will also help you in gauging your progress throughout training.

By the end of Pre-Service Training you must be able to:

1. Describe and discuss the Bulgarian Education system, including the role of the Ministry of Education, how the English curriculum fits into the overall school program, and their individual roles and responsibilities of PCVs working in the Bulgarian schools.

2. Describe the differences between the US and Bulgarian educational systems in terms of attitudes towards education and the roles of the teachers and students, expectations concerning student’s instructional needs, classroom management and teaching styles.
3. Describe the existing curriculum, syllabus and materials already used in the schools, and ways in which they may need to be supplemented by the individual volunteers.

4. Give an overview of the following language teaching methodologies and understand their relevance to English teaching in Bulgaria: grammar-translation, audio-lingual methods, competency-based, communicative, whole language and content-based English teaching.

5. Relate their own language learning experience to their teaching strategies through the use of a journal.

6. Compare and contrast English and Bulgarian in terms of grammatical differences, and discuss the implications of those differences for teaching English in Bulgaria. Identify common errors of Bulgarian students.

7. Demonstrate various teaching techniques and activities for developing speaking, listening, reading and writing skills.

8. Describe basic English grammar structures, and create lessons in which these structures are presented, practiced, and produced.

9. Design lesson plans that incorporate motivational, informational, practice, and application activities to teach the four language skills, and that address a variety of learning styles and strategies.

10. Demonstrate effective strategies for correcting students' oral and written errors.

11. Outline combined speaking listening, reading and writing lessons to supplement any English text commonly used in Bulgarian schools.

12. Develop appropriate language tests to assess learners' progress.

13. Develop integrated theme-based units (especially with an environmental content) that demonstrate long-range planning skills.

14. Demonstrate effective time management in the classroom, showing an effective balance of activities, pacing, etc.

15. Demonstrate flexible but consistent and effective classroom management and discipline techniques.

16. Demonstrate the ability to involve students in questions and discussions which provide opportunities for feedback to the students and information about their achievement to the teacher.

17. Evaluate their own performance and the performance of colleagues and give constructive and appropriate feedback on lesson content, pacing, sequencing and other lesson components.

18. Describe the professional expectations of English teachers in the school and demonstrate the ability to perform these functions, including grading and record keeping.
19. Assess their own teaching and skill development and develop a set of continuing professional development goals.

20. Develop and organize supplemental materials and resources and identify strategies to encourage students' and colleagues' use of these teaching and learning aids.

21. Understand project objectives and the expectations of counterparts and supervisors.

22. Identify concrete ways in which English teachers can work together with the SBD and Environment programs, as well as other organizations in Bulgaria.

On paper, everything looks as it should. The training was well documented, there is a logical sequence and the sessions were more culturally relevant. Trainees’ evaluations for each session throughout the summer had been quite high. Some things didn’t go according to plan, and there were sessions which weren’t as good as they could have been, but overall things went fairly smoothly. Yet, I had mixed feelings about what had been done. During the training, the trainees’ evaluations had been positive, almost every individual session had gotten a high rating. The trainees’ final evaluation comments however, were a mixed bag; there were many compliments, but there was also a fair amount of general discontent—too much theory, material not relevant, stuff we already knew. Ironically, these were all of the things I had set out to address. At first I felt angry at them; we had done all of these pieces, how could they possibly not have gotten them?

But I, too, felt a discontent with the product of my summer work. I felt that it was disjointed. Each part, each session, each activity, various ideas, had been pretty good, each had tried to address the issues stated by trainees above, but there was no sense of a whole. Had I been so busy with the parts that I had forgotten about the whole? I began to think that in lieu of content, or theory, or a coherent training design, I had just “put on a good show”.

The comments about the training program were dimmed by those for me. The trainees raved about me and my abilities as a trainer. It seemed that, on some level, they did not connect me to the training program. Had I succeeded in providing a good training program, or had I only succeeded in getting the trainees to like me? I feared that I had compensated for a not-so-good training and a lack of confidence with my personality—something which comes easy for me.

As I wrote for an evaluation paper last semester:
Despite praise for the training program last summer by the trainees, other trainers, and Sofia program staff, I didn't feel good about it. Why? Partly, because I may have felt that it was all show--providing good results in the acceptance category--and not much content. The trainees liked it, but was it good? (Evaluation. Paper, p. 7))

On a personal level it hadn't felt good either. The whole training experience felt empty for me. I left there after fourteen weeks feeling like nobody had gotten to know me; I had been so busy being a “trainer” that I had ceased to be me. This made the above praise even more bittersweet; I realized that in part, it wasn’t really even for me, Ann Hartman, human being, but for Ann Hartman, super-trainer, the only ‘me’ they had been allowed to see.

I was tired, burnt out and not at all pleased with myself. I left Bulgaria ready to put this whole experience behind me, believing that being a Peace Corps Trainer was just inherently a lonely and empty experience.

Return to Graduate School
Upon return to graduate school, I was ready to forget about my four months of Peace Corps training and to plunge into the things I believed to be more meaningful, all the conceptual ideas that I had been studying before I left. I felt that the two were completely separate and that the training experience had taken me away from, rather than closer to, my academic experience. In spite of the Center’s emphasis on this very problem, I found the chasm between academia and practice to be a deep and seemingly unfordable one. Yet leaving the training experience behind me was not to be that easy. On some level I knew that my inability to see a connection between what we were doing and learning about at the Center and this work experience was problematic. I tried to pretend that it didn’t matter to me, but it did.

I wanted to jump back into analyzing the worlds problems, to figuring out how to change the human condition for the better. Of course I did. That is powerful, and big and deeply critical for our future. It is also abstract and removed from the self, and therefore, easier. It all loses something when brought back into the day to day. One can and should study and understand the problems plaguing the world and the complexity of the global experience. But at some point one must return to the working world. In this, one faces that perplexing question: how does all of this change the way that I operate in the world? Do I just operate in the same way in my job, but then think about these issues and how
important they are in my spare time? Is it about volunteering for some organization when I am not working, about finding meaningful work outside of the work that I do?

I struggled throughout my summer of Peace Corps training to keep the flame of passion about the global condition alive despite its seeming lack of relevance to my day to day work. I clearly separated the two; in this work there was just administration, management, dull training sessions on teaching TEFL and not enough time to do any of it well. What I had to realize was that there was something more than just the content of these issues and the concepts of how to do development work. It is both about what we do, but even more importantly how we do whatever it is we do. Managing, administrating, training. This may be all we ever do in development. Indeed, it is precisely how we go about this work, any work, that is of a critical nature. With all the theories about the how to change the world, it all eventually comes back to each individual. What am I going to do? This will always seems small and insignificant compared to the enormity of the problems, but often it is all that we can do and in the end, it may be what really matters.

I took classes that fall trying to recapture my passion and enthusiasm for taking on the world's development dilemmas. But I was in a different place now; I had changed. It all seemed distant. Like a broken record, I kept returning to the question, “What can I do about it?” It was time to begin the difficult process of figuring out just how this all relates to the real world. How can all of this be useful if I can't in any way make it relevant to actual work in a development context? I had brought the lens out, seen what I needed to see, gotten perspective. Now I needed to return to my practice and take a good, hard look. Both looking inward and outward are important and necessary, and deeply connected. It was this connection that I needed to explore.

My dissatisfaction with the training I had planned and conducted continued to plague me. My desire to leave it behind, it turned out, was a desire to pretend that problems didn't exist. I was embarrassed by my inability, embarrassed that I had done what I considered to be such a poor job. By writing Peace Corps training off as a institutionally problematic situation which was insignificant to my career, I was able to rationalize my inability. It was the context, the structure, the trainees, the management, the Peace Corps bureaucracy. I decided to blame everyone but me. There were problems in the structure, problems that affected my ability to conduct training as I wanted to. But these were merely constraints, they were not the problem. My journey was not about critiquing the model Peace Corps uses for training and the institution as a whole, although that was my initial temptation.
There were ways to work within this context. I had to admit that there mistakes, mistakes that I had made, over which I had control, and that I could change. I had the rare opportunity to spend quality time reflecting on an action. And, as I had just learned from Peace Corps, I was going to get a chance to do it again.

Part of what plagued me was that, when I got back to the Center, everyone assumed that I had operated in a participatory, non-hierarchical way, that my training had surely reflected all of the values of the Center. It didn't. But I began to tire of trying to convince people of that, so I stopped talking about it altogether. I felt very contradicted by the whole experience. I wondered: "why does everyone assume that I operated in the "right" way (what is the right way?)? Is it because I seem to be a good person, because I can talk the talk, or just because I am a Center member making me inherently a good trainer, participatory and the like?

But it also made me begin to wonder about the concept of participatory. What did they mean by that? What did I mean? What did it mean in the context of Peace Corps training? I was afraid to ask. I fell into that age old trap of assuming that everyone else knew except me. I wanted to ask them what participatory, nonhierarchical Peace Corps training would look like. But then they would know that I really didn’t know, and I wasn’t ready to admit that.

I had gone into the summer thinking that I would be participatory; I even thought at the time that I was being participatory. I knew what to do: include others in the process, do needs assessment and gear the sessions to trainees needs and desires, collaborate with other “stakeholders” gathering their ideas and input, using the experiential adult learning cycle for all of the training sessions, having some trainees conduct training sessions to each other, sharing the work and “planning” of the training with my training assistants. However, in spite of all of these efforts, instead of an empowering, mutually beneficial, process, I struggled throughout the summer with a rift between trainers and trainees, a kind of delivery system training process, and with trying to give feedback and to supervise my training assistants.

Throughout the summer there was a friendly veneer between trainers and trainees but underneath it was a tension between the two groups. This fueled and was fueled by a kind of “delivery system” training process. Rather than a mutual exploration, it began to feel like a very traditional educational arrangement: we (the trainees) will obey the rules you
have set out for us (even thought we may not agree with or understand them) as long as you continue to provide us with the information and skills we ask for. We were deliverers and they were deliverees. Then, if either party didn’t keep up their end of the bargain, there was resentment and more of the above mentioned tension. This led to having to give “feedback”, a process that I struggled with the entire summer. I was not energized by the process, rather, completely drained. I didn’t feel empowered and neither did the trainees or the training assistants.

It was like I had pieces of participatory, but I had no whole. What was the whole?

I had discovered the lessons of the "real" world. I was beginning to see why we had spent so much time talking about and defining these concepts: in theory they are obvious, but how they look in the real world is much more complex. When out there on my own, I found out that I not only did not entirely understand the concepts, I didn’t fully trust the process either. This lack of clarity and trust, coupled with my general lack of confidence and experience, led me down a road of control, power hierarchies and as a result emptiness and dissatisfaction. The training program contained too little of me, and yet was all me. It was at the same time too adaptable, and too rigid. It had no integrating theme, no plan, no philosophy to guide the decisions being made. It felt like I wasn’t making any decisions from me, but rather just having decisions be made by the external constraints of the situation. And yet, it was only me making decisions, having control. Everything contradicted everything else. I was confused about just what had gone wrong.

I had had my humbling life experience. I had much to learn. But now I had focus. I had some problems that needed fixing. There were thing that I didn't know about, aspects of training teachers that I didn't have experience in. I needed more knowledge, techniques, information, especially, I felt, in the areas of supervision of teachers during the practicum, evaluation, supervising staff and giving feedback. But there was something else missing, getting at the solution to the above problems required looking at something less tangible than these skills, something in my general approach, a philosophy maybe, or an attitude. I needed to figure out just what I believed and why I believed it. My practice had no theory at least not one which was strong enough to guide my practice. Thus, it was practice in a vacuum, responding to everything, and to nothing.
SECTION II: EXPLORATIONS

I needed to find a theory for my practice. I came to realize that while theory must always have practice, so must practice always have theory. I knew I needed to know more and this part I could do and explore through regular coursework: supervision, evaluation, etc.

However, two other areas of inquiry seemed more intriguing and less clear. First is the possibility that maybe I didn't understand the theory I already knew as well as I thought I did. The fact that people thought I had acted in a participatory way, but I felt I really hadn’t led me to wonder if I knew what participatory really meant. What did they mean by participatory? What did I mean? This seemed like a good place to start. This section of exploration is called, “Education isn’t about Fixed Methods or Techniques”.

Second, was the possibility that I did know the theory, but maybe there were other things preventing me from acting it out in practice. This section of inquiry is called, “Human Conduits of Theory”: Our practice is only as good as we are.

The journey is a long and winding one. I started looking in certain places, thinking that my problem was one thing, only to find out that my real area of misunderstanding was something else. In my attempt to figure out what participatory education really was, I stumbled across another oft discussed concept at CIE: Theory vs. Practice. What was theory, and what was practice and where did the two meet? One of the reasons for my misunderstanding of the concept of participatory was that I was confusing practice with theory, I wasn’t looking hard enough at what the theory was saying, but was instead just trying to adopt the practices that people had developed from that theory. Better understanding participatory also meant getting a clearer distinction between theories, methods, techniques and practices.
Education isn't about Finding Fixed Methods or Techniques

"For me one of the dangers we have with these techniques and methods is to enslave the educator to the techniques, to the rules which are important also but which can not become the masters of the teachers. They should use their imagination, go beyond the rules with their students"

--Paulo Freire, discussions with students at CIE, 1988

I needed to look more deeply at what I already knew. There was meaning in what I had learned previously that I was not yet fully aware of. I hadn't looked deeply enough, I had been so busy surveying and tasting all that was out there at the university that I hadn't yet taken the time to stop and really know anything well. I had tapped the ground in many places, learned much about the overall landscape. It was time to dig a hole somewhere and search for what lay beneath.

What is Participatory?
This was the first and most fundamental of the concepts that I believed I had failed to understand. In spite of protests by friends at the Center, I knew that I had not conducted my training in a participatory manner. What did these terms mean in the context of a Peace Corps training? Of any training? Of a formal educational program?

Some clarification of terms seemed important. Is participatory equivalent to Freire? Or is Freire something more, something different? Where do the two intersect? Is participatory always consciousness raising? Does a Freirian approach have to be used with oppressed groups? Is it the same as Learner-Centered? How does the adult experiential learning cycle fit into this whole picture?

The word participatory has come to be attached to many fields--training, evaluation, research, management, curriculum development, to name a few. It seems one can do just about anything participatorily. This suggests that it is some kind of very general approach, some philosophy or way of operating rather than a set of techniques. So just what makes something a "participatory" approach? Is it the amount of participation? If so, just how much participation makes something participatory? Or is it rather a set of beliefs and underlying attitudes?
Exploration of Terms

Freirian, Consciousness-raising and Participatory Approaches

As mentioned above, there are many claims to participatory and each, depending on how it has been used, looks a bit different. Even just in education, “participatory” is varied, and in as much as it has become “trendy” has really come to mean many different things to many different groups. It is hard to know sometimes, therefore, just what participatory really means, to discern the practices from the theory. Struggling to find real meaning in the many “practices” I returned to Freire and those approaches focused on consciousness-raising as the basis for my understanding of “Participatory”. With Freire, I looked less at the techniques of culture circles and problem posing, than at the reason behind those techniques. In my search, I found themes in these approaches which are characterized by the following:

Consciousness raising or Freirian approaches, and participatory research and evaluation are usually discussed in reference to liberation of oppressed people and to “transform the existing social system which allows the marginalization of the poor, and promote in its place a more equitable system which recognizes the poor and gives them control over their own lives” (Steckler, 1996). For Freire, it is fundamentally a process of liberation, or the process of humanization of oppressed people through their awareness, or conscientization and resulting action. Through this praxis(reflection and action), the oppressed will transform their world and liberate both themselves and their oppressors (Freire, 1970).

Also important to these approaches, indeed part of the above transformation, is to break down the hierarchies of power within the educational or research or evaluation process, to redefine knowledge and therefore knowers, and to find power with the participants rather than power over (Steckler 1996, Freire, 1970, Tandon, 1995, Auerbach, 1992). This is in reaction to what is called Banking education (Freire 1970), Traditional, Ends-Means approach (Auerbach, 1992), or the Didactic Method (Srinivasan, 1990) which is characterized by the teacher as expert and therefore both the creator and disseminator of knowledge. In Participatory Approaches, the teacher/learner, researcher/participant, evaluator/evaluatee line is blurred, through dialogue, the teacher-of-the-student and the students-of-the-teacher cease to exist and a new term emerges: teacher-student with students-teachers. The teacher is no longer merely the one who teaches, but one who is himself taught in dialogue with the students who in turn while being taught, also teach. They become jointly responsible for a process in which all grow (Freire, 1970).
The teacher is seen as a facilitator of a process rather than the knower/expert who imparts knowledge into the empty vessels of the students.

Another underlying principle, an extension of the above, was that of "students being experts on their own reality" and that the students read the world not just the word (Freire, 1972, Auerbach, 1992). In participatory curriculum development, "in place of a static body of knowledge defined by outside experts, students and teachers have a set of principles and processes to guide their own selection of content and production of knowledge" (p. 19, Auerbach, 1992). Furthermore, "the bank from which content is drawn is the social reality of students' lives..." (Auerbach, p. 20, 1992). Knowledge is created, not "known".

Freire, and participatory approaches in the spirit of consciousness-raising seemed to have at their foundation a sense of liberation and social change, being less about learning per se, than about transformation of the learning environment and our relationship to knowledge.

**Learner-Centered Approaches**
Learner-Centered approaches are often equated with or seen as part of a "participatory" approach. Srinivasan (1990), in discussing Participatory Training, defines "The Participatory Style" as,

> a Learner-centered approach in which the focus is on the learners developing abilities and skills to diagnose and solve their own problems. The trainer merely facilitates a process of competency-building and self-discovery for the learners whose needs, experiences, and goals are the focus of the training (p. 26).

In Kindervatter (1976), on the other hand, Freire's Consciousness raising and Knowles' Andragogy are cited as examples of "Learner-centered Approaches". For her, these approaches "...are proposed as means to promote qualities of self-reliance and "khit pen" (form of self-reliance in Thai culture) [and] assume the active participation of learners in discussion and decision-making" (p. 12).
Kindervatter outlines the following as some common characteristics of a learner centered approach:

1. Content and objectives based on learners’ needs and presented from the learners’ perspective;
2. Methods which catalyze active participation and interaction of learners rather than passive information gathering;
3. Materials that provoke and pose problems, rather than provide answers;
4. Teachers who are not teachers, but facilitators;
5. Learning which is not only cognitive, but also leads to new awarenesses and behaviors in the learners’ lives (Kindervatter, p. 3-4).

There are many similarities between Learner-Centered and Freirian, consciousness raising approaches. Indeed, this approach seems to take the principles of Freirian, consciousness raising and participatory approaches, and to synthesize them into concrete practice. The approach is the practices, or the attempt to concretize the ideals into practice. It gives more specifics, such as the above ‘characteristics’ which serve as an example of how to do education that changes the learning environment. But even the title suggests something slightly different from participatory or consciousness raising approaches. It seems be characterized by ensuring participation in an approach or as a focus on the learners, rather than being “participatory”.

**Adult Education Theory: Andragogy and the Adult Experiential Learning Cycle**

Most theorists about participatory education use adult learning theory as either a rationale for or an example of their approach. Two of the most quoted theories are Malcolm Knowles’ theory of Andragogy and David Kolb’s Adult Experiential Learning Cycle.

**Andragogy**

In his theory of Andragogy, Knowles sought to find the way in which adult learners learn differently from children. There is much depth to the theory, but here are the four basic concepts:

1. Adults have a self-concept of autonomy rather than dependency and thus thrive in learning which is self-directed, and in which the teacher-learner relationship is one of reciprocity rather than directing/dominating;
2. Adults come to the learning environment with a wealth of life experience and these experiences should be utilized as resources for learning–hence the use of “experiential” techniques such as simulation, role playing, buzz groups, team designing...and so on” (Arceri and Ingalls, 1973, p. 7);
3. Adults have the basics and therefore their learning should relate to their social situations. They should determine what they want to learn according to their own interests;
4. Learning is “problem centered” rather than subject centered and it is focused on real problems in the present time (Arceri and Ingalls, 1973, p. 6-9).

Experiential Learning Cycle

The Experiential Learning Cycle, the approach upon which Peace Corps bases its training philosophy, has many different variations (Hammons & Wight, 1970; Holvino, 1983; Mullinix, 1986). In its form as developed by educator David Kolb, the approach is linked closely with learning styles and is based on the philosophy that adults learn differently from each other. Based on four basic learning styles, and the concept that adults learn experientially, the model has the following components as quoted from Mullinix (1986):

**Concrete Experience:** The learner is involved in a concrete experience that is provided in training. The learner explores a new situation firsthand. The learner learns by demonstration, explanation, lecture, and the giving of facts by the trainer.

**Reflection and Observation:** The learner maintains concrete involvement but distance self, becoming reflective observer—takes a step back to observe and reflect on what the situation means to him/her. Learning takes place through question and answer periods, discussion, or individual time for reflection and work.

**Abstract Conceptualization:** “Based on reflection, the learner analyzes the situation and forms theories, generalizing from the particular to the hypothetical and general. Interaction with peer and the trainer helps the learner analyze the situations.

**Active Experimentation:** The learner formulates a plan or strategy to apply the newly attained information to his/her own situation. The learner needs to discover for himself the application of knowledge (p. 15).

They do not always occur in this order, although the steps do seem to follow one another in a kind of repeating cycle, Kolb maintains that this is instead a guide for the trainer to remember to include each of these kinds of learning within the scope of the lesson or training program.

*Where do they intersect?*

Clearly all of these inform each other and all have informed our practices in working with adults. One can see very close similarities between adult learning theory, learner-centered approaches and Freirian participatory education. Yet, they are also different in subtle ways. Each seems to address a similar problem: the sense that education for adults is not addressing their needs. Each suggests a new kind of learning environment for adults and
the components of these environments are quite similar. My sense of what distinguishes them is their raison d’être, their purpose, so to speak. Participatory, as defined here, has as its goal the transformation of human beings and ultimately of society as a whole. Theories about adult education have the goal of redefining how adults learn so that adult education can better serve them and can be more effective, whatever that education. Learner centered approaches are similar, but seem to add a dimension: attempting to transform the learning situation to be more empowering for adults, not just more effective, or more relevant.

Both of learner-centered approaches and adult learning theory seem to be more of a means to an end, than an end in themselves. The goal, or the end, is often toward liberation or humanization as in Kindervatter’s Khit Pen, but it isn’t always; it isn’t necessarily liberatory, and it may not even be chosen by the learners. These approaches and techniques are adopted and adapted for use by many groups--human resources management, development organizations--and the idea seems to be less of the participants discovering their own reality and changing oppressive situations, then of having found a better means to reach a traditional end. For example, Srinivasan’s participatory training for water systems operates from the assumption that there is a body of knowledge to be gained and that the participants are there to gain this body of knowledge. Participatory techniques are introduced as a way to better transfer the information and have it retained, rather than as a way to have an organic process by which the villagers determine their own needs and develop them into a project.

Srinivasan acknowledges the many ways that the participatory agenda has been co-opted by development organizations to serve their own purposes without truly engaging the participants in a process of decision-making. The titles of these approaches are quite self explanatory: “cheap labor” concept, “cost sharing” concept, and the contractual obligation concept(Srinivasan, p. 16-17, 1992). However, even in what Srinivasan calls its true form, “community decision-making”, there is still a sense that it is a way to garner support for projects from the outside, a way to convince people and get them committed, as in this quote, “As participatory training takes hold, PROWESS has found that the momentum created by a learner centered approach can pave the way for better utilization of products or messages being disseminated by didactic means.” (Srinivasan, 1992, p. 26)

The techniques and methods of learner-centered approaches and of adult education theory, or even “participatory techniques” have the potential, perhaps, to be used in the way that
Bock and Papagiannis (1983) describe nonformal education being used: “within this perspective [deficiency model of development] it is clear that nonformal education has become the new weapon in the development arsenal: if formal schooling can promote development, then nonformal education, through its ability to reach a broader range of people during a greater span of their lives, can do it better and cheaper” (Bock and Papagiannis, p.9, 1983). Perhaps these techniques, under the guise of “participatory”, are the way development agencies have found to ensure that villagers ‘buy into’ the development initiatives being done by the outsiders. If this is true, then is what is being done participatory education? Is there is difference between participatory education and participatory training techniques? If someone is conducting a “participatory” training because he/she knows that this is the best way to get community members to maintain and develop a water project, not because this person really believes that the people have valid knowledge, or is seeking power with rather then power over, is this really participatory education?

This issue suggests that in participatory education, the end matters as much, if not more than the means. And perhaps something else matters, too, something a bit more slippery, an attitude perhaps, or the reason for doing something. It seemed important to separate techniques and methods from the theory or principles. I felt that one could use the techniques and yet not really be changing the educational situation, that one could look and act participatory without being participatory at all.

I think herein lay some of my confusion. Experiential learning, for example, seemed like a good method, a better way perhaps for adults to learn, but it didn’t seem like participatory education. People participated in activities planned by the facilitator, but was this enough? As a participant in experiential learning or even other participatory training activities, I have often felt a bit like a lab rat being put through an experience that had been carefully mapped out so that I would come to a certain conclusion. I felt that there was a specific answer or set of reflections, one that other people had already come to, that I was supposed to be realizing. The only real difference between this and didactic education was that I was being led through some kind of game to figure out the answer instead of just being told. Sometimes this was exciting and interesting and felt like a good way to learn, but other times it felt manipulative and very fixed. Everything had been done and prepared for me; my job was simply to participate in the process. I had little control over the process, and little decision-making and at times felt like a subject in some educators’ learning experiment. Was this participatory education? It is likely that part of the problem is that
these methods are not done well; they are used inappropriately, and are interpreted incorrectly. This was at least part of my problem, too. But I also needed to make some distinctions between these theories and the techniques or methods that seem to go along with them.

What is Theory?
Is theory a documentation or formalization of what is, or an attempt to visualize what could be? We talk about it, and read it and curse it, but just what is theory? And what is it that participatory education theory offers me in my particular situation? I made some distinctions for myself using frameworks from ESL teaching. Celce-Murcia (1987), makes a useful distinction between approach, method and technique. An approach is that which emerges out of a certain paradigm or understanding of how language is learned. It is the theory. A Method is “a set of procedures, i.e., a system that spells out rather precisely how to teach a language” (Celce-Murcia, 1987, p. 5). Methods are typically compatible with one or at most, two approaches. Finally, techniques are the most specific. This is a “classroom device or activity and thus represents the narrowest term of the three” (p. 5). Techniques may be used by a variety of methods or approaches. A technique developed by one approach may be adopted by and used successfully in another approach.

Using this framework I returned to Freire and Participatory education. Freire outlines a theory of how adults should learn, how human beings should engage with one another and the purpose for education. Then, he also outlines a method for teaching within this approach. Out of this method, there are many techniques which may be new to education. What we find useful in an approach obviously depends what we are looking for. Sometimes the approach might not appeal to us, but some of the techniques seem useful. Other times, one needs to use the theory to create a framework within which to choose techniques or develop a method. Techniques tend to be that which is seen as most useful and that which is most easily passed on. But there is danger in this. If one learns only the methods or the techniques without knowing the reasons for doing this, then the true meaning of the theory can easily be lost. Soon one’s idea of what the theory is becomes the techniques and methods which can become more and more synthesized and broken down each time they are passed on. The techniques are a kind of proposal of how to get from a to b given a certain situation with certain factors at a given time. The techniques may be applicable but with changes, in different combinations.
I needed to understand the theory in participatory education, to separate that from the methods and techniques that each new practitioner has found to fit their context. I needed to understand what that theory meant with regard to my own context. Coming from a formal education background in a second world country and not community development with oppressed people in the third world, I often had difficulty relating to the discussions on participation, participatory, critical consciousness, because of their link to the liberation of oppressed people and to community development and the poor. What did these terms really mean in a more general abstract sense, apart from their seeming contextual base?

Taken literally, all of these terms had little to do with my own work context, I was put off by the notions of liberation, human transformation and social change. What did transforming the social reality have to do with my situation, teaching middle to upper middle class, mostly white, Americans how to teach English as a Foreign Language? Trainees had come to learn EFL teaching techniques; their goals were quite clear: learn how to teach EFL and to learn about the Bulgarian school system. It didn’t seem to make sense that, “students are experts on their own reality”. The field is new to them, they know virtually nothing about their future teaching positions, and know very little about the country and it’s education system. TEFL teaching does have a body of knowledge which is useful to be exposed to and I do have knowledge and experience in this particular field and that is why I was hired for this job. Did it make sense for us to be co-learners? Is it possible that I do in fact have knowledge that the learners want/need to know?

Was what I had to glean from participatory/learner centered/adult education going to be limited to some new techniques, a new way to teach adults? This was a bit disheartening, especially given the fact that the techniques and activities given for participatory training and learner centered education really didn’t seem very relevant to my context. Mostly focused on team building, group dynamics (Eitington, 1984, Cohen & Pacheco, 1996)), community development (Srinivasan 1992; Vella, 1989; Licht & Murangi, 1996), or cross-cultural training (Hammons & Wight, 1970); they didn’t serve the needs of these future teachers who had only 100 short hours to learn the content of ESL, the techniques and theory of ESL teaching and the functioning and cultural norms of the Bulgarian school system.

I believed that participatory education was more than these techniques and that there was applicability to my context. It wasn’t about using the adult experiential learning cycle, or about just nominally setting up a different learning environment. It was something
broader, a whole approach and way of trying to see the world. In general, I determined that for my purposes, to be participatory means to have as your goal in any education process to:

*transform the nature of the learning situation and the interactions between learners and teacher, to share control over the decision-making, to break down the hierarchy of knowledge construction and to fundamentally, have love and respect for other human beings and their capacities while also creating an environment in which everyone can grow and learn and develop.*

I understand this, and I believe in it, and I believe that it is applicable to my situation. Now, I need to figure out just how to do it. How does this look in practice? What does it look like? How does a participatory leader or facilitator behave? What would it look like in a skills based training with the other constraints of Peace Corps training? While I was actively seeking answers in education, my revelations came rather serendipitously elsewhere.

**Supervision as a Helping Relationship**

The opening of my insight into the true nature of participatory and how powerful it can be came, in fact, from my personal explorations during one of my “skills” based courses: “Supervision as a Helping Relationship”. In this course, I reflected on my behavior not only as a teacher supervisor, but also on my experiences as a supervisor of training assistants. The thing that had made me most uncomfortable during the preceding summer was having to give “feedback” to trainees and training assistants. This feedback was usually something negative, having to do with the fact that the trainee had broken a training code, or a training assistant had not done a job up to expectations. In part, I didn’t want to do this because of personality issues (see below). I wanted to be liked, and so tried to remain neutral with everyone. However, this approach did not make me an effective leader, and I believe, did a disservice to those who worked with me. Rather than be up front with people about their behavior, I allowed small behaviors to become larger problems which then affected others, both other trainees and other staff members. I thought I was treating people with respect because I was not telling them that I thought their work was ineffective or that they were behaving inappropriately. I felt that to do this would be “judging” them and treating them like children.

Yet, by not telling them, or being honest with them in some way, I created a negative situation for all of us. I became resentful of them; I didn’t trust that they could do tasks that I gave them and therefore began to take on more and more of the responsibility for myself.
In the end, several of them asked me for recommendations for college and jobs. I was in a fix. I had never let on for even a second that I thought their work was unsatisfactory or unprofessional, but this was how I felt. Writing anything other than that felt dishonest, but I felt I had no choice. Nobody gained from this experience. The training assistants were not helped to really grow as professionals, and the trainees were in no way made aware of behaviors which were likely to cause them trouble as PCVs. I felt distanced from both trainees and training assistants, like I was in a position to have to give them negative feedback, so I was the “bad guy”. I also began to take on more and more of the responsibility for everything, thinking, “if they can’t do it right then I had best just do it myself”.

In my supervision class, I decided that what I needed to do was to become better at giving constructive, or sometimes negative feedback. I was looking only at the feedback event, thinking that I must get over my non-confrontational approach and my desire to only be nice and complimentary. This was certainly part of the problem: my personality and insecurities as discussed below. But as I began reading about giving constructive feedback, I began, very slowly, to see a bigger picture. In my second reflection paper I wrote,

I recognized (in the readings) that being an effective challenger begins long before any given feedback session. It is in the assumptions one makes about human learning and behavior, which lead to the approach taken. Much groundwork should already be laid by the time any particular feedback event takes place. The way that the actors involved in whatever the supervisory situation understand their role and the role of the supervisor, plays a large part in how the feedback will be taken and perceived. Techniques for being a challenger seem to be not only on the micro-level within any given session of feedback..., but in the whole framework and relationship between supervisor and the teachers or co-workers”.

I slowly began to see that it wasn’t about becoming more comfortable with and better at being a dictator, but rather about getting rid of the dictator-like dynamic.

There was a reason that I was uncomfortable giving feedback that went beyond my personality. I had not set up a supervisory situation. All of us being adults, and me wanting to be participatory, I had wanted a situation in which we were all in charge and responsible. I thought I was being participatory by letting us all just take on equal responsibility, but I wasn’t. We were not in the same situation. I had planned the training by myself; therefore I had a vision of the final product, and an idea about what I wanted each session to be in order to fit into the whole and nobody else did. The training program had rules for
behavior that the trainees were being asked to abide by; my job was to reinforce these rules. I was implementing my training design on them, in a nice way, of course, but still as an imposition.

This goes back to the feeling that it was all about me; I had set up a hierarchy without intending to do so, while at the same time professing to be participatory. Of course all direction had to come from me, and of course I had to be the one “in control” because I didn’t let anyone else into the process. In a spring Evaluation paper I wrote,

slowly the true nature of participation emerged. It didn’t just mean allowing the trainees to participate in some of the training activities during a given session. It didn’t just mean allowing the training staff to plan and facilitate some of the sessions. It meant opening up the whole process to the training assistants and the trainees. The more I learned about supervision, and the more I thought about the problems I faced, the more clear it became that it wasn’t about me designing something different, it was about allowing other people into the design process.

My first revelation about how I had misunderstood participatory was this. I needed to let others share in the stake, and to help create, or at least know about the vision of the whole product. It was about changing the relationship to each other and to information. In this sense, I was not being participatory enough, I was not seeing fully the ways in which others could and needed to be involved in the process in order for us to really work in a participatory way.

However, I also had to realize that this process and the extent to which I led or did not lead, depended upon the situation. Another misconception that I had was that participatory supervision or education always looks the same, that it is one thing. And my understanding of that thing was skewed. I think I was reading everything too literally. I took to heart the ideas that we should be both learners and teachers engaged in a dialectical approach to new knowledge construction. I wanted to be equal and to validate them and their abilities. I wanted to believe in them. I didn’t want to be controlling and I didn’t want to tout myself as an expert. Indeed, I really didn’t even see myself as such. As described above, I was very laissez faire in my approach; we discussed which sessions they wanted to give, we discussed what the session should be about, and then I let them plan the session as they wanted.

This whole approach, however, was dishonest, and false. Our positions in this process were different. They were temporary volunteers, on for a few weeks as a summer project.
They had very little stake in the effectiveness of the final product, and were not asked to. I did have stake, and ultimately, whether I liked it or not, I was responsible for the training happening in an effective way. Secondly, we did have different information, different expertise, different knowledge. By pretending that we all knew the same amount, I denied the training assistants and the trainees valuable information and experience about teaching TEFL. I wasn’t honest in the process about my knowledge and my stake. I had been trained to be so anti-expert, that I took this to an extreme, and not wanting to seem like I “knew more”, I didn’t share at all. Thus, I was not only not the leader of the group, I wasn’t even a member. They shared their knowledge, but I didn’t share mine.

I was confused about what it meant to create a mutual and nonhierarchical relationship. By denying what I knew, my level of expertise in the subject matter, and my stake in the product, I was not being honest, nor was I participatory. As I wrote in my 11th Supervision Reflection paper:

I need to acknowledge my position in this relationship...While I do not hold a threatening power position for these assistants (they are volunteers, after all), I do have knowledge about the various subjects being taught, experience with training teachers and an understanding of the overall program obligations that the assistants do not have....I have a hard time openly admitting that I have knowledge. I always think to myself, ‘well, my experience tells me that something won’t work or that this is a better way, but what do I know?’ Admittedly there is much that I don’t know. But I think in this case the problem was that I did know things, and I knew that I knew them, but I never admitted that to my supervisees, thinking that this would make them feel like I was being arrogant and exerting a position of power over them. Instead I pretended to use collaborative behaviors or nondirective behaviors, when deep down, I had both an agenda and a stake that I was subtly trying to impose (p. 2&3).

I confused being direct with being controlling and hierarchical. This is not the case. Most importantly, I needed to be honest, with myself, with the training assistants and with the trainees. I needed to be me. No wonder I felt that I wasn’t present in the training; I took myself out in the name of participatory education, thinking that in that way, I was not directing or controlling the process. But the process needed to be directed and controlled in some way. After “giving up control”, if things did not go as desired, then I would come in with a sort of passive controlling behavior, which often ended up being the sentiment that, “if I want something done right I had better do it myself”, blaming assistants or participants for things not working as I had envisioned. I was alternately super controlling and laissez faire and nothing in between.
Two ideas from Supervision helped me to better understand these roles of leadership: Differentiated Supervision and The Supervisory Behavior Continuum.

**Differentiated Supervision**

The fundamental principles of Differentiated Supervision are seemingly so simple. It is, "essentially a model for giving teachers some options in the type of supervision they receive" (Glatthorn, 1991). Simple, no? But in the supervision world, it is still a radical concept. And in management it may be even more radical yet. The rationale is gleaned from work in adult and human development, as well as organizational management.

Teachers, as humans and adults, will be at different stages of development in terms of their cognitive, moral, and conceptual development, will have different amounts of experience in the practice of teaching, and are in different life phases depending on their age (Glatthorn, 1990). Each teacher will need different kinds and amounts of supervision and direction depending on all of these factors, as well as on their own professed needs and interests.

Being a helpful supervisor, or mentor or co-learner, will mean something different to each teacher. It requires both supervisor and teacher to engage in an honest and open relationship, and attempts to create the situation which is most appropriate.

The word supervision connotes a hierarchy, and indeed, in reality, that may be. But the trend in supervision is to change that dynamic when and where possible while still preserving the possibility for teachers to find support and the means for professional development. A goal of participatory education also is to break down the power structure between learner and teacher. However, the trick is to do this in a way which still allows learning to occur for both parties. In the above scenarios, I was trying to break down this hierarchy, but in the process, nobody really learned and gained as much as they could have. It ceased to be a productive and useful relationship. For me, it is important to think of this co-learning situation as something which will always look different depending upon on the needs and human developmental level of the learners and the facilitator. In addition, it will also be affected by time and other constraints. This, to me, is also a more human approach: to see learners not as generic learners, but as different individuals and groups needing different things from a facilitator.
Back to Education: Learning Styles

This is reminiscent of the learning styles continua in adult education. Discussions on learning styles suggest that adults learn in different ways, and therefore will need different types of instruction. Mullinix (1986), presents some continua associated with the adult learning process.

active and participatory---------------------passive
shared responsibility------------------------trainer responsible
shared access to knowledge----------------trainer access to knowledge
learning how to learn------------------------learning facts (p.13).

They suggest that each of us, learners and teachers, will be at a different places on these continua, and that our responsibility as educators is to address these differences. Part of my skewed understanding of what makes something participatory was informed by this continuum.

I had come to feel that learner-centered and participatory education should always be focused on the left side of these continua. In essence, the approaches are about this, about moving toward this direction. However, learning styles theory suggests that, in practice, to really address adults where they are, and not in some kind of idealized way, educational situations should adapt to and incorporate all of these parts of the continua. The point is not to change from the right side, to education which is completely like the left side. It is rather to recognize the fact that it has been largely on the right side up until now, and that we must try to balance it out. In our trap of dichotomous thinking, it seems we always tend to go to opposite extremes when something has been shown to be ineffective, or incomplete. Rather than see a complimentary whole, we tend to say that if one extreme didn’t work, then the answer must be the other. We tend to classify the whole system as negative and thus throw out all of it, and any potential it has to inform the new. In this much is lost. The process may be that we need to try the other side, to explore it completely, in order to learn where it, too, is lacking. Then, and only then, we can return to the middle, using the best of both to perform the complex task of working with vastly varying human beings in a broad range of educational contexts.

I think one of the dangers of “alternative education” is in simplifying by glorifying the left and condemning the right. We often study about the alternatives without ever studying about what these are alternatives to and in so doing, lose a sense of the middle. We afraid
to be the other because we know it is “wrong” and yet, we don’t even know what the other
is, or what it has to offer. This dichotomized thinking contributed to my confusion. I
came to understand the left side as “participatory” or “good” adult education, and the right
side as that which the evil and uninformed “traditional” educators do. These four things,
the left side of the continuum, and the practices which embody them became for me the
theory, it became education as it should be. Thus, my practice became equally one-sided,
equally deficient, equally unable to respond to the needs of all adults in all situations.

Theory into Practice: Theory, Methods and Techniques II
Ironically, in Mullinix, this set of continua is followed with a method for teaching adults:
Kolb’s Adult Experiential Learning Cycle (Mullinix, 1986). There is some confusion for
an educator here. This approach supposedly attempts to address all of the learning styles
but clearly sets learning up to follow a specific pattern. It is useful to have this model as a
possible method for the appropriate situation, content and set of learners. However, it is
only useful if we learn it as one of many possible techniques rather than the way to teach
adults. One of the problems lies, I believe, in the substituting of a method or technique for
a thorough knowledge of the situation and constant attention to each and every learner’s
style as well as one’s own. The above continua are instructive in this regard. The real
danger, it seems, in anything, is not learning it well enough, but then practicing it. People
take the theory, synthesize it for themselves into techniques or models, which then become
the theory instead of just being one application or possible application of it. We start to
become focused on the techniques, rather than on the reasons behind the techniques. Each
of us needs, rather, to develop a theoretical underpinning from which to operate, and from
there to find our own set of techniques to respond to our different situations.

Informative theory and conceptual notions which are instructive for us as educators, get
brought down into practices, which then get turned into the theory, instead of just a practice
based on the theory. In Supervision, for example, someone developed a model for
supervising based on one particular theory of adult development or management styles, and
that model became not a model, but the model of supervision. At that moment, as new
practitioners came into the field and learned not about adult development or management
styles, but learned the model and how to practice it, supervision lost its ability to be
adaptive to each situation and to each human being.

The more times Kolb’s model is taught without the underlying theory, the more removed it
becomes from that theory, and the more likely it won’t be as effective. When taught in a
hour long Peace Corps training session, it is presented as a model of, the best model of, adult learning, and one leaves with the how tos, but not the why tos. Then, one goes out to practice it and may become frustrated with its limitations, not understanding that it is not the panacea of adult learning, not the way, but rather is a possibility within which and outside of which there are many other possibilities. Another example is my alienation with Freirian techniques. Inspired by Freire’s message, and method, I wanted to be able to do this kind of thing in my work. However, I could not seem to find a way to make the problem-posing coding technique work in my context. Thus, I assumed that I could not do Freirian education, that all of it was not relevant to me. By taking Freire as the techniques, I lose any possibility of being creative with it, of using the powerful principles in my own educational situations. Each theory, technique, and concept can only take us so far, after that, we must take it on our own.

As Freire said to CIE students in 1988,

For me one of the dangers we have with these techniques and methods is to enslave the educator to the techniques, to the rules which are important also but which can not become the masters of the teachers. They should use their imagination, go beyond the rules with their students.

I suspect he did not mean problem-posing, using culture circles and coding to be the theory, but rather, just a possible way to practice or facilitate the process outlined by the theory. It is what worked for Freire in his situation, in his time and place, with his students and with him as facilitator. It is offered to us as another possibility for the repertoire, it is offered as a jumping off point, but not as the means through which one accesses the theory, or the other principles of the theory.

The theory, as discussed above, was meant to be broader than the techniques developed within it, as well as the characteristics of learning on the left side of the above continua. We must remember that the theories are limited by the fact that they are developed by human beings, and are for us to use, not for us to become. The theories are meant to broaden our perspective, to help us see more and to be more inclusive, not to limit us by saying this is right and this is wrong. It is to help us see possibility for our practice, to re-assess what we do and to open up our thinking to new ways, new possibility. It is the criteria by which we decide which techniques and methods to use. But this theory will and should always be our own, informed by others, but of our own interpretation and making.
Supervisory Behavior Continuum: Know Thyself

Differentiated Supervision helped me to see that participatory or any education should be responsive to the needs and learning styles and developmental level of all human beings involved in the process. Different things were needed from a supervisor or educator. The Supervisory Behavior Continuum as outlined by Glickman (1990), helped me to understand what those different ‘things’ might be. Glickman (1990) emphasizes the need for supervisors to be aware of their interpersonal approach, both in order to recognize when they are using certain kinds of behaviors and to think about what kind of approach to use in what situations. He describes four interpersonal approaches:

- **Nondirective**: “Supervisor listens to the teacher, clarifies what the teacher says, and encourages the teacher to speak more...and reflects by verifying the teacher’s perceptions... (p. 108). The teacher has a high level of control and the supervisor has a low level of control over decisions being made.

- **Collaborative**: “...supervisor uses nondirective behaviors to understand the teacher’s points of view, but then participates in the discussion by presenting his or her own ideas, problem solving by asking all parties to propose possible actions, and then negotiating to find a common course of satisfactory action...the control of the decision is shared by all”(p. 108)

- **Directive, informational**: “The supervisor directs the teacher in what the alternatives are from which the teacher might choose, and the supervisor standardizes the time and criteria of the expected result...the supervisor is a major source of information, providing the teacher with restricted choice” (p.108).

- **Directive Control**: ...supervisor directs the teacher in what will be done, standardizes the time and criteria of results and reinforces the consequences of action or inaction...supervisor takes responsibility for the action [and] is clearly determining the actions for the teacher to follow (p.108)”

This was helpful for me in order to understand when I was behaving in what way. Even more instructive is that he goes on to discuss when each of these types of behaviors would be more or less appropriate. He defines three criteria for assessing which approach to use: 1). expertise, 2). responsibility, 3). care (Glickman, 1990, p.132). For example, if I know very little about a certain topic or decision, if it is a decision over which I will have no responsibility, but the teacher or group will, and if it is something about which I don’t care much, but matters to the group, then it is best for me to use a nondirective approach. On the other hand, as in my training situation, if I do have some knowledge about a topic, I am ultimately responsible for whatever decision is made and I care about the result because I have a high stake, then I might be collaborative during the decision-making process, and even controlling when it comes to making a decision.

The authors acknowledge that this is an oversimplification, and discuss in detail the complexity of each of these. However, from this, I began to clarify a method for assessing
each situation and individual, as well as, and perhaps most importantly myself. It helped me to see that always being nondirective, what I understood (or misunderstood) to be participatory, was not necessarily the most helpful way to lead, or even facilitate. Not only was it O.K. to at times be collaborative, or even directive, it was more appropriate, and more respectful of the individual or group with whom I am working. It is also more respectful to myself.

Being a participatory manager didn’t mean treating every meeting and every decision with a nondirective approach. It wasn’t that easy. It meant having to analyze every situation, every decision, every person on a staff (or in a class) and decide which approach will be the most honest, respectful and humanistic. Being Directive or controlling doesn’t always mean not being respectful of others as human beings, at times it might, ironically, be the most respectful thing. Sometimes and for some people, this approach is harder to do, yet if people are seeking direction, and in certain moments this approach may be just what is needed.

**Conclusion**

From these explorations into supervisory practices, I gained the understanding that participatory wasn’t just about participation in, it was at least in part about control, about who gets to make what decisions and when. There were many ways in which I could expand my vision of what could be opened up for shared control and decision-making. I also began to see that it wasn’t about one thing, one way of being in every situation, but rather an approach which allows one to be open to and to assess every situation, every individual and from there decide how best to behave so as to offer a sharing of power, a respect and a desire to foster growth and learning for everybody.

**Looking Back**

With this perspective I looked back on my situation. My attempt to gather stakeholder’s opinions, the disjointed process. It all started to make sense. I wanted the training to meet everybody’s needs and perspectives on the situation: Bulgarian teachers, the APCD, the Programming and Training Officer, the PST director, the currently serving volunteers and those who had served during my two years. I took the materials that were given to me by those trying to help, and based the training on that which had been done before. But in attempting to make the training everything to everybody, it took on a disjointed and hectic nature. I felt like I was making decisions for all of the wrong reasons: to appease this person or that, because there wasn’t time to do anything differently, to make other people
feel good, just because it had always been done that way before. Ultimately, the only person who I didn’t consult was me, and with no guiding philosophy for decision-making, the training was like a collage of pieces from many places stuck randomly together.

**Participatory Education Revisited**

My sense is that what really makes something participatory is not the amount of participation in something, but rather the goals of and the reasons for the undertaking, as well as the attitudes of the facilitator and participants. These go back to Freire, consciousness-raising, and Participatory approaches, and for me include the following:

- extent to which the educational experience seeks to empower the learner, and in which people discover their own strengths, and share in or have control over the learning situation and their lives;
- extent to which the educational process breaks down hierarchies of power and knowledge construction through honest and humanistic means;
- extent to which the goal is transformation of some kind, internal or external, for both learners and facilitators.

To reach these ends, many approaches and techniques could be used in unlimited combinations. As Kindervatter says “Thought learner center approaches commonly emphasize building programs based on learners’ perspectives and needs, and promoting active learner participation, these emphases take different forms in different programs (p. 19)”. In the how tos, comes the issue of degree and quality of participation in activities. But without the above philosophy, none of this is necessarily participatory no matter how much participation is allowed.

**Degree and Quality of Participation in a Participatory Approach**

As I discovered in my supervision course, and throughout my own learning experiences, there are many levels of participation in participatory approaches. As I began to examine my own training structure, I found that I was being participatory on the classroom level, but it was limited to that. For me, participatory education meant giving the students some choices about what to do, and then allowing them to participate in engaging activities. I have since become aware that this a rather limited view of the level of participation.
To sort this out, I began by envisioning a continuum, with controlling teacher who lectures and just gives information on one end, and the teacher who abdicates the whole learning process to the students on the other. It might look something like this.

- Teacher plans and facilitates lectures. Students listen and are receptacles of information.

- Students participate in activities and sessions which are planned and led by facilitators

- Students help plan what types of activities they want, facilitators plan them in detail and students participate in them.

- Students design the curriculum and plan the activities

- Students plan activities, facilitate learning process for themselves

- Facilitator give whole process to students. Is a resource when they ask. Offers no information.

In some ways, this continuum makes sense. Either end is an extreme, and is probably that which is least healthy. However, if one looks at it this way, then it would seem that the healthiest is in the middle. This is not what I have discovered about implementing participatory education. Rather, as argued above, we need to see this continua as the road of possibility, of choices. Our decisions about how to operate, about what methods and techniques are appropriate, will differ for every situation. One might find one’s self at many different levels of participation throughout one day. We might choose a level on which to develop our overall training design, or supervision strategy, but within that, smaller training sessions, meetings, activities and decisions, might fall at very different levels of participation depending on what the situation calls for. These decisions will be affected by many factors:

- Time
- Type of learning to be undertaken
- Resources available/budget
- Facilitators
- Expectations and expressed needs of learners
- Nature of task
Role of the Facilitator and of Leadership

Sometimes I get the feeling that people think that by changing the label from ‘teacher’ to ‘facilitator’ we have changed the learning situation and our relationship to our students. For this discussion I will use the term facilitator, because I think that language does indicate how we are thinking about something. Ultimately, however, it is our actions which determine whether we are teaching, or dictating or facilitating, not the labels we use.

How to lead or be a leader in a participatory approach is a complex process. As is suggested by the above explorations in supervision, the role of the facilitator will depend largely on what level and model of participatory approach is needed by the situation. I was confused about what leadership meant in a participatory approach. Because the teacher is not supposed to be an “expert” and is not there to impart knowledge onto the learners, one might get the impression that the facilitator is quite passive, a learner like the rest of the participants. The idea here is that if this is participatory, then we are all equal and no one should have more control of the process or over decision making than anyone else. On rare occasion, in a situation where a group is conducting participatory action research or something very organic, this may be the case, and it may work.

However, no matter how equal the participants and how organic the process, participatory approaches do not just happen. They are led. Indeed part of my confusion was that I found most participatory processes to be highly facilitated and controlled, with activities chosen and directed by the facilitator. My sense was that the leader/facilitator actually has a very large role. Srinivasan suggests the same in her Manual for Training Trainers in Participatory Techniques, “the responsibility for the quality of community participation rests, in large measure, in the hands of the trainers” (p. 22, 1990).

The abdication of a leadership role in the participatory process in the attempt at some kind of equality, is in my opinion, a mistake and misconception about "participatory education” or participatory management. Participatory does not mean being unprepared. Just handing a process over to students and saying, “OK, you do it”, is lazy, not participatory. As Auerbach says of participatory curriculum development,

contrary to some misconceptions, it doesn’t mean that the teacher goes into the classroom empty handed, waiting for issues to fall from the sky. A participatory approach provides the teacher with a structured process for developing context-specific curricula, involving students at every step of the way (p. 13, 1992).
Participatory anything may take stronger and more careful leadership than traditional education or management approaches. It requires much more from us than just technical skills, the ability to synthesize and present information or to manage and direct. It requires keen interpersonal skills, the ability to creatively design ways which will encourage people to learn on their own, and to think out alternative strategies if they do not. It requires the ability to discern the subtle learning edges of all participants, to know when and how to step into the leadership role, and when to just leave the group to its own volition.

As I learned from my supervision experience above, avoiding the expert role does not mean that one does not participate. Auerbach and others emphasize the need for the teacher to be a member of the group, an active participant who is expected to share information and knowledge just as the others in the group do. By holding back knowledge because you “think you know too much and don’t want to seem the expert” demonstrates that indeed you deem yourself an expert. You are then setting yourself apart from the learners, and a false participatory process is in place. You don’t really see yourself as one of them, you see yourself as knowing more, and thus, can’t or won’t fully participate.

I believe there is also little pedagogical or andragogical benefit to truly not knowing anything about a subject matter for which you are the facilitator. If you profess to know nothing the students will suspect you are not telling the truth. Their expectation is that if you are in the position you are in, you should know something about the subject, something which you can at least share. If we really don’t know anything about the subject, and are not actively pursuing information along with the students, then we send a very clear message: this thing is not worth knowing about. There seem to be some fine lines here. First, we may not want to express our opinions or share with the group because our sharing, even if in the spirit of a member rather than a teacher, may be taken as some higher truth simply by virtue of our position and the conditioning of everyone present to view that position in a certain way. Thus, not sharing may feel and may at times be, more appropriate. But if you share nothing, then you run the risk of the above scenario; what is your purpose there anyway? Another line is that of admitting when there are subjects we don’t know about, not being afraid to say “I don’t know”. I think it is important to be able to do this. Yet, if students have come to you, your class, your training program, to learn something about a certain topic, I suspect they would be disappointed if you didn’t know anything. At the very least they might wonder why; if indeed this topic is of interest to you, then why do you know nothing about it?
I think we should be careful how we think about the teacher as learner and learners as teachers. Both can be learners, but each will probably be learning in a very different way from the process. First, facilitators and every member of the group must be honest about his or her stake, expertise and care as discussed above. We also must be aware of true levels of decision making. As facilitators we must think carefully about our decision to create a participatory learning structure. In so doing, we have already made a decision for the students. Are we ready to enter into a situation with learners, present to them options of how to learn, and take whatever they come up with? Or are we predisposed to a certain process, are we already convinced that participatory is better and therefore the way we will operate? What if a group decides that they want the entire thing to be directed and taught by the facilitator through lectures, because they honestly feel that the person knows more than they do? Is a participatory facilitator ready to accept this as the group's legitimate decision, and prepared to do what they ask? Or, are we convinced that the desire to have the didactic method is the result of years of conditioning by the system of which the student should be freed, therefore, the participatory process should continue even if it is against their will? In this situation, does the facilitator know best? And if so, is this really participatory?

This is something with which I struggle. When is what the students (or community members) say they want not really what they want? When is it what they want because it is all they know and have ever known, it is what they are most comfortable with, or it is easier? And when is it because that is what they really want and is appropriate? What is the facilitators role in deciding which it is? Who are we to choose participatory education for others? It seems contradictory to the main principles of participatory education itself to determine that people don't really know what they want because they have been deceived by the system. Why do we know this and they don't? While I believe that Malcolm Knowles is probably right here, I am challenged by this kind of statement,

When adult students are first exposed to a learning environment in which they are treated with respect, are involved in mutual inquiry with the teacher, and are given responsibility for their own learning, the usual reaction is one of shock and disorganization. Adults typically are not prepared for self-directed learning; they need to go through a process of reorientation to learning as adults--to learn new ways of learning (Knowles, p.40).

Surely, Knowles comes to this conclusion based on watching adults come through the process, and get to the end and be grateful for the new learning process. However, we must be careful to know when the resistance is because adults are being put in what we assume to be a "new" and "higher" type of learning, and when it is because we are not
doing something “right” or because perhaps this model isn’t appropriate for this time and place. At one level, it speaks to the need to trust the process, to really believe that, in spite of what your participants say or feel, or the extent to which they are struggling, to trust that this is the better, or best way for them. In doing this, the facilitator may be making a decision to not abide by the expressed wishes of the group. On another level, it speaks to a need to be careful not to set up an expectation of this kind of learning to be what is really good for adults, and what they should want; and then attribute their inability to deal with it, or their desire for something different to their lack of development or their conditioning.

I think the trick in participatory education is that facilitators need to be very honest about their role, and their opinions. Clearly, we think that a participatory process is better than some other one; however, to remain totally participatory, this opinion might be suspended in order that the group make its own decision. Yet, the facilitator probably has an agenda, and an idea about what process he or she wants. This is inevitable. What is important is that we acknowledge this, and don’t pretend that there is not a choice being made, and an opinion being voiced. Participatory education is a choice, made by the facilitator usually without the consultation of the participants. If we are committed to a participatory process, then are we already not participatory? Is it our choice to be committed to a participatory process? Is that our commitment to make? Maybe it is, but then let’s be honest that we have taken a decision for others, and we are leading the process in a certain way.

Conclusion
From these explorations I began to get a grounding theory about what participatory education means to me, a theory within which to start building a practice. I began to see the ways in which I could be participatory within my particular situation, the ways that I could use what I learned at the Center in whatever task I may be asked to do. Interestingly for me, I had both broadened and narrowed. My understanding of what participatory was expanded to become more inclusive and encompassing, but I had also come to some conclusions about what participatory isn’t. Intellectually, I was becoming more clear about what I needed to do. Now, the question remained of whether or not I could actually do it.
Human Conduits of Theory

"Simply knowing multiple theories, models, concepts and structures is not very useful if one does not have the capacity to act. That is, if one lacks the learned repertoires of behaviors and skills to use. Furthermore, "knowing" learning and practicing behaviors and skills is not very useful if one's values, beliefs, attitudes, needs, and life experiences hinder and block one's ability to know or make a diagnosis and intervention" (Phillips, 1987, p. 33).

Through the above exploration, I was beginning to get an idea of how I had misunderstood "participatory" education, and how those misunderstandings had caused me to behave in certain ways. It was clear that a large part of the problem had been misunderstanding and a limited knowledge of approaches and possibilities. But I was aware of other things going on as well. What prevented me from seeing these possibilities and connection earlier? Why did I have the sense of "knowing better" but did things a certain way anyhow?

My Personal Situation. Summer 1995

Part of why my process of collecting information from stakeholders was ineffective, was because I had misunderstood and mishandled the process. But why did I do that? I was driven by other forces, forces outside of the realm of "knowledge". Looking back I realized that I lacked self confidence and felt a tremendous pressure to perform. I was both the youngest and least experienced of the staff members. I had the advantage of knowing the language, and of having been a volunteer in that culture, but having no experience as a lead trainer was more significant than all of these. I recognized going in that someone had decided to take a chance on me. In spite of the fact that I didn't have much training experience, the Sofia staff had selected me out of many. I felt pressure to live up to expectations. This pressure, coupled with my sense of lack of experience, led me to be overly accepting of other people's opinions and ideas...and overly confident all at the same time. To cover up my sense of uncertainty, I acted confident, sure and in control. This "act" became reality itself; my need to appear 'in control' led to actual controlling behaviors.

In the "act" of being always in control super trainer, I also stopped being human. I never allowed the trainees to see any possible weakness, not in me, and certainly not in the training program. There was no me, and yet it was all me. I was making all of the decisions, and everything had to come from me, but at the same time, my decisions were
driven by the needs and ideas of others that I had so diligently collected. I was not present really. Hence my sense that the experience was inherently draining and empty.

Also disturbing was the feeling that I had gotten the trainees to like me, but had not put on a good training program. It is, of course, good that the trainees like me; their approval of me as a trainer is an important aspect of a successful program. In this case however, there was something more going on, something that had been nagging me about my teaching style for years. I suspected that I was spending more energy on getting people to like me personally than I was on making a good learning environment. The ideal scenario is obviously to have both, but in points of critical decision-making, I realized that my decisions were more driven by my need to be liked than preserving the integrity of the training program or class or whatever. Indeed, I feared that being liked had become my guiding principle, in lieu of a theory about what makes good education.

Wanting to be appeasing and to be liked made the participatory approach especially appealing. I think I thought it freed me from having to make any tough decisions, from having to do anything controversial. If we all decide everything as a group, then I don’t have to take responsibility for a decision that might not be popular. If we are all “equal” then I never have to be the bad guy, give negative feedback, or continue with a certain course of action because I believe in it even though it is unpopular in the moment. By collecting everybody else’s ideas and putting in none of my own, I freed myself from blame for anything not working out well. By having no beliefs, nobody can not like them or disagree with them.

Yes, my decisions to do things the way I did was much more than just a misunderstanding. My misunderstanding about being participatory was fueled at least in part by a desire for the process to be a certain way in order to fulfill my human needs, fears, insecurities. One might see it a sort of chosen misunderstanding. I wanted the process to serve me in some way, so I made the process be that. How powerful are these forces which seem to operate subconsciously? How much is our thinking limited by this humanness? The process I chose, and I must be honest, the process I continue to seek serves my needs in some way. My resistance to aspects of participatory and my ability to accept other parts comes from deep places that I am only beginning to understand.
Explorations

My explorations during my second year of graduate school were not limited to the classroom. As I puzzled the question of why I didn’t do things in a more participatory way, I realized that not understanding the theories as described above was only part of the problem. If one does not believe in coincidences, then it makes sense that at the same time, I was experiencing some profoundly challenging personal and emotional problems. Troubled relationships, family deaths, the death of a friend all led to the breaking down of some of my “mechanisms” for dealing with life. I had become accustomed to seeing myself in a certain way; I was always the helper, the person who listened to the problems of others and counseled, but who never had any such problems. As I described my training persona, I appeared (and believed myself to be) always in control, always emotionally stable, able to deal with every problem without assistance, always happy, without anxiety and certainly without the typical neuroses of most people in society. Partly in rejection of femaleness, and part because of my upbringing and Minnesota culture, I lived in a nearly emotionless world, protected from any vulnerability by an internal fortress hiding most of my emotions, insecurities, fears. I very carefully chose what to show to whom, when. I believed that I could survive being only the helper and never the helpee.

It all worked pretty well until the events of 1995. Coming back from the intensive summer of training, feeling very dissatisfied with my performance, and then faced with these emotional issues broke down the fortress. I came to the humbling realization that I didn’t have the ability to control the world around me, and that I was experiencing things for which none of the old mechanisms and rationalizations and tools worked anymore. I needed help from those around me. The masks, the fortress, the doling out of parts of me to different people; I began to see the problems in all of it. The nice world I had so carefully built came crashing down. Allowing this internal world to come crashing down upon me, I opened myself up to a whole world of new learning that was before closed. By accepting the fact that I didn’t have it all figured out, by being open to the possibility that I had emotional stuff to deal with like everybody else, I had an internal kind of paradigm shift.

I began to have new insights into my interactions with people. I began to see the ways in which my efforts to protect myself had led me to be manipulative and controlling and were impeding my possibilities for deep and meaningful relationships. The incongruity between my internal world and that which I allowed the outside to see was creating dynamics of which I was unaware, passive-aggressive behavior to compensate for not feeling like I
could share my feelings outright. I was using “helping” as nourishment for myself, developing lots of relationships in which people depended on me in order for me to feel better, stronger, in control. I didn’t really see people as equal, as capable, as worthy because I was so busy finding ways to help them, and I could never see the ways that they could help me. I was closed to learning. I was so busy protecting my fortress by figuring out all of the ways in which I could differentiate myself from others, and thus continue to maintain some sense of superiority, that I could not truly be in relationship with them. I was insecure about myself, and had to lower others, if only in my mind (because I also have a needed to be liked, and therefore would never say anything to someone’s face), in order to feel OK about me.

A whole new and seemingly endless world of learning was opened up for me. I read about personality, about human development, I watched others, I paid attention to myself, I saw a counselor, I spoke to those with much more experience in the area. I learned more about yoga, meditation, martial arts, practices which encourage the development of our insight, our inner eye, which required us to be with and to explore our inner self. I gained a greater humility, a greater openness to other people, a much more compassionate attitude toward my fellow human beings, and I think, a greater capacity to love. Not that the journey has ended; on the contrary, the exciting part is that it has just begun. It is something about which I am now much more aware, and will try, always to the best of my ability to know myself in any given moment.

Turning the lens inside revealed much about me as an educator, and I began to understand much better why I do the things that I do. This changed me and my ability to conduct a training program as much, if not more, than my deeper understanding of the theories or any new tools or techniques. Indeed, without this part, those techniques might not have been useful at all.

The journey inward helped me to understand the theories in an even more fundamental way, a way that helped me see their applicability in a broad, all-encompassing sense. I had come full-circle. The connection I had been seeking between the larger global issues that had so moved me early in my graduate work, and the mundane activities of daily work was becoming real. The more I thought about participatory education in a broader context, I realized that operating in a participatory way is something much bigger than just employing some new techniques. It is a process that symbolizes a change in human evolution. It is about breaking down traditional notions of power, about changing he way we interact and
understand each other as human beings and about how we learn. To really do it is to deal with so many of the things that challenge us as human beings: fear, need for security, personality flaws, neuroses. The hierarchical nature of things didn’t just happen. We all created and perpetuate it. We must ask ourselves why. If it is the outcome of our internal fears and insecurities and need for acceptance, recognition, etc., then can we transform the process without also transforming these things within our selves?

Here I returned to my question about Freire, and the need for the educational process to be liberatory. I had always felt alienated by this because it seemed focused on socioeconomics, and on literally transforming the social reality through some kind of outward action such as revolution. Through his insistence that the oppressed must liberate the oppressor, and the oppressed usually being the economically poor, I also had the belief that transformational pedagogy only had a place if one was working with poor people. Perhaps liberation could mean something else, something beyond socioeconomic change, nay something which, I believe, encompasses it. Maybe the question is not only about power dynamics in the classroom, and not just those between rich and poor, but power dynamics in our every interaction. We are human beings, and with that comes all of the above humanesses which have led us to create society on earth in the current manner with all of the power hierarchies, the suffering, the war.

Maybe there was a connection between all of the larger problems of the world about which I had studied my first year and the work that I do everyday after all. As I moved from examining the problems and issues facing the world, to those facing me in my workplaces, training sessions, and daily interactions, I realized that there is a connection: the bigger problems of the world are manifested on a small scale in our relationships of everyday life. In physics, they are discovering that the reality of the universe may be precisely this. In science, using light reflection, they have discovered that “the image of the whole can be reconstructed from any fragment of the original image” (Wheately, 1992, p. 112). This is the theory of holograms, that in each of us is a micro picture of the entire universe. We mirror society and society mirrors us. “The part is in the whole and the whole is in the part...; the part has access to the whole.” (Ken Wilbur, 1985 2, as quoted in Wheately, 1992, p.112). Many religious writings also suggest that this is true. This, from the Bahai writings: “Dost thou reckon thyself a puny form when within thee the universe is folded?”(Baha’ulla, 1800’s). Indian philosopher and educator J. Krishnamurti, writing in 1953, says this as well, “...education in the true sense is the understanding of oneself, for it is within each one of us that the whole of existence is gathered (p. 7, 1953)”. 45
This validated my own experience. At the same time as I was confounded by the way that human beings were treating each other and nature in the larger scale, I was also experiencing a sense of lack of community and love and understanding in daily life. I felt that the problems of the larger society were caused by nobody but ourselves; none of us is free of responsibility from this. I have come to believe that solutions are not about saving the world far from ourselves, about creating a training design for all of Eastern Europe, or about criticizing those in power for the problems of today. Rather, it is about exploring and understanding the concepts of love and respect and conscientization and the way that they are played out in everything that I do. The larger problems facing the world and society also exist in our relationships with one another, in our relationship with ourselves. Society didn't just happen, we have created it. I believe that until we work out the contradictions and issues within ourselves, and in our relationships with those in our immediate surroundings, the world's problems will continue to plague us. Krishnamurti sees the way to change systems as starting with individuals,

Systems, whether educational or political, are not changed mysteriously, they are transformed when there is fundamental change in ourselves...The individual is of first importance, not the system; and as long as the individual does not understand the total process of himself, no system, whether of the left or the right, can bring order and peace to the world (p. 15, 1953).

Society can not be more evolved than we are. Perhaps this is one problem of dreaming of an ideal society, such as communism, only to have it implemented by people who are not really evolved enough to understand it or carry it out, and to impose it on a society whose individuals are not prepared to accept that kind of living. Krishnamurti warns against the building of ideals in education,

When we are working together for an ideal, for the future, we shape individuals according to our conception of that future; we are not concerned with human beings at all, but with out idea of what they should be. The what should be becomes far more important than what is, namely, the individual with his [sic] complexities (pps. 21 & 22, 1953).

In many ways, participatory education helps us to avoid making traditional assumptions about what people should be, should know, etc. However, we must avoid letting participatory education fall into the same trap, giving us expectations of both the participants and ourselves that we are not ready to fulfill. I see participatory education (and management, evaluation, etc.) as a very evolved way of operating. What Freire is really asking of educators is not that they be able to conduct a process of helping students code
reality, or to set up classes in which we put ourselves in the position of facilitator rather
than leader, but rather, as hokey as it may be, he asks us to love our students and to have
for them a deep respect, a “profound trust in people and their creative power” (p. 56,
Freire, 1970). He says,

The oppressor is solidary with the oppressed only when he stops regarding
the oppressed as an abstract category and sees them as persons who have
been unjustly dealt with...when he stops making pious, sentimental and
individualistic gestures and risks an act of love. True solidarity is found
only in the plenitude of this act of love, in its existentiality, in its praxis (p.
32).

What does Freire really mean when he asks us to “risk an act of love”? It seems to me that
this is the most challenging part of Freirian education to us as educators: really loving,
really trusting. Yet, this part of Freire’s message is rarely discussed. We talk about how
to do this in terms of techniques, but can love and trust be boiled down to some specific
practices? Why don’t we address it, talk about it? It is not academic to talk about love, it is
not something we can analyze and manipulate. It also begins to take us to realms with
which we are not very comfortable, the personal, that which is left to the home, to therapy,
to the inside. Or perhaps it is that this is seen as the easy part, a given of which we are all
capable.

I contend that it is not so simple. To love and respect others and trust their capacities in a
true sense is the challenge with which all of humanity has always struggled. We have vast
religions and laws set up to help us, force us to do so. But these external pressures, nor
those put out by participatory education will really allow us to be capable of, and even to
understand this. It requires work: vigilance and self-awareness. We must explore and
know ourselves.

One part of this is to know how we are conditioned, how society has shaped who we are,
and what we believe feel and do. This is also an important theme in Freire’s concept of
conscientization, of helping students to understand and to see the way that they have been
conditioned by society. Yet, I think we as educators often neglect to take on this process
ourselves. It seems to be assumed that because we know about the concept, and believe it
to be good, we have the ability to really be participatory. We have been conditioned by the
same society as our students; it is important that we think about our own conscientization as
well as that of our students.
Krishnamurti warns that,

There is radical transformation only when we understand our own conditioning and are free of it. To discuss what should be the right kind of education while we ourselves are conditioned is utterly futile (p. 27, 1953).

But conscientization is not only about being aware of how we have been conditioned by society, it is also about knowing our character, our personality and what goes on in our subconscious. Being truly participatory requires an incredible amount of human awareness on part of both participants and facilitator. As facilitators it requires us to examine everything in our character, to understand the subtle ways we exert power, the very subtle times that we suggest an agenda without being aware, our fears, our needs to be liked and recognized, etc. Exploring our own conditioning, our own conscientization requires probing that is internal as well as external. These concepts seem so fundamental as to seem easy. But they are deceptive. Knowing ourselves is a tricky affair,

A truly complicating factor with respect to beliefs, attitudes, values, and needs is that not only may we be unaware of them--because we may not have made ourselves aware of them--but also that they may be operating at such unconscious and fundamental levels that they may even block our attempts at introspection and self-scrutiny. As we try to examine these parts of ourselves, we may trigger feelings of discomfort, anxiety, and even fear, which act as our defenses against the intensity of the emotions held in our unconsciousness (Phillips, 1987, p. 32).

I thought that I was acting participatorily, that I was respecting others (I think the message or concept of love was not part of my understanding at that time). And, perhaps I was doing it to best of my ability, but these efforts were shadowed by my need to hide my fears, to pawn responsibility off on others because I wasn’t prepared to take it, and because I felt overwhelmed by the amount of work in my job. In part, I had trouble being participatory because I didn’t understand what the potentials of the concept were, but I also struggled because I had fears, insecurities and a lack of understanding of myself that impeded my ability to carry out a truly respectful and participatory process. I thought I was focused on designing and implementing the best possible training program, and perhaps I was--at least to the extent I was capable at the time--but being new to the job, and wanting to “prove” something, I also was at least part focused on “proving I could do a good job”, and wanting to be liked.

This does not make me a bad person. We all have faults, personality issues, neuroses and fears, born both of the virtue of us being human beings, and of our years of conditioning
by society. I am not suggesting that we all have to work through all of our human foils before taking on participatory education; no, then we’d never do anything. Yet, it seems that we must take seriously the demands true participatory education makes of us, and that, as educators, we recognize that we are human conduits of theory. As Philips says of the trainer, “who we are is THE most significant force that we bring to training and consultation, far overshadowing in importance what we know or even what we may do” (Phillips, 1987, p. 31).

We speak about the relevance of theory to the people with whom we are working, to the realities of the world as it is, we must also think of it in terms of ourselves as implementors of that theory. The theories about participatory pedagogy will be influenced both by the interpretation of the person implementing the theory, and by that person’s needs, fears, control patterns, openness to change, insecurities, need for recognition and a plethora of other human factors which affect the way and extent to which, we can be “participatory”. According to Phillips, “the trainers’ personal needs--one aspect of the self, can shade, drive or block the trainers hypotheses, diagnoses, and interventions and thus make those facilitative and leadership behaviors inappropriate or irrelevant--perhaps even counterproductive--to the group or individual.” (Phillips, 1987, p.32). To understand what can be, we must understand what is. We can learn techniques and ideas and skills and knowledge, but all of that will only be as useful as our understanding of ourselves and our relationship with people, things and ideas. It is a lifelong undertaking because we are constantly tested and challenged by new relationships and new ideas.

**Lingering Questions and Thoughts**

*Which comes first Action or Attitude?*

One question is always whether we should employ the techniques and at least try, even if we are not evolved enough to do it well, and through the action, we will come to learn and come to evolve as human beings. Which comes first: actions or attitudes? Do we develop behavior patterns which then lead to appropriately changed attitudes? Or is it possible to operate in a certain way, to employ certain techniques without taking on the attitude or philosophy behind that technique? I think that both can be true, but that we must be very aware that there is an important difference between acting participatory and being participatory. Fake participation might be worse than no participation at all. Pretending to be participatory, but really having an agenda and pushing it through without being honest
about what you are doing will lead to frustration with the participatory process, and is indeed not participatory. Perhaps one of the most important concepts in being participatory is honesty. Honesty with ourselves, and honesty with our students or colleagues. We need greater awareness of the human element in participatory education, we need to think about the reasons behind what we are doing, and be constantly vigilant about how we are interacting with others and with ourselves.

If attitude does come first, and action follows out of our true belief and understanding, then we must think more about how to change attitude, and to do this, we must work on knowing ourselves. As colleague of Freire, Donaldo Macedo, points out in a talk given to the School of Education at the University of Massachusetts (1995), the most important part of Freire is not the techniques we employ, but rather the attitude and understanding of the underlying concepts which we embody and carry out in our every interaction not only with students, but with colleagues and everyone else with whom we have contact. It is about finding in ourselves a deep respect for all human beings and for nurturing that. With all of our attention on finding the right techniques and tools, of finding the proper ideology for teaching, it may be that we are missing the most fundamental aspect of what makes a good teacher: a love for one's subject, a respect for one's students, a desire to be a teacher and a learner at all times, and energy and enthusiasm and a sense of self and self-awareness. As Agota Ruzsa's writes in an article about language teaching in Hungary:

my own teacher in grammar school used boring traditional schoolbooks--text followed by grammar and vocabulary exercises--and had no tapes or authentic listening materials...I remember my teacher's voice, her pronunciation of English, and her open, truly whole-hearted enthusiasm for the language...This interest, enthusiasm, and commitment involved us and ensured quality in our learning and her teaching. Teaching and learning from the heart-I can't imagine any better source of real motivation... (Ruzsa, p. 48, 1988).

Perhaps Ruzsa's thoughts about what makes a good teacher are not the same as what is needed for a participatory approach, but the point is that techniques and technology are not what makes education good, or participatory.

Kindervatter expresses the need for selecting "a facilitator or co-facilitators with a thorough understanding of a learner-centered approach...". What does this thorough understanding mean and look like? It is critically important not to distill a concept like "participatory" into a set of techniques which can just be employed. I believe that I could be using any approach from lecture with 500 people to sitting in a circle with a group of ten, and be
participatory. It is not about appearances, how the room is set up or how many pieces of flip chart paper are stuck to the walls; that is all smoke and mirrors. The real thing is what is happening inside; the facilitator of a group of ten can be just as controlling and have the same need for power as a person giving a lecture. Indeed, setting up the trappings of participatory education, and then not doing it is the far more disappointing and dehumanizing scenario.

I had a training course that did just this. The facilitators set us up in a circle, we began with a group generating of respectful rules and practices, and then we were asked to share stories and experiences on which we could all reflect. By the end of the hour of “discussion and sharing” the facilitators had spoken over 80% of the time. After each student response they felt the need to respond and to share a story or piece of theory of their own. Even if and when other students had had their hands raised for 10-15 minutes, the facilitators would jump in and share what they had to say, rather than let the students who had been waiting speak. It quickly became clear that the facilitators thought their stories were more important and instructive than those of the students, the facilitators clearly had an agenda although they pretended that we were all engaged in a participatory process. It was also clear who had power over the situation. The facilitators, being in charge, didn’t have to play by the ‘rules’ of respect, raising their hands and waiting their turn; they set themselves apart from us through their actions, while at the same time touting the need to break down the power hierarchies in society. I would have rather that they be honest. If they had information to share with us; if they believed themselves to be experts, then I wish they would have just lectured and not pretended to be doing something they are not.

If we indeed have the attitude and belief of a participatory approach, an understanding of human development and the needs of our students, and knowledge of a broad range of techniques then the participatory approach can look many different ways. But we must be very cautious of false attitudes, of denial, of believing that we believe but not really believing. This is what I did. I tried to force myself into an ideal, I thought I knew, I thought I was capable, when indeed, I was not doing participatory education at all.

Conclusion
I have come to believe that most fundamentally, the participatory approach is an attitude. It is the belief that every other human being has valuable knowledge and abilities to share and from which we can learn. It is about finding or allowing these things to emerge and
nurturing them. It is about caring about people, respecting them and, as Freire says, loving them. Many people have developed a myriad of techniques and activities and suggested practices to do this. There are a lot of useful tools. We need to know these, and to be open to new ways in which we might be able to open up our process of education and ourselves to be more inclusive, more honest, more participatory. However, ultimately, less will depend on the methods we use than on the attitudes we carry in our hearts. And to remember that these attitudes are not easily found. It is not enough to have good intention. We must be constantly aware of ourselves and our action in the world, this is a journey that is never over, no matter how well developed our practice.

This should never, ever be used as an excuse to justify lazy or dictatorial teaching practices, or to abdicate responsibility for teaching. I am talking about both attitude and practice, not one or the other. What is important is that the choice of method be an informed one, based on the whole range of possibilities. Like differentiated supervision, we need to be able to carefully assess the learners, the learning situation, ourselves and our own level of comfort and expertise and decide what is best in each situation for each individual. It is not using the lecture method because that is easiest and what one has always known, and the best way for one to disseminate his or her knowledge, but rather the best choice given the needs of the students and the constraints of the learning environment. But again, we should not fall prey to false constraints. “I teach in a huge lecture hall and therefore can only lecture”. We need to be creative with the possibilities for change, for making the learning environment more engaging and meaningful for all students.

SECTION III: A NEW TRAINING DESIGN

In the end, the changes I made after all of this exploration seemed small, somewhat insignificant. Like all other practitioners, I took what made most sense to me in my context, and tried to make changes in theory, attitude, and practice. This is skills based training, the trainees come to this situation nervous about their impending teaching job and eager to learn about TEFL and about Bulgaria. This is their social reality. They want skills, techniques and information. For teacher training, the best approach I have found is to model, rather than talk about, and to let them try things out. But there is a knowledge base for them to learn, and they want to learn it. That’s why they have come.
Thus, the training was still directed and led by the trainers. The changes made were small, but they were made in every aspect of the program over which I had influence. On both a personal and a professional level, they made an enormous difference. Still constrained by time, group size, the training day divided into sessions and being part of a larger training structure, things over which I had no control, it was not about reforming the whole system. It was about a change in process and attitude. It was about the lens through which I looked at everything we did and my ability to actually carry out a more honest and human process.

1. We, not me: a shared vision

- Having a vision of the whole product based on certain beliefs about education, a philosophy of TEFL, adult development, as well as the needs of the project in Bulgaria, the needs of the trainees, and the staff’s capabilities
- Having a collaborative process of determining the goals, competencies and activities of the training
- Having a Bulgarian co-coordinator
- Setting a visioning session with all training staff and asking them to identify their role in achieving that vision
- Attempting to allow every member of the training staff to be an independent and creative member of the team and to let this experience provide them with the kind of professional development they are seeking.

2. Honesty is the best policy

- Being honest with myself, fellow trainers and trainees about my abilities, knowledge, weaknesses, and humanesses. Expressing my confidence that I can do the job, and yet, acknowledging that I am human, I don’t know things, and will make mistakes
- Experimenting with new things and letting the trainees and assistants know it is an experiment. Opening up a new process and allowing them to form and develop it
- Being clear about expectations, and letting people know when they are not met

3. Letting go and knowing myself

- Being both involved and responsible and detached all at the same time. Recognizing that the training design is not me, and allowing myself to take open and honest feedback about the process, about me, and about the training design without taking it all personally
- Being honest with my knowledge and stake, I could then let go when it came time to let go, allowing the process to evolve.
- Trusting the process and my own decisions about what is best, yet being open to the possibility that it may not be best in the end.
- Taking responsibility for the decisions of the group. Know when I am satisfied with the decision of a group and when I am not. If I need to act on a decision,
be sure that I aired my own views and truly feel comfortable acting on the
decisions of the group.

4. Training Design: Deep practitioners

- Seeing the development of teachers as a deeper process through which they
  should learn not only TEFL techniques, but also underlying philosophies of
  teaching and learning a foreign language. To be able to respond to students of
  many levels and with many learning styles, they need to have theory and
  philosophy on which to draw, not just techniques to use. I exposed trainees to
  the theory through readings of original works and allowing them to synthesize
  the material themselves, teasing out what is new and relevant.

- The need for training to develop in trainees the ability to explore and find TEFL
  information for themselves, to see this as truly the beginning of a two year
  process of professional development. The need to be self-directed played out in
  the use of the following activities:

  1. fact finding interviews and visits (rather than bringing in speakers);
  2. exploration and presentation of TEFL topics as groups of “study circles”--
     trainees explored a certain area of TEFL teaching using resources that they
     would have at their sites and presented this information to the rest of the
     trainees;
  3. the use of a self-evaluative supervision model during the practicum.

The following handbook overviews of the Program from each of my two years of training
are indicative of the above changes. The first was almost literally cut and pasted from the
training design in Moldova; I just changed the dates and the words Moldovan for
Bulgarian. I picked competencies based on what others had done, and I had little to no
commitment to them. It is very structure based, describing what they will do. Note that
there is no person in this overview, it just is, nobody is responsible for what happens.
This is indicative of my lack of confidence. I didn’t want to take responsibility for the
design or the activities chosen, because I wasn’t completely comfortable in what I had
decided.

The subtle difference is in that the other, while seeming planned, actually allows for the
possibility of an open process. The activities are proposed rather than dictated. Ani, my
co-coordinator and I spent hours determining the process, our philosophy and the
competencies. We discussed each one, rephrased, reformed and ordered them. (Note:
That we complete all of this before the trainees arrive is a requirement of Peace Corps,
although I suspect one that I could get around if I tried. My next step may very well be to
work with the trainees to develop some competencies, rather than to propose them. The
trainees tend not to care that much and are all too happy to just agree to the ones we
determined). We made decisions based on the best combination of our knowledge at that
given moment, and then took full responsibility for everything.

Attached also are the two Executive Summaries of the training designs from each year.
Again, the first feels stiff and was indeed a copy of what had been written in years past.
For the second, I thought about what would be most useful to know, who would be
reading it and why, not about the formalities of the bureaucracy. In the second one, the
spirit of experimentation is evident. I am willing to admit what worked and what didn’t
work. Also, again, I am much more present.

I realize these difference are subtle, but they signal the very important differences between
the two summers. The training designs themselves would have changed no matter what,
because we were in a different site, with a different staff, different trainees, and new
timing. The big difference was in my approach and resulting level of comfort. Admittedly
some of this is just due to experience; one will ultimately be more comfortable the second
time of doing something. Yet, Peace Corps offices are filled with reports like the first,
distant, personless, and content-based--written by people who have done training hundreds
of times. What is important at any rate is that I felt different, and that I felt I drew upon not
only the parts of graduate school I mention here, but on everything--feminism,
development theory, evaluation, community development education, and my interactions
with people who demonstrated ways of being, training, education and interacting with
others that informed every level of my practice.

These past three years have been a profound experience for me, changing the way I will see
the world, my work, and my self forever. I hope that in these pages I have been able to
capture for you a little of that experience, a bit of the wonder that I was privileged to
encounter. I present this humbly, because when I think about how much I have changed
and grown in the past three years, I can only imagine that three years hence my perspective
might be much different than it is now. That is the exciting part. I know that I have gone
but a short distance down what promises to be a long road of discovery. Thank you, CIE,
for starting this journey.

At the end of this process and at the end of the second summer, I was pleased with how the
training had gone, but felt that it had only begun to really use the principles of adult
learning and the participatory approach to its full extent. There are things I would do
differently next time. It was no revolutionary training design. These feelings led me to write the following guide. It is a set of reflections and guiding questions for the TEFL training Coordinator. Writing it provided me with the chance to go meticulously through my decision-making process, and to expand my own vision of what is possible. With hundreds of decisions, there is the potential for hundreds of designs, a much more exciting prospect than the limited design from Summer 1996 which has lived its life already.
The Peace Corps project plan for PCVs in the Bulgarian schools involves three main tasks: the improvement of student language skills, development of resource materials, and sharing methodology and experiences with colleagues. The bulk of your time in the schools, however, will be spent in the classroom with your students. Therefore, the main goal of the technical component of training will be to prepare you to be effective and comfortable as teachers of English as a Foreign Language in the Bulgarian schools. This training will provide you with the opportunity to begin to develop the knowledge and skills you will need to do your job well. Feeling confident and comfortable teaching a new subject takes time, especially in a new culture; your process of skill development and knowledge acquisition will probably continue throughout your whole volunteer experience.

Education in Bulgaria is a serious and highly sophisticated endeavor; you should consider your PC assignment a professional teaching position for which you must be well-prepared. Many of you have background in education methods and teaching experience, thus, the thrust of this technical training will be on TEFL techniques and methods especially as they are used in and can be adapted for the Bulgarian teaching context. Through visits to schools and currently serving volunteers, panel discussions, lectures, group work, peer teaching and finally a practicum with Bulgarian students, you will be exposed to a wide variety of techniques and will get concrete practice in using these techniques. It is hoped that the TEFL component can draw on the skills and abilities which you already possess and facilitate the sharing of this knowledge with each other through trainee-led sessions and pair teaching techniques.

There are four phases to the technical training:

**Phase One (Weeks 1-3):** The goal of this phase is to provide you with knowledge of the context in which you will be applying your TEFL skills. You will gain an understanding of Bulgarian education, English teaching in Bulgaria, the PCV role in the schools and the resources available to you as teachers here. You will also have an introduction to some basic concepts and principles of language teaching and their applicability in this context.

**Phase Two (Weeks 4-6):** This phase will contain most of the sessions concerning TEFL methodology. As you learn techniques for teaching the four basic skills, presenting and explaining grammar, and testing, you will be practicing them by writing lesson plans and teaching your peers. You will also be working to develop curriculum and teaching materials that you will use when you teach in the Model School of Phase Three.
Phase Three (Weeks 7-9) Model School: You will work in pairs to teach the materials which you have developed to two classes of Bulgarian students which will be of the same ages and levels as the students you will teach at your site. You will teach one lesson per day for the three weeks, and will have the opportunity to try teaching two different levels. The focus of this phase will be on classroom management and teaching performance. Each of you will teach 15 hours.

Phase Four (Weeks 10-12): Preparing to go to Site. After working with Bulgarian students in model school and taking a trip to your site, you will have a chance to identify areas in which you need further information or practice. You will learn about resource management and development, secondary projects, and techniques for working with colleagues. You will develop materials for your first semester of teaching at your sites and will have a chance to assess your ongoing professional development goals.

TEFL Technical Training Competencies:

The following competencies are based on the goals of Peace Corps' TEFL Project Plan in Bulgaria and also on the expressed needs of TEFL PCV teachers who have served in Bulgaria. We are articulating them here so that you know what we, the training staff, expect you to gain from this training. They are the criteria by which we are assessing your ability to work effectively in Bulgaria. They will also help you in gauging your progress throughout training.

By the end of Pre-Service Training you must be able to:

1. Describe and discuss the Bulgarian Education system, including the role of the Ministry of Education, how the English curriculum fits into the overall school program, and their individual roles and responsibilities of PCVs working in the Bulgarian schools.

2. Describe the differences between the US and Bulgarian educational systems in terms of attitudes towards education and the roles of the teachers and students, expectations concerning student's instructional needs, classroom management and teaching styles.

3. Describe the existing curriculum, syllabus and materials already used in the schools, and ways in which they may need to be supplemented by the individual volunteers.

4. Give an overview of the following language teaching methodologies and understand their relevance to English teaching in Bulgaria:
grammar-translation, audio-lingual methods, competency-based, communicative, whole language and content-based English teaching.

5. Relate their own language learning experience to their teaching strategies through the use of a journal.

6. Compare and contrast English and Bulgarian in terms of grammatical differences, and discuss the implications of those differences for teaching English in Bulgaria. Identify common errors of Bulgarian students.

7. Demonstrate various teaching techniques and activities for developing speaking, listening, reading and writing skills.

8. Describe basic English grammar structures, and create lessons in which these structures are presented, practiced, and produced.

9. Design lesson plans that incorporate motivational, informational, practice, and application activities to teach the four language skills, and that address a variety of learning styles and strategies.

10. Demonstrate effective strategies for correcting students’ oral and written errors.

11. Outline combined speaking listening, reading and writing lessons to supplement any English text commonly used in Bulgarian schools.

12. Develop appropriate language tests to assess learners’ progress.

13. Develop integrated theme-based units (especially with an environmental content) that demonstrate long-range planning skills.

14. Demonstrate effective time management in the classroom, showing an effective balance of activities, pacing, etc.

15. Demonstrate flexible but consistent and effective classroom management and discipline techniques.

16. Demonstrate the ability to involve students in questions and discussions which provide opportunities for feedback to the students and information about their achievement to the teacher.

17. Evaluate their own performance and the performance of colleagues and give constructive and appropriate feedback on lesson content, pacing, sequencing and other lesson components.
18. Describe the professional expectations of English teachers in the school and demonstrate the ability to perform these functions, including grading and record keeping.

19. Assess their own teaching and skill development and develop a set of continuing professional development goals.

20. Develop and organize supplemental materials and resources and identify strategies to encourage students' and colleagues' use of these teaching and learning aids.

21. Understand project objectives and the expectations of counterparts and supervisors.

22. Identify concrete ways in which English teachers can work together with the SBD and Environment programs, as well as other organizations in Bulgaria.
Welcome to TEFL Technical Training. The broad goal of this training component is to prepare you for your professional work as set out in your Volunteer Assignment Description: Teaching English as a Foreign Language to Bulgarian secondary school students. Education in Bulgaria is a serious and highly sophisticated endeavor; you will find your PC assignment a professional and rigorous teaching position for which you must be well-prepared. Most of you are certified teachers, and some of you have experience tutoring and teaching English as a Second Language or Literacy. This background will serve you well but we think you will also find Teaching English as a Foreign Language in Bulgaria to be distinct from all of this. We hope that you will enjoy and take seriously the task of adapting what you know to this new subject area and context.

TRAINING DESIGN

Content
This technical training will focus on theories, methods and techniques for teaching TEFL especially as they are used in and can be adapted for the Bulgarian teaching context. It will also introduce you to the Bulgarian schools: the structure, the teaching methods, the attitudes of teachers and students, and the underlying philosophy of education upon which these are based. Just over 100 hours of training can not possibly cover all that is encompassed in learning these topics in depth. By attempting to balance the "How To's" (which will seem more immediately important) with the "Why To's", the training is designed serve as just the beginning of your process of becoming thoughtful, resourceful teachers able to meet the needs of students in various contexts.

Process
It is our intention that you have as much control over your own learning process this summer as possible. Together we can determine how best to reach the Peace Corps goals as well as your own personal goals, and how to measure whether or not we have gotten there. In this, we hope to draw on your coursework and experience in education, as we plan, evaluate and adapt the program to meet your expressed and changing needs.

The training will adapt by providing opportunities for self-directed learning in addition to informational sessions. The types of activities which we envision throughout the summer are as follows:

- Trainer facilitated sessions
- Outside speakers
- Visits to Bulgarian English classrooms to observe lessons
- Discussions with Bulgarian teachers, school directors and students
- Group investigation and presentations
- Individual trainee presentations and peer teaching
• Journal assignments
• Assigned readings

Practicum
In addition to the above activities, there will be two and a half weeks of Practice Teaching with classes of Bulgarian students. You will each be responsible for 15 teaching hours, writing lesson and unit plans in accordance with the level and age of the students. This practicum will be divided into two separate sessions, one in week 7 of training and the other in weeks 9 and 10.

COMPETENCIES

The following competencies have been determined based on the goals of the Peace Corps TEFL Project Plan in Bulgaria and also on the expressed needs of TEFL PCV teachers who have served in Bulgaria. They are criteria by which the training staff and the Sofia program staff are assessing your ability to work effectively in Bulgaria. They will also help you in gauging your progress throughout the training.

By the end of Pre-Service Training you must be able to:

1. Describe and discuss the Bulgarian Education system, including the role of the Ministry of Education, and the individual roles and responsibilities of PCVs working in the Bulgarian schools.

2. Describe the relevant differences and similarities between the US and Bulgarian educational systems.

3. Identify the underlying principles of various TEFL approaches/methods and techniques (Grammar-translation, Audio-lingual, Competency-based, Communicative, TPR, Suggestopedia and Content-Based, etc.) and describe how they might be incorporated into your English teaching in Bulgaria.

4. Design lesson plans and facilitate lessons which:
   • Incorporate motivation, presentation, practice, and application
   • Integrate the four language skill areas
   • Address the needs of a particular student group and school including age, proficiency, and interests
   • Include formal and / or informal evaluation techniques
   • Highlight the presentation, practice and production stages of teaching a language structure
   • Show a recognition of the difference between true language production and controlled practice.
   • Teach language inductively and deductively.

5. Demonstrate teaching techniques and activities for listening, speaking, reading, writing, and vocabulary expansion.
6. Describe basic English grammar structures, and demonstrate the ability to use reference materials for further explanation of English grammar rules.

7. Develop appropriate evaluation strategy to assess learners' progress and demonstrate an ability to write an effective language test.

8. Develop unit plans based on textbooks used in Bulgarian classrooms as well as integrated theme-based units from outside resources.

9. Demonstrate effective pacing in the classroom, showing an effective balance of activities.

10. Demonstrate flexible but consistent and effective classroom management and discipline techniques.

11. Describe the professional expectations of English teachers in the school and demonstrate the ability to perform these functions, including grading and record keeping.

12. Assess your own teaching and skill development and develop a set of continuing professional development goals.

13. Conduct peer observations using pre- and post conference and give constructive and appropriate feedback.

14. Develop a personal philosophy and style of TEFL teaching in Bulgaria as based upon your experiences in training.

15. Understand project objectives and the expectations of counterparts and supervisors.

16. Cooperate and collaborate with fellow volunteers and Bulgarian counterparts to initiate new ideas and deal with problem situations in a professional manner.
Peace Corps Bulgaria
1995 PST Final Report

Summary Statement of TEFL Training

OVERVIEW

On June 10, 1995 Peace Corps Bulgaria welcomed its fifth group of volunteers. Of the 37 trainees that arrived in Sofia, 19 people began pre-service training to serve as volunteers in the English Teaching and Curriculum Advancement Project. During the course of the summer, four of those people chose not to begin service as Peace Corps Volunteers, leaving a group of 15 to swear-in on September 2, 1995 after the successful completion of 12 weeks of training. This summary provides an overview of the TEFL program design. It is followed by a document which assesses the individual components of the TEFL technical training and offers recommendations for future trainings in Bulgaria.

TECHNICAL TRAINER

I arrived in Bulgaria on May 18. In preparation for training, I attended a national conference on language teaching, met with currently serving volunteers and their counterparts, discussed goals and objectives with the Sofia program staff, and reviewed all PST documentation in Bulgaria. The TEFL component of the 1995 pre-service training in Bulgaria drew on the experience and recommendations of previous PSTs in Bulgaria, the currently serving volunteers, the APCD, the Moldova 1994 pre-service training by Steve Thewlis. Training Materials provided to the EME region by OTAPS, the combined professional training knowledge of a seasoned core-training staff and finally on my own personal experience as a PCV with Bulgaria I from 1991-1993 and as a training assistant with the 1993 PST in Bulgaria. The training was also informed throughout by the core training staff of four currently serving volunteers who served as TEFL training assistants and the Bulgarian resource teachers who joined us during model school.

CURRICULUM DESIGN

This training was unique for Bulgaria in several ways. First, it was a twelve week training instead of the traditional nine or ten weeks. Second, due to new recruiting requirements set by the post, all but two of the trainees were certified teachers in some subject. Most were certified to teach English, but some had certification in social studies subjects. Few had any concrete teaching experience outside of student teaching and none had certification in TEFL or TESL. Finally, this training encompassed three program sectors: Small Business Development, TEFL and the first group of Environmental trainees ever in Bulgaria. The training was well staffed and supported for the first time in Bulgaria by a Programming and Training Officer in Sofia.

The curriculum was designed to prepare the trainees to perform all three goals of the PC Bulgaria project plan: improving the level of English of Bulgarian students by providing qualified English instructors, developing English language resources in Bulgarian schools, and aiding with the professional development of colleagues by sharing methodology and by increasing their fluency in the English language. The first goal is the main activity of the TEFL volunteers in Bulgaria and the one which requires...
the most direct preparation. Therefore, the training was divided into the following four phases:

Phase One, Education and TEFL in Bulgaria (Weeks 1-3): The goal of this phase was to provide trainees with knowledge of the context in which they would be applying their TEFL skills. The sessions focused on giving the trainees an understanding of Bulgarian education, English teaching in Bulgaria, the PCV role in the schools and the resources available to them as teachers here.

Phase Two, TEFL Methodology (Weeks 4-6): This phase contained most of the sessions concerning TEFL methodology. As they learned techniques for teaching the four basic skills, presenting and explaining grammar, and testing, they also practiced them by writing lesson plans and teaching their peers. The phase began with lesson and unit planning so that as they learned new teaching techniques with regard to TEFL, they could be working to develop curriculum and teaching materials that they would use for Model School of Phase Three.

Phase Three, Model School (Weeks 7-9): The trainees worked in pairs to teach the materials which they developed to two classes of Bulgarian students which were of the same ages and levels as the students they will teach at their site. They taught one lesson per day for three weeks, and had the opportunity to try teaching two different levels. The focus of this phase was on applying the TEFL skills learned in phase two, on classroom management and teaching performance.

Phase Four, Secondary and Summer Projects/Counterpart Conference (Weeks 10-12): This phase allowed time to address any skills or information deemed as lacking after model school, but was largely devoted to the other two sections of the project plan: resource development and working with colleagues. Sessions focused on resource center management and development, secondary projects, and techniques for working with colleagues. With the one-day counterpart conference, the trainees had the chance to begin a working relationship with their counterpart and to develop a work plan for the first semester of teaching at their sites.

Seventy-Five percent of training was focused on preparing trainees to become qualified teachers of English as a Foreign Language. To this end the staff provided a wide range of training activities: trainer demonstrations, trainee-facilitated sessions, case studies provided by currently serving volunteers, peer teaching, and a practicum. The other twenty-five percent of training was a mix of speakers, APCD-led sessions and a counterpart conference to prepare the trainees for the second two project goals.

In order to prepare trainees for the goal of becoming competent TEFL teachers in Bulgaria, the training maintained the following sub-goals:

1. Assuming a solid basic knowledge of educational principles and teaching techniques on the part of trainees, training will focus on transferring these skills to TEFL and Bulgaria;

2. All technical sessions will be grounded in the reality of the Bulgarian teaching context: techniques and methods given will be appropriate in this context;

3. Technical training will reflect and incorporate the types of teaching and learning environments we encourage trainees to establish in their own classrooms: it will be interactive and should follow the 4MAT lesson philosophy;

4. Training will be light on theory and technical jargon and should focus on practical techniques and activities;
5. The training will provide trainees with a wide range of techniques and ideas from which to draw and to develop their own personal teaching style;

6. The technical portion of training will be integrated with the other three major components: Cross-Cultural, Language, Small Business Development and Environment sectors;

7. Trainees will recognize the relationship between education and culture; they will gain an understanding of and a respect for the educational system and philosophy in Bulgaria, and their role within it.

ASSESSMENT

The three-week practicum allowed for the trainees to demonstrate the extent to which they had grasped and could apply the skills being taught and for the training staff to gauge how effective the training sessions had been. Trainees were monitored and supported by resource teachers who observed them every other day, and each trainee was video-taped and observed by the technical coordinator. The trainees were extremely impressive both in their dedication to lesson planning and teaching and in the high level of teaching demonstrated. By the end of the three weeks they showed great competence in both the planning and conducting of solid TEFL lessons. By this measure, the technical training was highly successful in producing quality and conscientious teachers of TEFL.

I also feel that the above sub-goals were well-addressed if not accomplished. They are a bit more difficult to measure, and until the trainees are out into their schools interacting with Bulgarian colleagues and students, we won't know just how effective we have been. In the end, despite efforts to the contrary, I feel the training program needed more practical TEFL methodology and less theory. However, I feel good about sending this "batch" of teachers out to the Bulgarian schools. It is my belief that as individuals who had chosen the teaching profession before becoming Peace Corps Volunteers and with a training which emphasized their roles as professionals here, Bulgaria Five will carry the Peace Corps Bulgaria TEFL Project to a new level of professionalism and quality.
Peace Corps Bulgaria
1996 Pre-Service Training Final Report

Summary Statement of TEFL Training
Submitted by Ann Hartman and Ani Zlateva, Coordinators

On June 13, 1996, 47 trainees arrived in Kyustendil. Among these, 17 were designated to be TEFL teachers in secondary schools in Bulgaria, two had combination secondary school and university assignments in Bulgaria and five would work in the field of second language acquisition in Macedonia. The five Macedonia volunteers, along with their language and technical coordinators, spent their first two weeks with us in Kyustendil before making their way to Macedonia to complete the remainder of their ten week training. The 19 Bulgaria TEFL volunteers spent twelve weeks in Kyustendil until they swore in as Peace Corps Volunteers on September, 1996.

Before the arrival of the trainees, the two Bulgaria TEFL coordinators, Ann Hartman (American) and Ani Zlateva (Bulgarian), spent two weeks at the training site preparing the training design and materials. This preparation included meetings with the APCDs, the Training and Programming Officer and Currently Serving Volunteers to assess the needs of the TEFL project in Bulgaria and to gather suggestions. It also involved participating in Training of Trainer sessions and working closely with the new Macedonian staff to orient them to Peace Corps Training.

The program requires individuals who can teach English as a Foreign Language to Bulgarian high school students. The ages and levels for which schools request volunteers varies widely. Thus, the trainees had to be prepared to be able to teach all aspects of TEFL at all different age and ability levels. The trainees were all certified teachers, but only one had any experience or education in TEFL. Thus, the training design was developed with the assumption that there were two main segments of knowledge and skill to be transferred over the course of the summer for the trainees to be prepared to be competent English teachers in Bulgarian schools: the basics of TEFL teaching and an orientation to the culture of Bulgarian schools. The training design assumed a level of knowledge about general teaching practices on behalf of the trainees and attempted to build on that, not repeat it.

The training design also has as it's general premise that the best way to become adaptable TEFL professionals is to have a framework of theory in which to plug the activities you choose for whatever level you are teaching. You must have the "why to's" as well as the "how to's". It also recognizes that adults learn best by doing, and by exploring and investigating on their own. Thus the design contained a healthy mix of the following activities:

- Trainer-led informational and practice sessions
- Field visits to schools
- Lesson observations in Bulgarian schools
- Interviews with students and teachers
- Group investigation and presentation of a TEFL topic
- Peer teaching of grammar lessons
- Assigned readings
- Journal and other writing/reflection assignments
- Site Visit

In addition, the trainees were provided with 24 teaching contact hours with Bulgarian students over the course of a two and a half week practicum (also referred to in this report as Model School). In Week Seven of training, the trainees were responsible for planning one lesson which they would teach twice per day to students at the same level.
This allowed them the time to focus on their planning and to work on their implementation. The second half of the practicum, held in half of week nine and all of week ten, required the trainees to prepare two forty-minute lessons a day for the same group of students. This required more planning efforts, and provided the opportunity for more complete development of material and a more meaningful amount of contact with one group of students, enough to adequately experiment with assessment tools. The split practicum was done to try to alleviate the exhaustion that usually comes with the practicum experience and to allow the trainees to assess their skills and then have some time to focus their own development in TEFL sessions. The split was also planned around the site visit in the hopes that the trainees would return better informed about what levels or subject they would be teaching and what textbooks they would be using. This would make the second session more focused, practical and real.

The design started with a wide lens, giving the trainees an overview of the Bulgarian school system and a general orientation to the schools, as well as a general orientation to the field of TEFL teaching both in historical context and in Bulgaria at present. Much of this was done concurrently in weeks one and two as we visited a Bulgarian high school, observed English language lessons, interviewed Bulgarian students and familiarized them with textbooks and TEFL syllabi by using the various textbooks used in the schools.

For the next three weeks the lens became narrower as we began to prepare them for the practicum. Each session built upon the next until the trainees had moved through a solid framework for their English teaching: the presentation, practice and production cycle. In these sessions they learned about language from a TEFL perspective, reviewed English grammar, and worked on their skills teaching new structures and vocabulary. In Week Five they formed groups and took on one of the following TEFL topics to investigate and present:

- Listening
- Speaking
- Writing
- Error Correction
- Songs and Games
- Innovative Techniques

Week Six was spent preparing for the first Model School experience. The trainees focused on choosing topics and planning units. They were assisted by resource teachers who were available for assistance during both the planning and implementation stages. During both segments of the Practicum (weeks 7, 9 and 10), the trainees were assisted in their process of professional development as teachers by a three part observation sequence called "Cognitive Coaching" which emphasized their own role in analyzing their lessons. They were also aided by videotaped sessions and feedback with the TEFL coordinators.

In Week Eight, the trainees went out to their sites to collect information, to see their new community and school and to meet colleagues and counterparts. It was hoped that they would return informed about what they would be teaching so that they could focus their efforts in the second week and a half of model school.

In Weeks Eleven and Twelve, we began to prepare them to go to site. We covered the specifics of teaching in the Bulgarian schools, and of being a Peace Corps Volunteer teacher. We also discussed their other responsibilities as TEFL volunteers, providing them with some food for thought about conducting their secondary and summer projects.

This training saw the advent of many new training elements as well as the development of many important hand-outs. Many of the experimental elements grew out of a desire
to make training more self-directed, participatory and reflective and to revamp areas of training which seem to always gather the most complaints, namely evaluation. Some of the experimental elements proved quite successful: the mix of Bulgarian and American coordinators, assigned readings, independent research assignments, split model school session, varied evaluation strategies. Others are good ideas but need a bit more work: journals, models school observation strategy. The development of hand-outs is also just in its beginning stages. There was an emphasis this year on documenting the information prepared for sessions so that each year the training staff does not have to re-invent the wheel. Much vital information was compiled on paper for the first time.

Overall, the training flowed extremely well. The competent and diverse training staff of Bulgarian and American coordinators and dedicated currently serving PCV assistants were able to meet the varied needs and interest of the trainees. The trainees expressed a high level of satisfaction with the training and it's staff, and, more importantly perhaps, demonstrated a very high level of teaching competence during model school. They were also asked to write a philosophy of TEFL teaching as part of the evaluation process and in this assignment they showed significant growth and progress as Teachers of English as a Foreign Language.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The ideas in this guide were informed by a multitude of sources: courses in graduate school, Peace Corps Training experience, my background as a classroom teacher, my training positions at the Center for International Education, and the many exceptional human beings who graced me with their words and actions in work and in play over the past three years. I can not begin to list every source of every insight. I have done my best to give an idea of where major concepts came from, and I hope that you will feel free to contact me if you would like more specifics.
Why this Guide?

When I first thought about writing about my experience to fulfill my Master’s degree, I thought that I would write a training design. I had big ideas; maybe I would write a training design that could be used throughout Eastern Europe, that could be a model for Peace Corps. At the end of my second summer of training I realized that the design still wasn’t perfect; it wasn’t everything it could have been. As I thought about what I would do differently, I came to recognize the specificity of this design. Not only was it not appropriate for other countries, it was not even appropriate to use it again for Bulgaria. There were so many minor factors that made the training good and bad. Like we are discovering about most things, there was not one cause and effect, but rather many interrelated parts interacting to form the whole.

My first and perhaps most important lesson in this whole process has been that it isn’t about creating a fixed training design that is implemented in many places. Indeed, just the opposite is true: each training design is the creation of a complex set of variables. It is as varied as the countries in which Peace Corps serves, as varied as the myriad of people that Peace Corps recruits. Each training design will depend on the needs of the host country, the culture in which trainees will work, the background of the trainees, the personality and leadership style of all of the trainers, the goals of the Peace Corps program in that country, the wishes of the program staff and the environmental and time resources and constraints. I learned that a training design emerges slowly, from a process full of small decisions which affect, change and direct that process. Like laying the lines of railroad tracks, the design is built throughout the training period, not completed until the last day, until A is finally linked with B. Once that has taken place, no one need build that exact same line again. The process for building it will never include the same set of workers, the same environmental conditions, the same management.

I discovered that training is instead always a set of choices; it is the trainers job to have the ability to make and, more importantly, be willing to take responsibility for, making those decisions. It is the combination of all of these little decisions which make up the end product. But how does the trainer decide? For my first training, all I had to draw from was the training programs in which I had taken part as a volunteer and as a training assistant. I had the final reports from other training programs in that post, and my own philosophy about training as developed through other training experiences and education outside of Peace Corps. I often felt as though I was making decisions based on what had
been done, rather than what was possible. I wasn’t sure what my choices were, so I allowed everything to just happen at the will of the other trainers, not of my own decision-making.

Recreating the Wheel

I also had the sense that I was recreating the wheel. I knew that Peace Corps had done training for many years all over the world. Yet, the information and models I had to draw from were surprisingly limited. Those I did have were materials that I and other trainers had collected from our past training work. It seemed that only through experience was one exposed to the different models of training which had been tried throughout the Peace Corps world. So for the first time trainer, there is little from which to make informed and thoughtful decisions. There are previous training designs from that country and these designs tend to then define training for that country. In other words, training in that post is what has been done before. Through word of mouth, comments here and there, I began to learn that a wide variety of training models were being used in different posts. I wanted access to what others had tried, and their reflections on what worked and what didn’t.

But during my second training, I also realized that the final reports and training books only told small pieces of the story. They could provide different models for the practicum, and variations on session designs, but rarely did they discuss the issues and challenges that each trainer faces. I struggled with many issues outside of planning and teaching the curriculum. The new trainer faces the challenges of working with adults, of the need for feedback, of working with training assistants or currently serving volunteers who might be peers in age, and of assessing and monitoring. There was little information in training literature about these aspects of training, about the decision-making processes that each trainer goes through.

What this guide isn’t is a prescription for training. What I hope it will do instead is to guide the decision-making process by posing the questions that can be asked along the way. It also offers some possible outcomes of certain decisions, advantages and disadvantages of different ways of doing things, and gives some suggestions about how to deal with certain, common problems. Mostly however, it is just set of guiding ideas, questions and reflections to consider while planning a Peace Corps TEFL training. My perspective, of course comes out of the contexts in which I have worked, the people with whom I have trained, my philosophy about what good adult education should be, and my personality and training style. I come with a lot of baggage and this writing is not free
from that. I have not even attempted to separate who I am from what I am presenting here, mostly because I don’t believe that I can, even if I do try. This writing is not meant to be universal, however it may contain universalities. My hope is that although it is specific to my experience, it will relate enough to the experience of training in general to be of interest and use to those conducting training, especially but not exclusively, Peace Corps training anywhere.

Positioning Myself

Who am I?
I am a 29 year old Master’s student at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst, MA. I grew up in a middle class suburb of St. Paul, Minnesota, but have been living and working in other places since I graduated from college in 1989. I have a BA in Psychology and 7-12 teaching certifications for ESL and Social Studies. I have taught ESL in Chicago’s inner city, and in suburban Minnesota, and have taught EFL in New York City (at a private language school for foreigners), Pakistan and Bulgaria. My varied teaching experiences have led me to believe that there is a difference between EFL and ESL, both in philosophy and technique, and that we must be very careful as we work overseas not to assume “our” (US)methods for teaching language are better than those which have been successfully used in other countries for many years. I believe rather that practitioners should have a firm knowledge of all methods and should be able to apply the techniques and methods most appropriate to the context and the needs of the students.

I am female. Some of the issues to which I give emphasis may be due to my personality, and to my gender. In my course about supervision, for example, out of which grew many of the insights presented here, the women in the course were by and large, less interested in finding a less authoritarian, more empathetic supervision model, than in finding ways to improve their ability to give constructive feedback. It may be that my struggles with giving feedback and supervising staff as well as my lack of comfort with being the one in control, are issues for women but not for men. My discussion of these issues will obviously be from my perspective as a woman, and may, therefore, feel awkward and overdrawn. I hesitate to name these things as ‘gender’ because that may alienate women for whom these do not ring true. I am a combination of many locations, of which gender is just one. Mix that with my personality type and billions of other hang-ups and this may not ring true for anyone but me.
As a Peace Corps Volunteer (PCV) in both Pakistan and Bulgaria, I had the unique opportunity to compare the training programs and needs of very different Peace Corps countries. I found the training I received from people who had been PCVs in Africa and Asia to be not quite so relevant for the very formal and rigorous Western-style education system of Eastern Europe. As the first group of volunteers to Bulgaria, we spent much time revising the training curriculum to represent the needs and culture of the country. I was a training assistant for the second TEFL training in country, and wrote much of the training curriculum to reflect the real situation of PCVs in the schools.

A year after completing my Peace Corps service I became a graduate student at the Center for International Education (CIE) where I began to look more deeply into the work I had done as a PCV. I examined the role of PCVs and westerners in development, the empowerment models of education and development as written by Freire and many before and after him, and the nuances of culture and gender when working with people from all over the world. This education radicalized me in many ways. It confirmed my belief in the need for and power of feminism. It opened my eyes to the ways in which development has often been to serve ourselves rather than the countries in which it takes place, as well as the ways in which development has been ethnocentric, assuming that the rest of the world wants to follow the path of the Western nations. I also came to believe in the need for education to be as empowering as possible, and to draw on the richness that adults bring to any learning situation.

**My Peace Corps Training Experience**

How this happens in real terms something with which I had to struggle as I left to serve as the TEFL Coordinator for Peace Corps training in the summer between my two years of graduate school. I was the TEFL trainer in Bulgaria for the fifth training of the post in 1995. It was an eleven week training with three training components: TEFL, Small Business Development, and Environment. There were 22 TEFL trainees, 15 SBD, and 5 environment. All of the program coordinators were American as was the training director. The program set in place by the post and the training director was an eight hour training day broken into two morning sessions and two afternoon sessions. Language was held in the morning all days except Wednesday when the schedule flipflopped and technical sessions or cross-cultural sessions were held at this time. We had a community meeting, or check-in, each morning for 30 minutes, and then sessions throughout the day held in classrooms at the training facility. This facility was a sports training facility/hotel which we converted
into offices and classrooms. The trainees lived with families and commuted to the training site each day. For the TEFL component, the trainees had between 4 and 7 sessions a week for the first six weeks. Weeks seven through nine were a teaching practicum or model school during which the trainees taught one class of students per day every day (see preceding TEFL Overview for more detail). The sessions were mostly in a classroom with the exception of one school visit to observe a Bulgarian teacher and to talk to other teachers and administrators.

My second training was basically the same basic training day and home stay structure as the first. It was also summer, when schools are closed in Bulgaria, and it was eleven weeks. The differences, however, were that the training site had moved to a much larger community, a town, in fact, with a wealth of schools and resources upon which to draw. The training staff had gone from four Americans to two: only the TEFL coordinator (me) and the training director were Americans; both had been trainers the previous year. For the TEFL component there was a Bulgarian co-coordinator who would be trained during the course of the summer to take over the position in the future. The training site was a school building with school classes that would be in session for the first few weeks of the training. For me as a trainer, a big change was my experience, and my year back in graduate school honing my skills and thinking about how to alleviate the problems I encountered the first time around.

With the exception of the home stay, this model was very familiar for me; it is the basic structure that this post has used since the program began. Thus, it basically fit with my understanding of what training “is” like (I say is rather than should be because my idea of what defines PC Training comes from my experiences with these models; it is not just a possible way, it is the way) because it was consistent with my two training programs in Bulgaria, as well as my training in Pakistan. It is important, I believe, to let you know that I have been exposed in practice to essentially only one training model in my Peace Corps experience. This very much defined what I did as a trainer, and it certainly affects the way I will write the following guide.

One of the things I hope to accomplish with the guide however, is to open to the new trainer possibilities other than those he or she has experienced or is being exposed to by the post or training director. I have discovered that there are many different training models, especially now as the Peace Corps moves into more integrated (meaning the component areas of cross-cultural, language, and technical) training designs. There have been
experiments with levels of participation by trainees, structure of the training day, home stay situations, practicums and many other areas. While I don’t have access to all of these models, and won’t describe them in detail here, I offer some questions to ask of the post, of the other trainers and of yourself in making decisions about the way the training will be. I did things because I assumed they had to be that way. Not much is fixed, really, anything can be challenged. There might be good reasons for doing things a certain way in a given post, but then again there might not. At the very least, by asking the question, you have come to better understand the philosophy of those with whom you are working, including yourself.

What is Training?

One of the first questions to ask ourselves is, “what is this activity we call training”? What does it mean to “train” someone to do something? How is this different from what we call “education”?

According to Webster’s New World dictionary, “to train” means many things. Those most closely related to our task at hand are; “3). To subject to certain actions exercises, etc. in order to bring to a desired condition; 4). to guide or control the mental, moral, etc. development of; to bring up, rear; and most related, 5). to instruct so as to make proficient or qualified[to train nurses at a hospital]” (Neufeldt, 1991, p. 1418). To train is offered as a synonym for ‘to educate’ which is defined as, “to train or develop the knowledge, skill, mind, or character of, esp. by formal schooling or study”(p. 431).

From these definitions, it would seem that training is the broader term and that education is a specific kind of training, that which occurs in school, or through schooling. Yet, in our society, there is a distinction between the two, both in connotation, and in methods and techniques. In connotation, I sense that education is seen as the broader of the two terms and that it is also seen as the more serious and rigorous undertaking. Training is associated with other things as well as those listed above, things which may explain its negative connotations: we train animals to behave as we want them to, children are potty trained, and we train for athletic events. Some professions seem to require training, others require schooling or study.

Why are teachers trained while doctors go to medical school? Whether is it from these connotations, or from larger social forces, I don’t know, but people make a difference
between the two, a difference that matters. Nurses, for example, were once “trained” (while doctors went to medical school) and they fought to have their status changed from “Nurses Training” to “Nursing School”. Clearly, they are seen as different things, with different levels of status, and different goals. In addition, the methodologies for training are very specific, and they are different from those for education. Indeed they seem to be two completely separate fields with different philosophies and different methodologies.

Professionals I talked to and books I read didn’t seem to define training in general, or to examine this difference between training and education. It seemed obvious to them that training is different from education, but when asked in what ways, the definitions were not so clear. When presented with various educational situations, we would probably fairly easily be able to name some as training and some as not. We know when we are being trained and when we are not. We understand this difference on a very subconscious level. For example, it is clear to all of us that getting your Master’s degree at a University wouldn’t be considered a “training”. It is considered further education. But what is the difference? You are learning a new and, often, very specific profession. But the methods, and process is quite different.

The process of education at a university or college is quite standard. It will last a number of years, you will be self-directed, the university and college environment will offer you possibilities for learning and, depending on the program you will have the freedom to select from these possibilities and thereby make your own education. It is a slow process with time for reading and reflection and expectations that you will learn on your own. Contact time with educators is minimal, maybe only once or twice a week. It is a whole range of activities, academic and extra-curricular which contribute to your development not just as a professional but as a human being.

However, if you enter a teacher training program, or a training program for dental technicians, your educational program might look quite different. It is likely to be entirely set up for you in advance, with a specific and sequential set of activities through which you must pass. It might be a full days worth of lessons and activities in which you participate and usually led by a facilitator. The educational activities in which you will participate are determined by the program or by a facilitator, and decisions about your participation will be led by this person too. In training we assume things will be planned out for us, that we

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1 Information about this came from discussions with Jane Mosczynski whose mother is a nurse who fought for these changes.
will be led through a process of some kind that is entirely planned and facilitated by someone else. And at the end of what is set up, you assume you will have the skills necessary to be whatever the program told you you would be: a teacher, a dental technician, a nurse. The knowledge and skills that it takes to do this particular thing have been defined and need only to be given or passed on to you, the new learner.

Training tends to be fixed and highly facilitated. Training has a specific goal, it is short term, it is intensive, it has a specified outcome. People who come to training expect to leave with a skill rather than knowledge. Training is contained; once the training period is over, that training is done. Whereas education is something that happens all the time, gradually, over the life span. In contrast to the above definitions, this would seem to place training as an activity in the larger picture of education instead of the other way around.

Expectations
Why are these distinctions important for us? It seems a bit like unnecessary linguistic hair splitting. However, the relevance lies in the fact that people carry underlying attitudes and expectations about education and training, and those attitudes will affect their level of acceptance with what you are doing. One can tell if one is getting training and not education. And if one is expecting training and gets education, then one is taken aback, disappointed, feels a lack of intensity while at the same time overloaded. Recently a group of educators came to our program from the Philippines. They were told that they would be participating in a "training". When they discovered that this "training" meant participating in university courses--reading, discussion and writing papers--they were frustrated. It was not what they expected or wanted. They wanted "practical skills", "hand-on" training, not theory. Even though they had more work than they could do, they complained of a lack of intensity. They wanted full days of instruction, full of activities, games, and even lectures.

But those coming to the university to get their Master's degree are perfectly satisfied with coursework and papers, even though they are often also professionals from the field, seeking "training" of a similar sort in adult education and literacy. If one is expecting education and gets training, then one might feel a bit manipulated, frustrated by a process that seems fixed and not exploratory, too defined somehow. In some of my courses, I felt like a rat jumping through a maze that many others have already jumped through, participating in learning gimmicks designed to produce an outcome already determined by the facilitator. Either way one feels that what one is getting is not quite right; it does not it
into what one has expected to happen which often leads to dissatisfaction and disappointment.

**Theoretical vs. Practical**

Another set of language, and area of expectation, that fits into this discussion is that of practice versus theory. Almost inevitably, training is seen as a place for “practical” information and skills and not for theory. In contrast, the university tends to be understood as the place for theory. This was the perception of the above mentioned Philippine educators. It often is, but interestingly, even when it is not, even when University classes are “practical”, there is an assumption that anything from a university class will be theoretical and not practical. How a participant defines what is theoretical and what is practical very much depends again on expectations. It also may depend on the pressure one feels that one will have to perform when one completes this training and must therefore have practical skills. Later in the paper, I will revisit this topic and, using examples from my experience with Peace Corps, will discuss what I think is really meant, often, by these terms “theoretical” versus “practical”.

Another factor is the desire to get answers, to get formulas, for “how-tos”. It is our human desire to simplify, to want things to be easy and not complex, to have a fixed pattern or checklist to follow. Practice is much easier if someone just tells us how to do it. Yet, universal “how tos” increasingly elude many professions. In a complex world and as theories become more and more diverse, it becomes harder to be descriptive. Any descriptive “how to” comes from a set of assumptions made by the facilitator, a set of assumptions that need to be made clear for the audience.

**Teacher “Training”**

There may have been a time when “training” teachers was a matter of giving a set of techniques and rules and subject matter. However, the task is increasingly complicated by our recognition that education will always be different depending on the needs of the learners, the context, the time constraints, the personality of the facilitator, etc. There are also many approaches to doing something depending on which philosophy of learning and teaching you ascribe to. Finally, as we learn more about how people learn it is becoming clear that it is more about finding an appropriate process, a process that may have no set prescription and may look different every time. As this happens, our definitions of what a training should look like may change. It may not be so clear just what the body of knowledge is that needs to be attained. It may be rather that people need skills in decision-
making and a complex set of processes that require critical thinking more than a set of techniques. It may be that what is needed is theory in addition to practice, so that teachers can know the whys behind the hows of what they do.

With this in mind, the way we approach training may not be so obvious. It may be that the line between training and education is blurred, that we are doing both and that the methodologies of both may be appropriate. This is even more true for those doing Peace Corps training, if one truly sees the Pre-Service Training as the beginning of two years of development and growth and learning, if we see it as part of a much larger process.

**Brief Overview of the Literature**

Being a TEFL Coordinator required a broad range of skills and knowledge. The job proved to be much more complex and required different skills than I had imagined. Mullinix (1986) outlines the skills one needs to master "to be a successful trainer of teachers: understanding comparative education systems, needs assessment, adult learning, training design, supervision/observation, training techniques" (p 1). Add to this evaluation, supervision of multicultural staff, knowledge of TEFL/TESL methodology and content, and knowledge of general teaching methodology and content, and you have the basics of what it takes to be a TEFL trainer. Each of these areas has an entire, enormous field of literature dedicated to it. It would be impossible to cover these topics in the scope of this guide nor is it necessary. As TEFL Coordinators, you already come to this position with expertise as TEFL/TESL teachers, teacher trainers and trainers. Some of these are areas which I spend a fair amount of time on and which provided great insights for me into the teaching and training process. Rather than try to separate the literature out in a special section, I will incorporate what I found in the literature as it becomes relevant. Here, I will talk only briefly of the challenges I had looking for literature on the topic of "training", because it helps to point out the particularities of Peace Corps technical training.

One challenge of Peace Corps teacher training is that it is not long enough to fit into models of teacher training, and it is too long to fit into the models for most other kinds of training. It also is complicated by the fact that it is part of a larger training and set of experiences which are intensive and require much energy. Training people to be Peace Corps Volunteers requires a wide range of skills for both in and out of the classroom. And, to complicate matters even more, the classrooms in which they will operate are completely
different from what they know; they have no knowledge of the educational structure and
modes of learning that take place in that culture.

With this, it is difficult to find literature which adequately addresses the particularities of
Peace Corps Training. Instead, one finds oneself piecing together bits of training
information from the formal sector, which is preparing teachers to enter the rigid US
education system, and information from nonformal education which typically is preparing
individuals to work in communities often doing village level “development” activities.
Both inform this task, which is somewhere in between. These people will be teachers
operating the formal schools; we should not forget that. In Eastern Europe the requirements
of this were as rigorous as any school position in the United States. Yet, their position is
also much more than that. They are also supposed to be development workers. They are
expected to employ a wide range skills and undertake a broad range of activities.

There is an abundance of literature on teacher training in general, and a fair amount on
training ESL/EFL teachers. However, in spite of the fact that these are called “training”,
most take place at colleges and universities and are quite “educational” in nature, rather than
training related. In looking at "training" in general, one finds materials from many fields
but especially that of human resources training (Reddy & Henderson, 1987; Benbow &
Gardner, 1991; Eitington, 1984) or training for community development (Srinivasan,
1990; Vella, 1989; Cohen & Pacheco 1996; Licht & Murangi, 1996). These materials
usually emphasize group process and experiential learning through simulations, role plays,
games, etc. The goal is often to produce affective change in a group’s team dynamic,
sensitivity to others, leadership skills, or community relations (Benbow and Gardner,
1991). TEFL training, however, would fit under the category of “technical training”
requiring a set a methods quite different from the others. These methods, are listed by
Benbow and Gardner (1991) as, “skills building; method demonstrations; programmed
instruction; other activities determined by content” (handout). The materials from technical
training of ESL/EFL teachers at the university is often too rigid, and much too long in time.
Other kinds of training however, have very different goals and while many of the methods
can be borrowed, rely on methods that are not completely appropriate for the task at hand.

It is a mistake to pretend that TEFL training fits into that range of training which is wholly
experiential, completely process. English as a Foreign Language is an enormous field with
many theoretical underpinnings. It has a very particular and rich content. Unlike much
community development or cross cultural training, there is a body of knowledge to be
known; it is not fixed, but it exists. The trick for the trainer is to find a way to do both; to allow the trainees to develop skills in finding that knowledge for themselves, thereby developing the necessary skills to continue their professional development beyond this training within the very short time constraints and still make the participants feel prepared to go out and teach one week after the training is over.

GUIDE FOR THE TEFL TRAINING COORDINATOR

Who Makes What Decisions?

By the time you, the TEFL Coordinator, land in country, the training and programming staff in country and the project director have already been hard at work putting things in place, making decisions and preparations. Many decisions will probably have already been made, decisions that will affect your training design. The number of decisions already made, and the extent to which you can challenge them will depend largely on the post and the training director. Remember that while some decisions are taken because of constraints, many reflect the philosophy of training held by the post and the training director. Things as benign as the location, or time of year actually hold in them philosophical principles about what training should look like and what it should be. It also may be that the decisions reflect a priority of one component over another, and that the decisions were made with a philosophy of one component even if it compromises another.

Decisions which are Fixed

One big decision over which you will have not control is the time of year chosen for the training. If the training is held during a break from school (summer months in Bulgaria), then the types of resources available to you are very different than if schools are still in session. If the schools are still open, then much more can be done experientially with the volunteers potentially having internship experiences in the schools, having ready access to students and teachers and classrooms in session. Depending on the size of the town, the cooperation of the schools and the size of the training group, this may prove challenging in finding enough opportunities for all of the teachers, etc. In Bulgaria, the training is almost always held in summer because school buildings are used as training sites, and because most members of the language staff are teachers during the school year. With school open
for only a few weeks at the very beginning of training (if we're lucky) there is little opportunity for working directly in or with schools. The advantages are an abundance of students with lots of free time to participate in our own English school, and a wealth of resources in the teachers who are also off for the summer.

Another decision which will probably have already been made is the location of the training site. The size of the town, the educational facilities and students available, proximity to ministries of education and other officials, etc. will all have an impact on the design. The building, the number of rooms available to you, etc. may also be things that are out of your control.

The other decision which will probably be set is the length of time for the training--9, 10, 11, or 12 weeks, and the number of hours needed by each component.

Decisions which may be negotiable

Other decisions may be set, but may also be negotiable. One of these has to do with training design and philosophy. The post may have a certain training philosophy to which you must adhere. Perhaps it is trying out an integrated approach for the whole training. Or perhaps it believes in having language only for four weeks, and then four weeks of mostly technical, and then equal time for both. It may be that the post has been doing it this way for years, and there is no question of doing it differently. It may be that they have been doing it for a year, but are open to suggestions because they are not completely satisfied. Or it may be that the post is trying out this method for the first time, and wants to stick very closely to the fundamentals of the philosophy. It may be that they are trying to work with their trainers to find out what permutation of the philosophy will work best. Your job is to find out what the goals and philosophies of the post and the other training staff members are. How fixed are they? Whose philosophy is it? It may never be talked about as the philosophy of training, but will rather be just presented as other training decisions.

In my first year of training, 1995, one of our initial planning decisions as a team was determining the schedule of the training day. Mostly, our decision had to do with time; what time would we start, what time would we end, how long would each of the morning sessions be, etc. What I didn’t realize at the time was that an enormous training decision had already been made: that we would break the training day into segments for each subject and would each be allotted a certain number of hours. A philosophy of training which sought to integrate the training components, or to include mostly experiential learning
would certainly have looked quite different. Because this is what I had always experienced in my training, I didn’t question it. I assumed that was how training was done in Peace Corps, not by this person, or by this post.

I am not suggesting that this is a bad philosophy, but rather just that it is a philosophy. It is not how training is done in some universal way. You will be tossed into some of these decisions only days after arrival, amidst a swirl of other activity. They may seem insignificant at the time, but later, as you try to plan your program, you may be thinking, “hmm...if only I didn’t have to fit into these hour blocks...how did I get into having these isolated blocks of time anyway...?” Believe me, they’re important. It is likely that I couldn’t have changed this even if I had wanted to, but by exploring it further, I may at least have come to better understand the reasons behind this philosophy as held by the training director. This is the time to present any misgivings about this overall training strategy and to get your opinions heard. Somehow, you must find an overall strategy with which you are satisfied. Be firm about this. Taking time in the beginning to understand and be able to live with all of the training philosophies functioning will pay off. Once you start the training you can not go back and decided you don’t agree.

Site assignments and site visits: The post will most likely have a process in place for determining site placements. This could happen at any time during the training. As a volunteer, I knew my site before I arrived and went on my site visit in week two. In my three experiences as a trainer, the site assignments occurred in week 7, 8 or 9 with the visit taking place soon after. Find out the post’s process for site assignments as soon as possible. Ask how much time they will need to conduct the process, the extent to which they will need your help and what kind of information they will want you to provide them in order to conduct the process. For example, if the post wants information about the trainees' classroom skills, it is best that this process not take place until after some of the practicum and you feel you have a basis for assessing this. Site placements can be fun and exciting, but it can also be extremely disruptive and anxiety producing. Be careful about scheduling around this time.

Model school: What is the post’s understanding of the practicum? How have they budgeted it? When will it fit into the training schedule given the other training activities and events? The post and the training director will probably have some opinion about the practicum. As it affects the other parts of the training, it is something you will have to negotiate. (see "Practicum" for more details)
**TEFL staff:** What is the budget for TEFL staff? Are you to be the sole trainer? Do you have training assistants? Will these assistants be Currently Serving Volunteers or can they be anybody? Do you have a choice of who to hire? Has the post identified anyone? Find out what the budget is for TEFL staff. Don’t assume that they will tell you. There may be assumptions and expectations about who will be working with you. Find out what those are. (see Staffing for more information on staff decisions)

**Use of Currently Serving PCVs:** The post will probably have some philosophy of how to best use currently serving volunteers during training. Some posts view them as a great resource and like to have them participate as much as possible. Other posts want the trainees to have their own experience and prefer that the contact with currently serving volunteers be kept to a minimum.

**Field Visit:** There may be other larger training events scheduled into the training. These will likely be discussed by the whole staff.

**Evaluation Strategy:** It is possible that nobody will talk about evaluation strategies. But you can be sure that it will be a major part of the training even if nobody is talking about it. Bring it up. Find out who wants to know what and for what purpose (Kinsey, 1987). Who is responsible for evaluation of your training component and who is evaluation information for? The post? The training director? You? If it is for you only, then be sure that you are getting the information that you want. In my first training, an evaluation tool was used by the training director which gathered information from the TEFL trainees about our sessions. Evaluation was never discussed, it was just assumed that the training director would do it and that it would be done using a certain instrument. In the first few planning meetings bring up the subject of evaluation if it does not come up. (see "Evaluation" for some reflections about the evaluation process).

**Who are you? Know thyself**

Before we even begin planning and asking questions, and especially before we begin training, we must be as clear as possible about who we are and what we believe. Perhaps the most meaningful change for me from one training to the next was in this category. The more I got to know my personality, my needs, my internal contradictions, insecurities, habits, my assumptions, philosophy, etc., the more relaxed and comfortable I was.
Knowing these things, and making peace with them, allowed me to just be myself. My belief is that the more human you are, the better. Let the trainees know you, remind them that you are not just a trainer, but also a human being with faults, strengths and weaknesses. The more you are able to acknowledge and fess up to these things, the more forgiving the trainees are as well.

**You are not your training design and your training design is not you**

As a Peace Corps trainer you leave your familiar world behind and come to a new place full of strangers. You often have only this job and the people associated with this job to fill your time. It is easy to make this job and these people the entirety of one’s self during training. You spend most of your time on the job, working to make this training something you believe to be good. It becomes difficult to separate the job, and what you are creating there, and yourself. We put our entire self esteem into what we have created, and the people with whom we are working. Remember that in any other life, you would probably have friends that had nothing to do with work; you wouldn’t rely on your “students” as your cultural support network and you would have people who know and value you for things other than the work you do. You will not have that here. Most of the people you will know and meet will be related to Peace Corps or the training in some way.

All of this can contribute to trainers getting “wedded” to their training design and to themselves as a trainer. We all want to do a good job, and want positive feedback. But as educators we also know that we will not please everyone all of the time. Be honest about your relationship with your ideas about training and about where those ideas come from. You are making the best possible decisions about how to do things based on the information available to you at any given time. That is all you can do. If something doesn’t go well, or if the trainees are unhappy or dissatisfied, be able to take an objective stance and analyze what happened. It may have been a good idea, badly implemented, or it may have just been an idea that wasn’t appropriate for this group at this time. Remember too, that trainees are of varied ages and learning styles. Something raved about by one, will be hated by another.

Feedback and criticism of the training program is usually about the program, not about you. Feedback and criticism may be about you and not about the program. It is a fine line to be sensitive to feedback, and to not take it personally. It is also a fine line to know when to make changes due to the feedback you are getting, and when to let an idea run its course, hoping or believing that in the end, the trainees will see the relevance and worth. This is in
part about confidence. Confidence not just in yourself, but also in the ideas you have chosen.

There are many levels and ways in which to know yourself. Here are some guiding questions:

**Philosophy:** What is your philosophy of TEFL/TESL instruction? Do you believe that the communicative approach is the most important? What other approaches do you use/ascribe to? Which approaches don’t you use? Why? Where did you learn TEFL techniques? In what environments have you taught? How might this affect the techniques and methods you use? Are the techniques and methods you know based on ESL or EFL? How might these be different?

I believe, for example, that the communicative approach is a good way, but not the only way. I think the trainees must have a broader repertoire of techniques to draw from if they are to truly be responsive to the varied needs of students. Let them choose the communicative approach because it seems best suited to the situation not because it is all they know. I believe that the most useful concept for any teaching of EFL is the presentation-practice-production concept. This is what I use as the basis of my training design.

What is your philosophy of education? What assumptions do you make about the way adults learn?

What is your learning style? How might this affect the choices you make in methods and activities, in both the way you train, and the way you teach the trainees to teach?

What are your training strengths? What are your weaknesses? Are you high energy or low energy?

How do you want the trainees to perceive you? Friend? Trainer?

What is your level of confidence? Where are you more confident? Less? What resources can you draw upon for these things?
How might your level of confidence affect your decision making? Are you less likely to try something because of lack of confidence? Will you be less comfortable with a model that lacks control?

What is your personality type? Do like to control? Do you need to be needed, to be liked?

It is important also to recognize your "location". In other words, where you come from, your experiences, your gender, race, ethnicity, class, etc. This may have an impact on the way that you perceive others and on the way that others perceive you.

Vision, Goals and Objectives

Within the first few weeks on the job, you will most likely be asked to submit a list of competencies to be achieved in your component and an overview of the training: The Component Overview for the Trainee Handbook. In my first year, unsure of what this should say, I used bits and pieces of training designs from previous years in that post, and from other countries. For parts of the overview, I even just changed the dates, and the country name. For the competencies, I weeded through lists developed over the years in Peace Corps posts throughout the world. I was not the first to do this; many (most) of these competencies, even though from a wide variety of countries, were verbatim. I came up with a list of competencies, turned the thing in and never looked at it again. In the end, I had no idea whether or not I had actually achieved any of these competencies and, although they were "assigned", I am not sure the trainees actually ever read them.

This was the wrong approach. It left me feeling like the whole training design never had an integrating vision that I believed in. I had nothing to guide my decision-making and planning. The overview and the competencies are your training design. Take your time with it, and write it in your own words, to reflect your own ideas. Let it encompass the philosophy of training and of education that you bring to training, and the ways that you intend to get to that philosophy. If that means that you have no design yet in mind because you plan to plan it with the trainees, then write about that. The competencies then, should be things that your training design really intends to accomplish. They should serve as your guide for your training decisions, and can be used as a way to evaluate the program.
Collaborative Planning

In an ideal world, these planning decisions would not be made by you alone. This overview and the training design would be a product created by the entire TEFL training staff, and if possible, the trainees as well. You may be able to organize a meeting of the TEFL staff in these weeks before training, although this is often challenging. You may not have a TEFL staff other than yourself. If anyone is working with you, be sure to do this collaboratively, so that it is everyone’s vision, and not just your own (see Supervision for more details). It may also be possible to wait until the trainees arrive to develop this list of competencies, but don’t count on it. If their participation in the design process is important to you, then write that in your overview, and propose competencies as possible, rather than set in stone. The only problem with this is that trainees, new to TEFL and new to the country, are all too happy to read the list of competencies and just agree without giving it much thought. If you are hoping for a more fluid, goal-free kind of training, then you may have more negotiating to do.

Whatever you decide to do, have a clear sense of the process and the final product, a clear philosophy of how to get there, and why you are attempting to get there through the means you have chosen. Be sure that the ideas are your own, or hopefully those of the whole training staff, and that you believe in them.

Needs Assessment

This is one of the first and largest task of the TEFL Coordinator. There are many people to talk to and many versions of the needs in any post. There are two sets of needs to be considered: the needs of the post (the country as a whole, the PC project in that country) and the needs of the trainees. These needs are somewhat interconnected, the needs of the post will determine the needs of the trainees in that it will define where they need to be in twelve weeks in order to be effective as PCVs. These will then be matched against what the trainees bring to the training to sort out the needs which should be addressed by the training design.

Assessing the needs of the post

Talk to: The APCD, the Programming and Training officer, HCN teachers (both those who have worked with PCVs and those that haven’t), currently serving volunteers, COSing volunteers (those who are finishing their service). You might request that the post
have a community planning event which invites people from all of these parties to come and work together on sharing ideas for the training design.

**Read:** The project plan, old final reports, and any other documents the post can provide you with about the education system and English teaching.

**Observe:** One, or even better, several, Host Country National (HCN) teachers teaching an English lesson. A PCV teacher teaching an English lesson. HCN teachers teaching other subjects.

**Assessing the needs of the trainees**

Assessing the needs of the trainees is a bit trickier. You will receive information on the educational and professional background of each trainee in a questionnaire called the PTQ, Pre-Training Questionnaire. In this questionnaire the trainees are asked what they think they most need to learn in training. These initial pieces of information are helpful in knowing what the trainees will be able to do. Also ask the post for a copy of the request they sent to Washington for trainees. In this, the post will have specified their requirements. This will help you get a sense of what kind of people are coming with what kinds of skills. For example, Bulgaria requests only certified teachers. Knowing this narrowed down considerably the kinds of information I needed to glean from the PTQs.

Then, when the trainees arrive, it is possible to do a needs assessment with them. My preferred approach is to have an interview with each trainee to talk frankly with them about what they think they are good at and what they need. It may not be possible to have individual interviews, so this could be done on paper or in a session with the whole group. One of the challenges that I have found with needs assessment is that people don’t really know what they need. This is a completely new experience, they don’t know about TEFL and they don’t know about the host country. Thus, my experience with needs assessment is that it reveals general information such as, “I need to know about the host country school system, and about how to teach TEFL.” Other statements of need tend to reflect their previous experience with teaching in the states: “I need to work on management, or lesson planning”. If given a list of TEFL topics to rank in order of importance, how meaningful are the responses? If the trainees know nothing about TEFL, then how will they know if what they need is vocabulary or grammar or listening techniques?
It may be that to do a meaningful needs assessment with trainees, they need to have some kind of experience with TEFL. Perhaps they could teach a class or two in the first or second week of training. Maybe the first week of model school should be in week one or two. Then, after this, the trainees may have a better idea of what they need to know, what skills they’d like to develop and would have a very clear motivation and sense of purpose for the rest of training. Otherwise, I am not sure how to get beyond the training staff just determining the needs for the beginning with the possibility of revising them as the training progresses and the trainees get more experience with both TEFL and their future life in the host country.

Resources and Constraints

This has been addressed in many of the above categories because certain decisions will determine your resources and constraints. Decisions about the training design for the PST as a whole, the training site, the budget, the daily schedule, etc., will all afford different resources and constraints. Be creative with resources. Think about how to set up mutually beneficial experiences (for example between local teachers and PCVs) which do not require additional money.

Time and Information Overload

The two constraints that I struggled with most were time, and the fact that the trainees and trainers were human beings. There is never enough time to accomplish all that is necessary in the training. In planning we often fill each moment given to our component with training sessions, forgetting about processing time. Don’t forget to leave time in the schedule for the unexpected, for group check-in, for evaluation, for unanticipated "learning moments". Don’t forget to process what you do—especially if they involve any kind of cross-cultural experience. Take the time to deal with cultural assumptions and biases and just to recognize the trainees as people.

This relates to the second constraint. We are human. The trainees are in a new culture, away from friends and family, living in often in someone else’s home, and learning literally, a million things at once. In addition, the food is new, it might be extremely hot with no air conditioning (or cold with no heat), and the trainees may be exposed to illnesses they have never had before. The training day is long and rigorous. For many, the
infantilization of learning a new language and culture may be extremely frustrating. I needn’t go on. You get the point. Energy will ebb and flow, both in the daily schedule and in the different weeks. It is partly culture shock, partly training burn-out. You cannot control this. But you can recognize and prepare for it.

The TEFL Staff

You may or may not get to choose how many people will work with you and who they will be. Find out first how much money there is for staff, if you are allowed to hire people outside of Peace Corps, if you are allowed to use Currently Serving Volunteers and if you are allowed to use COSing volunteers. Then assess your staffing needs. It might be helpful to write down all of the tasks involved in the training. These can be taken from your statement of work, and from a careful assessment of your training design if you have it. Consider the following:

- How many stand-up training hours does your design include? Will these be done by the TEFL staff or by outside speakers? Remember that you have lots of responsibilities other than planning and conducting training sessions, and even if you could do all of the sessions yourself, the trainees could probably benefit from a diversity of training styles and teaching approaches.

- If the design is more process oriented, with the trainees working independently, who is going to meet with them and how often? Who are the resources available to them for consultation?

- What needs to be done to prepare for the practicum? When will this preparation need to start? Will students needs to be recruited? If so, who will organize them, notify them, etc.?

- How many resource teachers will you need for the practicum? When will they be brought on? How many weeks will they work? How many hours per day? Will PC need to pay for housing and meals? Begin this process right away! (see "Practicum" for more reflections on this)
• When should the other training staff be brought on? If the Currently Serving Volunteers are limited by their summer vacations, school schedules and only six week commitment, when should they attend and in what configurations?

• When and how will you hire people? If people are not already chosen by Peace Corps, then how will you choose them? There is usually very little time before planning and pre-training events begin.

Cross-cultural Considerations
There are great advantages to having a staff comprised of both Americans and HCNs. If you are an American, then it is imperative that at least one member of the core TEFL staff be an HCN. If you are an HCN, then it might be helpful to bring on at least one American for the duration of the training. In any case, I found the combination to provide a much richer experience for the trainees and trainers alike.

Staff Training
Using PCVs who come at different times during the training makes a cohesive staff training plan difficult. It is ideal to have a staff that plans the training together and works together throughout the summer. Having people come and go is challenging. While it is refreshing to have new ideas and perspectives, it also means doing a lot of orienting. The new people won't know the training philosophy, the design, and what has already been done.

Staff Supervision
This was the part of the TEFL Coordinator role for which I was the least prepared. Having people work for you or with you adds another dimension of work to your job. As the person ultimately responsible for the training (and you ultimately are held responsible) you will be looked to by the rest of the staff for direction. You will be held accountable if reports are late, or if there are no model school students. It must be clear to everyone who is doing what, when and how. It is your job to make sure that it all happens. Sometimes it feels like it would be faster and easier just to do it all yourself. Trust me, it isn’t. But it is more work if you have to do things over because it wasn’t done well the first time. Part of being a good supervisor is making sure that this doesn’t happen.
A Short Story from my Experience

In my first year, I had no idea how to supervise. Indeed I didn't even view myself as such even though there were two TEFL assistants working with me, and four resource teachers. I felt overwhelmed with the amount of work I had to do, and was therefore more than happy to just turn things over to my assistants with little direction and hope for the best. In this, I also felt that I was being open and participatory; I didn't want to assume a director or leadership position, but rather wanted them to feel as though we were all equals, part of a team. Then, they would conduct a session which didn't cover any of the material I had hoped it would cover, or that my plan necessitated it should cover. I would be frustrated and angry. I, then, had to schedule the material that hadn't been covered into a different session, plan it myself and rush something important.

I didn't give the training assistant any feedback about the session, but rather just glossed it over, saying to myself, “no point ruffling the waters, it wasn't that bad, and we can’t do it over now anyway...”. It made it even harder that these people were my peers. Doing this, and by not giving feedback throughout the summer when things did not go as desired, came back to haunt me. At the end of the summer, each of the assistants asked for recommendations from me. I had given them no impression that I was anything less than pleased with their performance, so I felt put in a very hard place. But I put myself there. Did I just write the recommendation in such a general way as to not have to deal with it, or did I write honestly of their performance?

There were many problems with this approach. It was not participatory, or egalitarian, it was just lazy. I wasn’t being honest with myself about my role and my expectations. I had a specific vision of the final product, and I had a stake in things being done a certain way. By not admitting this to the trainees or to myself, I was setting them up for failure. They couldn’t read my mind, so they couldn’t possibly know what I wanted if I didn’t tell them. I was also not honest about our levels of expertise and our strengths and weaknesses. In graduate school I had come to see “expert” as a dirty word, and was therefore reluctant to see myself as a TEFL expert or even a “knower” in this field. Partly it is also my personality. The training assistants had only one year of experience with TEFL and no formal training other than their PC training. I failed to recognize my level of expertise with them, and to share that with them. I was reluctant to “help” them in their planning, because I felt this was too controlling and patronizing.
In the end this thinking hurt everyone. The training assistants did not have the opportunity to learn and grow from me, or from this teaching experience. I was frustrated with them, and with the process, and gave myself more work in the end. The trainees sat through sessions that were not up to scratch, wasting precious time and energy. These particular training assistants did not do their homework or recognize their lack of expertise themselves. They may have been trying to impress, or they may not have known that there was more to know than what they knew. If I wanted them to do more, like reading and researching, then I should have made that expectation clear from the beginning.

Finally, I also failed to recognize that I had a different stake in this training than the training assistants. They were there for a short time to “help out”, they were not ultimately going to be held responsible for the quality of the training program. I, on the other hand, felt the burden of this responsibility. It was my first year, I wanted to do a good job, to prove myself and therefore, had a lot at stake in wanting this to be “good”. Being honest with myself about this stake, may have led me to be more directive, but at least it would have been honest.

The other problem with this approach is that while I wanted it to seem participatory, it was quite controlling. The training design was my vision, and only my vision. Only I knew what needed to happen when and how in order to make the whole thing fit together. Thus, everything had to come from me. It was all in my head, I owned it, and, in my lack of confidence, wanted to control it all as closely as possible. In searching for better supervision strategies, I discovered that it wasn’t’ about exercising more control, it was about sharing that control in the first place.

**Thoughts and Suggestions**

If possible, open up the planning process to all staff members in the very beginning. As mentioned above in Vision, Goals Objectives, **create a shared vision** among all of the staff members. Make a vision that everyone believes in, and in which everyone feels they have an integral role, a voice and ultimately a stake. “People don’t sabotage their own projects” (Bunker, 1995); make this everyone’s project. From this, hopefully people will feel invested.

Then, **take stock of the skills and resources** within the group. Give each person an opportunity to be honest about their skills, knowledge and abilities. Find out what each person feels he or she has to contribute. Share levels of expertise.
Find out what kind of professional development each staff member would like to get from participating in this training experience, what kinds of skills is he or she hoping to develop? You might ask each why they are here. Beyond the wanting to "help out", and "it seemed like a good summer project", most will have at least some interest in putting this on a resume. Find out what exactly they want to put on the resume and why.

List the major jobs and responsibilities that the training design requires. Allow people to choose a set of responsibilities for themselves, negotiate who will do what sets of things. This will depend both on what people bring to the training, and what they hope to get out of it. Try to make it a fulfilling opportunity for everyone; make sure nobody ends up just being the copy person all summer unless of course that is what he or she really wants.

Honesty is the Best Policy
One of the most important parts of this process is for you to be honest with yourself. Decide in the beginning what kind of role you see for yourself in this process. If you have strong opinions about what the design should look like, then be honest with your staff about that. Don’t pretend that the process is totally open and then railroad everyone into your beliefs. People will recognize and resent this.

Also remember that you work for a hierarchical organization and that no matter how participatory you are within your staff, Peace Corps will most likely be looking to you to make things happen. For example, my Bulgarian co-coordinator and I saw ourselves as a team, both equally responsible for the program. But the training director, and Peace Corps Sofia didn’t see it that way. They saw me as the Coordinator, and Ani as my assistant or coordinator-in-training. If reports were late, or something didn’t get done, or they had questions about the program, they came to me, not to Ani, even if reports were Ani’s responsibility.

The point here is to remember that part of the expectation of your job is to take responsibility for the overall planning and implementation of the program. Even if it is Bob’s job to remember to bring the video camera to model school, it is your job to remember that it is Bob’s job and to be sure that it happens. This is not to suggest that you become a dictatorial micro manager, or that you just do it all yourself; rather it is just to remind you that whether you like it or not, you have more of a stake in this thing than everybody else.
Supervision: What to do if Bob doesn’t do his job?

This brings us to the real supervision piece. What do you do if Bob doesn’t do his job? How will you evaluate the performance of the training assistants (remember you will most likely be asked by them in the end for some kind of recommendation)? What are your expectations of them? What will you do if they are not met? Again, here it is important to be up front about your role in the very beginning. Given the intensive nature of the experience, and the fact that the group of trainers and trainees tend to be together in and out of the work day, you might form friendships with these people. You also want people to genuinely feel they are working as part of a team, to treat them like adults and to value their work and ideas. And finally, to make matters harder yet, the currently serving volunteers are not getting paid. You might think that because they are volunteering, you don’t really have the right to demand much from them. Well, unfortunately, they are the only staff you’ve got, and you need them to perform 100%.

All of these factors make it harder to give the necessary critical feedback. But you owe it to the staff and to yourself to provide some mechanism for feedback. Have high expectations. This does not have to be you just going around handing out judgments of people’s work, but can rather be a joint process between you and the staff members. Some of the staff members have professional development goals for their work with you. This process can help them. For example if one of the staff members wants to work on their facilitation skills, then conduct a process of conferencing with them to provide feedback on a session they give. Or perhaps as a staff you can establish a system of peer evaluation, in which they have partners with whom they meet to assess how well they are meeting their objectives and to provide them critical feedback when something is not done well. Or, you sit down in the beginning with the list of responsibilities and discuss what should happen if and when these are not fulfilled. However you decide to do it, make a plan and stick with it.

This is all easier said than done. The training schedule is a crazy and hectic one. Supervising well is a full time job and you don’t have that luxury. Other aspects of training will take priority and suddenly one of your training assistants will be saying good bye before any evaluating has occurred. This can easily slip through the cracks and can seem like much more of a burden than it is worth.
Training Strategy

The big question. What are you going to do and how? This will obviously look different depending on the various decisions that have already been made, the needs assessment you have done, and your assessment of the resources and constraints. The content will be particular to each training and will depend largely on your own philosophy of TEFL teaching. In the process, however, there are some questions to ask ourselves to find out if we are really doing what we say we are doing, and what we want to be doing.

Peace Corps suggests (well, maybe insists) that we adhere to the principles of adult and experiential learning and provides us with a long list of general Peace Corps training goals. (See Appendix 1) However, it is not clear exactly what training will look like in order to be like this. How experiential is experiential? What does it really mean to be participatory? To what extent does your design really “model an approach to development by providing training that encourages critical thinking, creative problem solving, information gathering and analysis, flexibility, patience, professionalism, and self-sufficiency” (from Goals)?

There is a careful juggling act that must take place to balance the need to cover a certain amount of content and develop certain skills while also engaging the trainees in a meaningful, interactive, humanizing process all within an absurdly short time frame. There are also conflicting desires coming from the trainees. On the one hand they want us to just give them information, they accept us as knowers of TEFL and expect us to guide the process and effectively share what we know. On the other hand, they soon tire of being led, and are anxious to get involved in doing, again validating their abilities as teachers and their position as knowers. The point here is that made by most of the training literature that I have read: be sure to provide a variety of training activities which address a variety of learning styles.

Thoughts on Participation and Participatory Education
But this approach already makes a fundamental assumption: that the training will consist of training activities which the trainers plan and implement and in which the trainees participate. We must consider the level of participation that this affords the trainees and must think about the extent to which this leads to the above goals.
In order to better understand for myself just how much trainees were participating in the training process, I broke participation down into these levels:

- **Participation in activities that were planned for them by the trainers:** The activities that were planned followed the teaching cycle of presentation, controlled practice, and then production or experience. Or they might be the other way around and begin with experience, and follow with reflection and analysis and then practical experimentation. Either way though, the activity was chosen and led by the facilitators. This includes providing opportunities for micro-teaching, peer teaching, etc. and for other hands-on skill exercises.

- **Letting the trainees facilitate sessions:** Trainees choose or are assigned sessions to explore and facilitate.

- **Trainees participate in the planning of both individual sessions and the whole process of training:** Trainees get to help decide what sessions to have and when to have them. They help make decisions about the practicum and may aid in the planning of it.

- **Trainees get to make decisions about the training day, how it will be structured and what kinds of activities they will undertake to meet objectives they have developed in conjunction with the trainers:** Trainers provide a supporting role as facilitators, or as resource people. In other words, trainees do the kinds of investigation and needs assessment that the trainer did upon arrival and discover for themselves what they need. They then decide how these needs would best be met.

This demonstrates the levels of participation that might occur in a training. My training designs have always for the most part been only at the first level and some of the second. This may be fine and appropriate to the situation. It is just important that we recognize the level of decision-making and responsibility we are really giving the trainees for their own learning. Is it only required that the trainees show up on time and participate in the activities planned for them?

One consideration in this is that trainees may be in no position to take on the responsibility for planning all aspects of their training. They are busy with many things, not the least of which is learning the language. It may be that they are happy to have things planned for them, as long as they feel their opinions and suggestions are validated. What is the responsibility of the trainer after all? Perhaps it is enough that they have the job of learners at this time, and that they welcome the fact that someone is weeding through vast amounts of information for them to present only that which has been deemed most needed.
The time is short and there is much to learn. As trainers we must juggle all of these facts. How much participation is too much? When does it become a burden instead of a boon? How much at the same time is too little? When are we spoon-feeding and not allowing the trainees to develop their critical thinking, information gathering and analysis and self-sufficiency?

Each trainer must gauge these questions with his or her own personality, abilities and philosophy of education. The questions of training versus education come in here. What is the expectation held by the trainees? What kind of experience is appropriate given the needs and the type of training? But we must constantly ask ourselves, to what extent are trainees called upon to take responsibility for their learning? To what extent are they developing the skills needed to negotiate life for themselves once they leave training?

These questions need not require a session dedicated to talking about them, they are questions of process. We must use the process to accomplish as many of these goals as possible--session time is precious and should be reserved for content. It is a complex issue. There are many other factors which figure into these decisions as well as the above considerations:

Number of Trainees
Amount of time available vs. information to be covered
Number of staff
Trainees' expectations
Work in other sectors of training
Structure of training day and overall training design
Resources available for gathering information--at the training site and within the community

Theory vs. Practice
Another question that comes up here, both a content and a process question, is that of theory versus practice. Feedback from trainees always emphasizes that what is necessary is "hands-on" ideas and techniques, "practical" information that they can use. What is meant exactly by "practical" and "hands-on"? Most trainees will find the sessions in which they leave with a bag of techniques to have been the most useful, indeed, "what we have been looking for". But as trainers, we must ask ourselves how useful these techniques are if there is no philosophy of how and when to use them. I felt like there was not enough of this background in training, and that this is of critical importance.
With some exploration, I also discovered that the desire for “practical” may be as much a process as a content issue. Looking over my first training design, in which there was said to be too much theory, I could actually find no theory per se. But looking at which sessions were said to be too theoretical, I did find a pattern. Theory sessions did not necessarily contain theory, but rather, were sessions in which the trainees were told things instead of seeing them and doing them. For example, in a session on “Teaching Reading”, the trainer spent 90% of the session telling the trainees how to teach reading. They talked about it, the trainer answered questions etc., but in fact never demonstrated any methods or allowed the trainees to try them out. This session did not even begin to delve into the theory of teaching reading, it was actually a techniques session in which the trainer had already synthesized the theory into techniques and was presenting them to the trainees. The problem was not in the content being too theoretical, but in the presentation being too teacher-centered.

From this feedback, and from our conception of training as not having to do with theory, I think theory is avoided in training. Yet, as I reflected on my first training, I felt that not only was there not too much theory, there was not enough. The question becomes a philosophical one for the trainer. If PC training is indeed the beginning of two years of professional development for these teachers of TEFL, then what role should training play in that development? Should it lay the foundations for a solid practice? And what are these foundations? Is it enough for them to know the “How tos” if they don’t know the “why tos” behind them? Is our job to provide them with the theoretical underpinnings of the techniques, do we provide just the techniques, or also the methods and approaches from which those techniques come?

To answer this, we might consider the diversity of teaching situations in which the trainees are likely to find themselves. How diverse are the needs of the various students at different levels? Will it be necessary for these teachers to have a broad repertoire of techniques and approaches to choose from in order to meet the needs of their students? When is theory more meaningful, after one has a sense of the practice and can attach the theory to it, or does one need it before one can really begin? Does theory emerge from practice or vice versa?

Then we must also remember time. Of course if we were at the university, that we would include theory would be no question. But these trainees have 100 or so hours to be ready to enter a classroom full of students who don’t speak their language and to teach them
something. Trainees will be resistant to theory in any form during training, this is almost certain. Whether that is due to the perceived pressure of having to teach, a natural aversion to theory, the perception that a training is no place for theory, or any number of other reasons I don’t know.

**Choosing a Participatory Approach**

Choosing participation is already a choice made by the trainers. The trainees may be resistant. What if what they want in sessions in which trainers deliver information? Do you assume this is resistance and insist on the participatory process that you believe in?

**Planning versus Spontaneity**

How much should it look like you have the whole summer planned out, and how much should it seem like things are open and flexible? How much should the whole summer be planned out and how much should be open and flexible? There is both image and reality to contend with here. It would seem that, in order to be deemed a good trainer, everything would be planned and “in control” or at the very least should seem that way even if it isn’t. However, this is somewhat contradictory to the participatory ideals of going with the needs of the group, letting decisions and plans emerge from the participants. Trainees are likely to get nervous if there are no plans, if it appears everything is up to them; after all, they don’t know anything about TEFL teaching, that is why they are here. But if “necessity is indeed the mother of invention”, maybe it is good to let them be nervous, and then have to take charge and do things for themselves if they are going to get what they need. People will move into leadership if they see leadership lacking.

There is care to be taken with either approach. You want to be perceived as competent and knowledgeable. Being in control doesn’t have to mean having everything planned out. It can mean being comfortable with ambiguity, and confident with your and the trainees’ ability to fill in the gaps and make things happen. Letting the trainees panic because they don’t think they will get what they need may backfire; once people believe that you don’t know what you are doing, and take over because they think you are not capable of doing so yourself, you may have lost their respect forever no matter what the grand plan. People are comfortable with different levels of ambiguity; some like to know that things are planned for them, others are perfectly happy with nothing.

It may be however, that you can have a kind of planned spontaneity. Have a vision and ideas. Be honest with the trainees that it is new, or that you are not sure how it is going to
work. Let them know that you are trying something out. Make people feel like they are part of something new and exciting, something innovative. But make it clear that you are in this thing too, that you will guide the process and will be there when and if need be. How you approach this question depends very much on you and your personality and beliefs about education. It also depends on the other resources and constraints of the training. Most important is to have a solid philosophy for whatever you choose, to be honest about it with the trainees right from the start, and to be confident in what you are doing. Lack of confidence is not productive in any strategy.

Evaluation Strategies

This is another area of training for which I was unprepared to deal my first year. It all sounds so simple in the statement of work, in which numerous evaluation tasks are stated. But like supervision, and not unrelated, doing evaluation well is a tricky endeavor. As mentioned above you may or may not have any say in how evaluation takes place in the training as a whole. In my first year, we made decisions about how often to have evaluations, but the format: numerical ratings for the content and facilitation of each session was fixed. It might be seen as a service for the training director to do this for you; it was nice to not have to think about collecting and compiling that information. But I wondered sometimes who it was for? I didn’t always feel like I was getting all of the information I needed, but at the same time wasn’t sure what the training director was doing with the information either. The second year each training component was to conduct it’s own evaluation and just report the result to the training director.

Clarify with the training director and the program staff who wants to know what for what purpose. Then, once you know what your programmatic responsibilities are with regard to evaluation, you and the TEFL staff need to ask the same question for yourselves, “What do we want to know and for what purpose?” Some questions to consider in this:

- How will you evaluate the effectiveness of the program?
- How will you give the trainees ways to give feedback about the program as you go along?
- How will you provide the trainees with feedback about their progress?
- How will you evaluate the trainees in order to provide the program staff with the information they need for their decision making?
- How will you know if the competencies have been achieved(if that was your goal)?
Also think about the issue of evaluation burn-out. Remember that each component has evaluation. Collaborate with them on this. There are many creative ways to collect information, think about how to keep it varied and interesting so that you don’t lose effectiveness just because trainees are bored and tired.

Finally, consider how the process of evaluating might be a learning experience for the trainees, contributing to that goal of modeling “the development process and promoting self-sufficiency, problem analysis, and critical thinking”. How could we do evaluation so that the trainees learn and benefit from the process—either by learning evaluation skills that they can take with them to the field, or by feeling like their insights into themselves or their learning have been enhanced?

Unfortunately, no matter how the evaluation is done, you can be pretty sure of one thing: it will become one of the most complained about areas of training. Trainees usually begin feeling evaluation burn-out by the third week or so, and by the end of training might become outright hostile about it. However, you are damned if you do and damned if you don’t. People will also be acutely aware if they are not given the opportunity to evaluate something, especially if that something is something they don’t like. You can try to change this dynamic, but don’t get attached to the idea that you will. A lot of effort in this area can be disappointing. You might think that what you have done is at least much better than what has been done in the past. But, the trainees don’t know that, and never will. This may be one area where you will just have to be a bit selfish. Know what your needs are and then negotiate with the trainees as best you can about how to get them met in a way most beneficial to them...or which irritates everybody the least.

Practicum/Model School

Training situations vary so greatly that I am hesitant to even address this issue. Every training I have done has had a “model school” experience for its practicum: the creation of a special English school during the summer which provides free English instruction for local students and real classroom experience for the trainees. It may be that this is not the best or only way to provide this kind of experience. It is the only way that I have experience with. If a training occurs while school is still in session, then there may be other opportunities such as mentor teachers, internships, and practice teaching as we
conduct it here in the states. A few consideration about practicum are relevant for either situation:

- When will it occur during the training period?
- How long should it be?
- Who will supervise them and how?

**When?**

This question will need to be decided by the whole training staff because it will affect the activities of the other sectors. Indeed, this fact may be the biggest constraint in deciding what kind of experience to provide and when to provide it. This will depend on the level of component integration of the overall training model, but will in any case be a full staff decision. The question of when has been answered in as many ways as one can imagine.

Typically, the practicum is used as the culmination experience, a chance to integrate and try out all of the methods learned throughout the training. It is then held in the last two or three weeks of training. Other times, it is used in the middle, a chance to try out some teaching and then return to training with a better sense of what needs to be learned. It can also happen in the beginning and end or middle of training, providing first an opportunity for the trainees to “get their feet wet” in teaching TEFL so that they can better identify with the methods and techniques, have a clear sense of their needs in teaching TEFL and can gauge their own progress. Then they get to try it again at the end, after getting some more information and structured practice.

I’ve tried it all together and have tried a split model in the second half of training. This split model gave a week and a half between the two experiences with the hope that they would have some time to reflect on the first and spend more time planning and seeking out relevant information for the second. There is no definitive word about the best time to have a practicum; just let yourself be creative with the possibilities. Some constraints to consider will be the availability of resource teachers and students and if splitting, the task of organizing the students two times.

**How Long?**

Again, there are as many possibilities as there are Peace Corps training designs. Typically they seem to be two to three weeks, but this will depend on the length of the overall training and the other training events. It will also depend on how many hours per day the
teachers will be teaching. Do you want many teaching hours per day for a short period of
time, or one or two teaching hours per day over a longer period of time?

**Supervision**

This is perhaps the most important part of the practicum and the part which is also easiest to
overlook, especially if one does not come from a teacher training background. In my first
year, I just basically did what the trainers in the past had done, with very little thought as to
why. I thought supervision was about having a good form for the resource teachers to fill
out during their observations. This was as far as my decision-making went. I spent my
next year at graduate school exploring models of supervision and found that, while I was
basically doing all the right things, there were many more questions to ask myself about
what I was doing and why.

You will confront this issue early in your planning, before the training even begins. As
mentioned above in “TEFL staff”, you need to decide if you are going to use resource
teachers during the practicum, how many resource teachers you will need and for how long
at the beginning, so that you know what resources you have left for other TEFL staff.

**How many resource teachers per trainee? 1:1, 1:2, 1:3, 1:4?**

To decide, you may need to map out how many teaching hours there are per day
throughout the practicum (or if they are in internships, how many different schools, how
far apart, etc.). Logistically, in order to have each trainee observed even twice, you may
find you need a certain number of teachers.

Beyond logistics, there are several other important considerations about the work that the
resource teachers will be doing:

- How will they work with the teachers?
- Do you envision the resource teachers working with the trainees on lesson planning?

The next three sections relate to this decision of how many resource teachers will be
needed, in addition to being entire areas for consideration on their own.
A Story from my Experience

After working for one week with the clinical supervision model (see next section for more details), and with a rather passive approach to lesson planning assistance (help was available, trainees just had to ask for it), we discovered that most of the problems in the classroom were in the fundamentals of the lesson planning rather than in the implementation. As this group was all certified teachers, the lesson would go very smoothly, everything looked great, but the observer was left wondering, “why was he or she teaching that?”, “What did the students really learn?” The problems were less in the classroom, than in what happened before they entered the classroom.

For our second two weeks we tried to set it up so that the resource teachers spent more time with each trainee on lesson planning. This was extremely helpful to some, but others complained of feeling smothered. The smothered feeling may have had to do with the way the assistance was provided and the extent to which they felt the assistance was helpful as much as the fact that it existed (see who to hire below).

Reflections from my Experience

But the big question here for any teacher trainer is when to help and when to just let new teachers discover things for themselves. When is help helpful, and when is it controlling? In this practicum experience we have the disadvantage of time. In a five month period of practice teaching, some fundamental principles of planning and teaching a given subject can emerge through a slow discovery process. We don’t have that luxury. There is no “right” way to teach TEFL, and each teacher should try to be as creative as possible in their teaching, but to what extent do we intervene to make sure that trainees are clear on the fundamentals, the basic concepts? If these are the competencies we have outlined, and the ideas we have been trying to teach, then are we not obliged to point out to the trainees when this is happening and when it is not? Do we not do them a disservice if we allow them to leave training with misconceptions about the fundamental practices of TEFL teaching? At the same time, this is only the beginning of their two years of professional development, at what point do we have to let go and allow them to experiment on their own?

Observations

How many observations do you want to have over the course of the practicum? How do you make sure to provide appropriate assistance and yet don’t make people feel smothered? In thinking about this, consider what the observations are for. It may be that different observations serve different purposes and you will want to have a certain amount of each
kind. Resource teacher observations should serve the purpose of assisting the trainees in examining their practice as teachers, in providing for them "another set of eyes". This person will know their lesson plans and will be working closely with them. Many other people may request observations for a variety of purposes:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>You, the TEFL Coordinator</td>
<td>Assistance with techniques/Evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Training Director</td>
<td>Assessment of overall training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The APCD</td>
<td>Evaluation of trainees classroom strengths/weaknesses for purposes of site placement and just future reference/assistance with techniques</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Programming and Training Officer</td>
<td>Assessment of TEFL program and trainee progress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Country Director</td>
<td>Assessment of overall training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other TEFL trainees (peer observations)</td>
<td>To observe other classroom styles, exposure to different student ages and levels, teaching techniques, support, and assistance with methods and techniques</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trainees from other components</td>
<td>To appreciate what the other sectors do, to see a classroom because their jobs may also involve teaching or working with students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language Teachers</td>
<td>See new methods and techniques. To use experiences for language class</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is important to find out who wants to observe and why. My first year, I planned observations based on only myself and the resource teachers. Everything was fine. Then, I found out that all of these other people wanted to come as well. Pretty soon classrooms had someone visiting every day, sometimes two or more people at a time. The trainees felt inundated with observations, and ultimately distracted from their goal of teaching.

Aside from the resource teachers, the other observations are not necessarily for the purpose of "helping" the trainee with his or her teaching. It may be partly that, but there is also some other purpose. Be clear about this with the trainees; if an observation is evaluative, don't pretend it isn't. The APCD may be very informal about the visits, and might offer suggestions in the same way as the resource teacher does, but the APCD will use the information from the observation for other purposes. The same goes for you. You will probably give feedback to the trainees after your observations, but you are also collecting
information for other purposes: assessment of effectiveness of program, assessment of trainee progress toward competencies, assessment of strengths and weaknesses for site placement purposes. By being up front about this, you can structure it so that it is both honest and non-threatening.

You may not know who is coming when until the day they arrive, but you can find out what people’s plans and expectations are. Once you have a sense of these visits, you can map out logistics. Then, (and this is not relegated to secondary importance, if you deem it important for the resource teacher to be there every day, then they should be there every day no matter who else is visiting) decide on a program of observation for the resource teachers. Some considerations:

**How Often?**: Every lesson? Once a day? Twice a week?

**What to Observe?**: A whole unit in its entirety? Or just random lessons? Lessons chosen by the trainees to have observed? Or lessons chosen by the resource teacher or the program (sometimes trainees will asked to be observed on days when the focus is not on them, but rather on the students such as presentations or role plays)?

**Supervision Model**

What model will you use for the observations? Will there be a pre- and post- conference with each observation? How extensive will this be? What kind of documentation will the resource teachers have to provide to the trainees? To you?

There are many models for teacher supervision. We used our own blend of "Clinical Supervision" and "Cognitive Coaching". (Please see Appendix 2 for a detailed description of Clinical Supervision, and Appendix 3 for a description of Cognitive Coaching). Our model included a pre-conference in which the teacher identified areas of the lesson for the observer to examine. The two together then determined a strategy for collecting information about that area, keeping it as objective as possible. The observer served as a collector of data rather than a judger of technique and methods. This meeting was followed by the observation and a post observation conference. In this conference, the observer presented the data to the teacher and allowed him or her to analyze it and then make conclusions about what to work on. The observer served as a guide for this process.

One of the reasons I liked this model is because it encourages the teachers to examine their own practice and not just rely on the judgments of the observer. It develops analytical and
hopefuly, critical thinking skills as the teachers have to determine their needs and then reflect on data to analyze their own teaching. Once out in the field, these teachers are usually very much on their own, still fledglings at TEFL, but having to rely on themselves and their students to hone their practice. Thus it was hoped that this process would help the teachers develop ways to gather information and think critically about their own practice. In addition, the non-threatening nature of the process also makes it something that might be applicable to the trainees and their future HCN colleagues. It might provide a way for them to encourage observations and thereby share methods and techniques.

Some of the trainees liked this method, others did not. Many wanted to just be told what was good and what was bad. Their feeling was that they didn’t know enough about TEFL teaching in order to determine what to look for or to analyze their problem areas. While I chalked some of this up to resistance, I also recognized the need for guidance at this early stage. One of the things to remember is that this model is about being attentive to the differing needs of teachers as adult learners in varied stages of development (Glatthorn, 1991). I think I was a bit too rigid about the use of one model in the same way with everyone.

A part of the mistake was overemphasizing the need for the resource teachers to be objective data collectors thereby ignoring the valuable knowledge that these “experienced”, “expert” resource teachers had to offer. To avoid confusion with the old judge and critique models, I ended up putting the resource teachers in the position of being more like peer coaches which assumes an equal level of expertise and experience on the part of the two teachers involved. It is understood by both parties that this is the arrangement, and is usually initiated by the person being observed. Cognitive Coaching has a variety of arrangements, from peer to expert/mentor (Bunker, 1995). We chose the pure peer model, when it was probably more appropriate to view it as the expert or mentor model. The trainees are still learning a new skill, they are not just honing skills they already have. And the resource teachers are a valuable resource willing to give them advice and guidance; something they will most likely not have access too out in the field.

Assess the position of the trainees and the expertise of the resource teachers. Try to encourage and find that delicate balance of allowing for self analysis and autonomy and yet providing valuable insights and assistance when it is needed.
Also remember that if you plan to use a model which includes pre and post conferences then this must be planned into the TEFL day, and counted in the amount of work for resource teachers.

**Meetings and Training**
Do you plan to have meetings with the resource teachers and the TEFL staff regularly? To do any of the above, an extensive training of the resource teachers will be needed. These methods may be completely unfamiliar to all of the resource teachers. Thus, in addition to orienting them to the goals of the Peace Corps and of this TEFL program, you must spend time discussing and practicing the model. Be sure that everyone feels comfortable with the position they are about to undertake. In addition to an initial training, the resource teachers may also want some time set aside to meet and discuss their work. I found it extremely valuable to spend time sharing experiences, checking up on progress, helping each other with problem/difficult situations, and discussing how we need to adapt and change our practice. That you will and must meet is really not even a question. But do think about when you will meet and how often.

**Audio & Videotaping**
Will audio/videotaping be available? If so, who will do this? Obviously the videotape is the best source of data collection you have. Decide how and when to videotape everybody, who will do the videotaping and who will watch the videotape with the teachers and when. Remember that watching takes extra time and space.

All of the above are important details about the practicum for their obvious reasons, but also because of their impact on time and staffing needs. Think through all of these things carefully as you plan your Model School.

**Hiring Resource Teachers**
This is something I have never done satisfactorily. The resource teacher may very well be the most important job on the TEFL staff. These people must not only have good, solid teaching skills, they must also have confidence in these skills, be able to give feedback well, and have incredible interpersonal skills so as to be able to assess the needs of each trainee.
**Host Country Nationals**

If these people are host country nationals, they must also have good English, confidence in working with Americans, and an ability to handle cross-cultural situations. Having host country national teachers is invaluable; they provide trainees with the opportunity to work alongside HCNs as they will their future colleagues, and allow them to see that these teachers have a wealth of experience and expertise from which they can draw. Having no host country national resource teachers would send a very clear message to the trainees about how English teachers in country are viewed, and would deprive them of the most valuable cross-cultural experience they might have during training.

Finding teachers who employ a broad range of techniques, and who have the confidence in their teaching to critique and offer suggestions to native speakers of English is the tricky part. Naturally, many teachers, no matter how competent, are nervous and shy about telling a native speaker how to teach English. There is an assumption that Americans know how to teach English because we are native speakers. One of the great joys is watching the HCN teachers discover that we don’t! In Bulgaria there was also a balance to be sought in finding people who would not be taken away with the American’s friendly, glitzy style, unable to see the teaching or lack thereof that lay beneath, and teachers who would not insist on a teacher centered, teacher-controlled model because that is what they know, not allowing for the Americans to employ their creativity. In my two experiences I found the first to be a much greater problem than the latter.

**Using PCVs**

Sometimes it seems easier to use Americans, especially because they already know the Peace Corps, the training routine and the TEFL philosophy typically advocated. Trainees often initially find these people to be “better”, but often this is mostly just because it is easier. The Americans have a communication style we understand and can use English in the careful and subtle manner often required for this kind of sensitive feedback. However, these people are not necessary better. Check first their TEFL skills and experience. They may be new to this subject themselves and may have only their last year’s training and a year of teaching under their belt. They may be great TEFL teachers, but they might also still be learning, and may be employing bad habits developed in their year out on their own. The APCD should be able to help identify good candidates.

These people also must be extremely mature. One of the problems with having them in this position is that they cross into the world of staff in which there are certain issues of
confidentiality and professionalism. They will spend a year with these people as peers. Putting them in a supervisory position at this time, may present some awkward and difficult situations. Make sure you are dealing with people who understand and can handle this.

Other staff members as Resource Teachers
It may seem reasonable that other members of the staff—training director, cross-cultural coordinator, language teachers—double as resource teachers during model school. Be careful with these arrangements. Think about the time and work commitment that you expect from the resource teacher. Is it a 3/4 time to full time job? If so, be realistic about these people having two full time jobs, the second of which is not their priority. Will they be available? Better perhaps to have fewer resource teachers working full time, than to have a lot of people who can only commit some of their time and that sporadically. Best to count yourself out as a resource teacher as well. Remember that for you it would also be a full time job, not in place of, but in addition to the one you already have.

You will need to develop a statement of work for this position and then may want to conduct interviews if you find the time. Indeed that is the problem. This is all well and good, but in the end, you might hire people just because they are available in a critical moment.

Cultural Perspectives

As Peace Corps moves to more integrated training approaches, culture will surely be a more integral part of every component. But we should all check in with ourselves and with our training strategy. We must take a look at our own cultural baggage, and we must then look at our training strategy to make sure that it is constantly helping the trainees look at theirs. Some questions I struggled with:

- What are my cultural assumptions and biases about education? teaching? teaching TEFL?
- What are the best ways to get trainees to look at their assumptions?
- How to emphasize that TEFL is being done in the host country, that we are not here to show them how to teach, without making them feel like they have no role?
The best way for me to examine my assumptions about education was to work with and train a HCN co-coordinator. This was perhaps the most rewarding and eye-opening experience of my TEFL career. I had lived and taught in Bulgaria for two and a half years; I figured I had a pretty good handle on how things are done, differences in our education styles, etc. To my surprise (and perhaps embarrassment), I discovered that I had only scratched the surface of understanding. In trying to come to agreement about how to approach something, we argued, and I felt myself getting resistant and controlling. With time, we both began to realize that we were learning about each other’s cultures both by the content of our discussions and by the nature of our interactions. I learned from both what Ani was trying to tell me, and her process for conveying that information. Her frank questions about my ideas and approaches startled and put me on the defensive, but forced me to look more carefully than ever about what I was doing and why. It was frustrating at times and extremely time consuming, but I learned more about Bulgarian culture and education that summer than I did in my whole two years as a PCV. I also gained a close personal and professional friend.

The trainees also benefited from our interaction. Every aspect of the training had been examined from both cultural perspectives. We were able to present the nuances of Bulgarian education and learning in ways that they were able to understand. **Having Bulgarian trainers and resources teachers is perhaps the best way to help trainees confront their assumptions and biases.** It is not always the easiest way for them. There is often frustration at first with a different presentation style, a different way of interacting and communicating, and language that is not always so easy to understand. They may not recognize these feelings as being cultural.

**Field visits, observations of classes, interviews with students and working alongside a HCN colleague to produce some product** are all good ways to stimulate cultural awareness. It is important to follow these activities with discussion and processing, or trainees may be left with negative attitudes toward the experience rather than a recognition of their cultural biases. You don’t want them to leave the experience with just their frustrations or with fresh stereotypes in place.

In my training, we went to observe a Bulgarian teacher of English, and although the assignment was to write down the TEFL techniques the teacher used, many journals came back with a list of all the things the teacher did not do, all of the things that made her an
outrageously bad teacher by American standards. Each statement represented an assumption about what good teaching is. We spent almost two hours processing this experience, with only moderate success. This is powerful stuff. It challenges people’s belief systems and everything that they just spent four years in school learning.

Ask and Thou Shalt do it Yourself: Avoiding the Service Model

You want to be there for the trainees. You want to be helpful and after all, you are getting paid to get their needs met. The first Peace Corps dictum of professional behavior is, “The effective Trainer puts the need for trainees to learn above his own needs”. But the trainees need to learn to do it themselves, and this comes above our need to help them out. Like with everything, there is a fine line between listening to and responding to needs and being paternalistic. Our enthusiasm for being responsive to feedback may lead us to fall into what I call the “service model trap”. Trainees get a sense that they are helpless and that the training staff is “at their service”. They need only to ask for something and we will scramble around to provide it for them. When confronted with needs and requests ask yourself some basic questions:

- Is this request appropriate in this cultural context? As a PCV?
- Could the trainee do this herself?
- Would the trainee learn something by doing it herself?
- Is this something the trainee will have to do on his or her own out at site?

Closing

Peace Corps Training is a great adventure and, because of the many unique elements, provides an excellent opportunity for learning. It can be frustrating and tedious at times, and most everyone involved will be anxious for it to be over while it is happening. At times, you will wonder why in the world you are doing this. But in the end, hopefully you will feel you have learned and grown, and been rewarded by seeing how much the trainees have changed and developed over the course of nine, ten, eleven, or twelve weeks. Enjoy, be yourself, and good luck!
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Peace Corps training goals

Even though training for Volunteer assignments varies greatly according to project need, there are common goals which weave through every training program and event. Those common goals, which were developed by Peace Corps trainers, are listed below.

1. To provide Volunteers and trainees with basic technical, cross-cultural/community, language, and personal health and safety skills that allow them to serve effectively as they live and work productively and positively with host country people.

2. To model an approach to development by providing training that encourages critical thinking, creative problem solving, information gathering and analysis, flexibility, patience, professionalism, and self-sufficiency.

3. To develop in Volunteers strong skills which allow them to function effectively to help others define and solve problems.

4. To help Volunteers understand the development process, including the involvement of women in this process.

5. To demonstrate the value and methods of sharing knowledge.

6. To enhance Volunteers' understanding of how to develop counterpart/coworker relationships.

7. To increase Volunteers' knowledge and understanding of the Peace Corps Mission as well as general Peace Corps and country-specific policies.

8. To provide Volunteers with ways to manage the communication process effectively by utilizing listening skills, feedback, and non-verbal communication.

9. To provide Volunteers with effective skills for making a transition to a new culture using observation, information gathering, and validation, as well as others' assumptions as they relate to technical work.

10. To provide Volunteers with skills that enable them to manage loneliness, isolation, and stress effectively while also understanding basic nutrition, hygiene, and personal health and safety.
11. To assist Volunteers in understanding their technical assignment and in developing the skills necessary to perform their jobs.

12. To provide trainees with a clear understanding of what is expected of them as Volunteers; enabling them to set personal and professional goals and to measure their progress in achieving these goals.

13. To assist Volunteers at the close of their service by facilitating their re-entry into the United States.

14. To expose Volunteers to the realities of being a Volunteer.

15. To develop in trainees an awareness of characteristics that will help them to live and work effectively.
Peace Corps training philosophy

What are the underlying philosophical assumptions to every Peace Corps training program? No matter what Peace Corps training document you refer to, you are likely to find the common assumptions which are summarized below.

- Training efforts must be collaborative.
- Training activities must be integrated with each other and with project planning efforts.
- Training is an ongoing effort beginning with placement and ending with close of service.
- Training consists of four major components – technical, cross-cultural/community, language, and personal health and safety.
- Volunteers must be trained in specific competencies to develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes required by the project.
- Training efforts are based on the principles of experiential, adult learning.
- Training efforts are based on goals which apply to each training program and event.

The sum of these statements represents the philosophy of Peace Corps training. As you develop PSTs, conduct evaluations of training programs, or complete any training-related task, incorporate this philosophy into your work. Peace Corps Volunteers deserve our best combined efforts to prepare them for their jobs.
One of the skills a teacher trainer needs is the ability to supervise teachers effectively. This includes working closely with the teacher to determine areas for improvement, the ability to observe accurately and effectively, and the ability to provide constructive support to teachers as they try to use their new-found skills. The method of clinical supervision and the techniques outlined here can be adapted according to the needs of the supervisors and the cultural constraints of the host country. Time constraints may prevent every phase of the model from being followed exactly.

Clinical Supervision

Clinical supervision is a method of supervision where the supervisor is involved with the teacher in a close, "helping" relationship. Ideas are shared and help is given in order to improve the teacher's ability through the analysis of objective data that is collected during the observation. Various techniques used to collect this data will be discussed in the next part of this section.

The most notable difference between the clinical supervision model and other more traditional models of teacher supervision is that the supervisor and the teacher discuss and agree upon the focus for the observation. For example, if the focus of the observation is to be teacher-student interaction and the supervisor notes that "out of a class of 45 students, only six were called on by the teacher to respond to questions", the supervisor and teacher have specific and mutually desired data to discuss. This then forms the basis for a cooperative relationship in which the supervisor helps the teacher to develop strategies for improving his/her performance in future lessons. In addition, the clinical supervision model reduces much of the anxiety usually associated with classroom observation by a supervisor. If the objectives are clearly stated before the observation and the method of data collection is discussed during this pre-observation period, there are no secrets about what the supervisor is doing while the teacher is teaching.

The clinical supervision model is based on several assumptions:

- Teaching is not random but is characterized by regularity in style and approach.

The pedagogical skills used by the teacher can be classified and studied.

If the teacher is conscious of his/her behavior, the learning environment is greatly improved as is the teacher's overall instructional ability.

Through careful and systematic observation, analysis and dialogue with a supervisor, effective teaching can be reinforced.

The Clinical Supervision Model is based on the participation of two people – the teacher and the supervisor. It consists of four phases which can be modified according to the needs of the teacher and the supervisor. The stages, which are described briefly below, are:

1. Pre-observation conference
2. Classroom observation
3. Analysis and strategy session
4. Post-observation conference

When used properly this model not only creates a feeling of trust and common purpose between supervisor and teacher, but builds skills in teachers which, in turn, allows them to monitor their own classroom behaviors and that of fellow teachers.

It is important to note that this model of supervision is quite different from what is usually considered to be "supervision" by teachers and supervisors. The model is sufficiently different that it may not be easily, if ever, accepted in your school or institution. Furthermore, some components may not fit the cultural setting in which you find yourself. You may experience some resistance to this model initially. Often, however, as teachers become more familiar with the rationale behind the model and see results from the use of clinical supervision, their resistance decreases. The supervisor should be sensitive to the traditional way supervision is handled at the school and plan carefully when introducing the model. The model suggested here should never be employed unless both the teacher and the supervisor understand its use and agree that the data collected from the observation will help the teacher become more effective in the classroom. In extreme cases, the supervisor may want to move slowly from a more traditional supervision model which utilizes feedback and critiquing (see Chapter 3, Collaboration Skills) into the many staged, teacher-centered clinical supervision model.
1. Pre-observation Conference

Goals:

a) To establish real two-way communication.

b) To discuss and agree on an objective of supervision cycle.

c) To discuss and agree on what is expected of the supervisor and the teacher during the supervision.

Real two-way communication means that each person involved in the interaction has a sincere desire to listen to and understand the other. A genuine feeling of trust must exist between the supervisor and the teacher to make the supervision cycle productive. It is important for the supervisor and the teacher to realize that a single observation will not improve every aspect of the teacher's class. The supervisor should limit the focus of her/his observation to one objective and not focus on every aspect of the class. The objective of the supervision should be determined by the teacher in dialogue with the supervisor. The supervisor's role is to help the teacher clarify the objectives that would improve the learning environment. By creating a feeling of trust, listening and asking the right questions, the supervisor can help make the objectives useful to the teacher. If the teacher can formulate the objectives of the supervision, feedback is much more useful for the teacher and will probably be more readily incorporated in her/his teaching style.

The method of collecting useful data is also discussed and determined during this conference. For a discussion of specific aspects of the class that can be observed and techniques for collecting useful data see the next part of this section: Observation.

2. Classroom Observation

The supervisor observes the lesson and collects the agreed upon data. The supervisor should try to avoid value judgments. Again, it is very difficult to work on all aspects of teaching at once, so if the supervisor can focus on the limited objectives agreed upon and collect data that the teacher feels are useful, chances for improving the teacher's teaching are greatly enhanced.

It must be mentioned here that the supervisor should never interrupt a lesson to correct a teacher. There is a tendency, when observing a teacher who is conveying incorrect material to offer the correct information to the students. This action only serves to discredit the teacher and destroy any bond of trust that has been established during the pre-conference phase. Instead, the supervisor should note the incorrect information and bring it to the attention of the teacher only during the post-observation conference.
3. Analysis and Strategy Session

This may be just a brief period after the observation when the supervisor reflects on the class and decides how to approach the next phase with the teacher. If the supervisor is prepared and has had time to organize the data (even if just briefly) the next phase will go much more smoothly. The supervisor should use this time to think about how best the data can be used by the teacher.

4. Post-observation Session

This is the time when the teacher and the supervisor meet alone to discuss the observation and the analysis of data relative to the teacher's objectives. If the data is collected and presented in a clear fashion, the teacher will be more likely to use the data and evaluate his/her teaching and classroom performance. It is important to try to elicit the feedback directly from what the teacher sees from the data. This is accomplished only after a feeling of trust and communication has been established. The supervisor should:

a) Ask the teacher to analyze the data and tell the supervisor about the lesson. (Rather than having the teacher sit passively by while the supervisor tells the teacher about the lesson).

b) Ask questions to focus the teacher on certain aspects of the lesson. (Since it may not always be possible for a teacher to successfully evaluate his/her own teaching, there may be occasions where the supervisor needs to be more directive - see Collaboration Skills for a detailed discussion of giving and receiving feedback and critiquing. In general, every effort should be taken to elicit the analysis of the data from the teacher).

c) Discuss ways to improve the lesson and whether the focus of the next observation is going to remain on the already agreed upon objective. (This part of the meeting can serve as a part of the next pre-observation conference).

d) Request feedback from the teacher as to how effective the supervision cycle has been and how to improve the next supervision cycle.

Team approaches using these same basic steps have been used quite successfully. If a team approach is tried, it is recommended that one team member act as the team leader (supervisor) who initiates and maintains contact with the teacher being supervised. The team approach is particularly useful in the strategy session to paint a more complete picture of the observation data and strategies for improvement. If appropriate, the team members can also observe the class and collect the data but care must be taken not to overwhelm the teacher or upset the
learning environment of the class by having too many supervisors/observers in the room.

Observation

As mentioned in the previous section, one of the objectives of the pre-observation conference is to focus the supervisory observation on observable behavior. The teacher may have few ideas on what can be observed in the classroom to gain useful insights into her/his teaching practices.

Examples of observable behavior are listed below. This is in no way a complete list and discussion of observable behavior that would add to this list presented would be a valuable component to an in-service teacher workshop.

- Type of reinforcement used by the teacher. (positive/negative, verbal/nonverbal).
- Teacher movement in the class.
- Teacher's ability to redirect questions when wrong answer is given.
- Amount of teacher talk and student talk.
- Type of questions used by the teacher.
- Clear introduction of the lesson with review of previous lesson.
- Summary of the lesson.
- Student learning styles/Teachers ability to address different learning styles.

Observation Techniques

Listed below are several basic approaches to and techniques for the collection of data. Where indicated, sample observation forms have been included in the Appendix of this Manual so that supervisors can use a standardized form for their observation.

1. The Anthropological Approach: In this approach, the observer examines various "artifacts" or situations at the school or in the classroom and discusses inferences to be drawn with the teacher.
Example:

OBSERVATION: Students are not doing homework that is assigned.

Inference: Students have no time because of chores at home.

Inference: Students can not do the homework due to difficulty with concept or poor explanation.

Inference: Teacher does not reward students when they do homework.

Inference: Teacher has not clearly developed a policy when students do not do homework.

Inference: Homework is not relevant to skills covered in class.

After a brainstorming session between the teacher and supervisor, the observation is discussed. During the course of the classroom visit several observations, similar to the one mentioned above, are made and discussed. This is an excellent way to decide objectives for future observations.

2. Behavior Frequency Approach: The observer counts the number of times a specific behavior is displayed and records it in a predetermined category. This can be a behavior of the teacher or students. Some examples:

- Count the number of questions asked by the teacher and classify them according to type of question.
- Count the positive and negative comments made by the teacher.
- Count and classify the type of responses made by students.
- Identify which students answer questions and participate in discussions and to what extent.
- Note how long a teacher waits for an answer and if this varies between high-achieving students and low-achieving students.

3. Time sampling: Probably one of the best known time sampling methods is the Flander's Interaction Analysis in which the observer periodically (every 5 seconds) lists what type of interaction is taking place (a copy of this form has been included in the Appendix). After the agreed upon period is complete, the observer counts up the type of interactions and calculates a percentage. Although the techniques have been used with great success, the observer must understand and memorize classification codes for each of the types of interaction in order to use the chart efficiently.

4. Verbatim Recording: This method involves a considerable amount of writing on the part of the observer who records every word spoken by both teacher and students during the observation. Unless the supervisor knows shorthand or speedwriting, this technique can be very
time consuming and not very worthwhile when discussing the lesson. This method might be used periodically during the observation of language classes where, occasionally, it is the verbatim episode that is of most interest to both teacher and supervisor.

5. Classroom Mapping: This approach is useful for observing teacher movements in the classroom. Before the observation period, the observer draws a map of the classroom — including where she/he would sit. During the observation period (every three minutes or so) the observer places a circle on the map to coincide with the teacher's position in the classroom. The circles are numbered sequentially and an arrow(s) drawn from each circle pointing to the group or groups of students where the teacher's attention was directed while the teacher was in that particular position.

This technique can also be used to map which students are participating in the class. A very simple way to map class participation is to, having created a blank map, mark each box representing a student who participates in the class. If desired, a more detailed number code could be used to represent the type of participation. For example:

1: Student reads out loud.
2: Student asks question.
3: Student answers question. (called on by teacher)
4: Student answers question. (voluntarily answers)
5: Student makes statement relating to lesson.
6: Student does not know answer to question when asked.
6. Interview Approach: This approach involves the collection of potentially valuable feedback for the teacher by having the observer interview all those people who know or interact with that teacher professionally. The supervisor can directly ask students, other teachers, the principal or the teacher about specific lessons, interaction and teaching skills, etc.

Data Collection

If the supervisor has access to a videotape recorder or an ordinary tape recorder, objective information can be collected by making a videotape or audiotape of the class. This technique for collecting data has the advantage of allowing the teacher to view, objectively, his/her own performance. It should be stressed, however, that the supervisor should not feel tied to this technology. Many methods exist for collecting valuable and objective information for discussion and improvement. It is up to the supervisor to choose the appropriate means of collecting the desired data.

In choosing the observation technique to be used, the supervisor or observer and teacher should keep the following questions in mind:

1. Will the data collected provide the teacher with helpful information?

2. Are both the technique and data type chosen compatible with the objective of the observation discussed in the pre-observation conference?

3. Can the system be used comfortably by the observer?

The ultimate goal of any supervision program should be to have teachers become self-supervised. For this to occur teachers must be
provided with as much concrete, specific, and non-evaluative data as possible so that they are in a position to evaluate their own performance in relation to the predetermined objectives. Teachers are then in a position to determine where changes might take place. All of this must be done with the help of the supervisor, not by the supervisor.

ACTIVITY BOX

1. Think of a time when you have been observed and given feedback. How did you feel? How were you approached? What did you like/dislike about the way the observation was conducted? Re-examine this experience with respect to the Clinical Supervision Model and consider what your experience would have been like under this model.

2. Consider how you would introduce the concept of clinical supervision to a group that is:
   a. Resistant to it (making a slow or partial transition to it).
   b. Unsure of it (making a slow or partial transition to it).
   c. Interested in it (introducing the complete, perhaps adapted model).

3. Think of ways in which data can be collected to identify each of the observable behaviors listed at the beginning of the Observation subsection.

References:


COGNITIVE COACHING: A STRATEGY FOR REFLECTIVE TEACHING

by
Arthur L. Costa and Robert Garmston
Emeritus Professors of Education, Emeritii
California State University, Sacramento
and
Co-Directors,
Institute for Intelligent Behavior

Cognitive Coaching is a marriage of the professional experiences of Art Costa and Bob Garmston. Art had been working with a supervision model long before we came together in the early 1980's. Art's background was in cognition and intellectual development, having studied with Jean Piaget, Jerome Bruner, Hilda Taba, J. Richard Suchman, Reuven Feuerstein, and others. Bob's background was parallel, having also been influenced by Suchman, and by Caleb Gattegno, Fritz Perls, Carl Rogers, Abraham Maslow and, most recently, John Grinder. Cognitive Coaching is a blend of our two perspectives.

ASSUMPTIONS

Cognitive Coaching is based upon some fundamental beliefs about teaching and human growth and learning. We believe that all human beings are capable of change, that we continue to grow cognitively throughout our lifetime, and that we all possess a vast reservoir of untapped potential.

We believe that teaching cannot be reduced to a formula or a recipe. There is an enormous amount of information today about specific instructional behaviors which produce certain student learnings. In such process-product research studies, however, there were always certain "outlier" teachers who did not use these behaviors but obtained good results in student learning. Still other teachers who DID use all the behaviors produced poor results. Thus, while we have knowledge about teaching, we do not have certainty about teaching.

Another fundamental assumption is that a teacher's observable classroom performance is based upon internal, invisible skills—thought processes that drive the overt skills of teaching (Joyce and Showers, 1988). We subscribe to Shavelson's (1973) proposition that the basic teaching behavior is decision making, and we build our assumptions on the research of Peterson and Clarke (1986), who describe a four-phase cycle of instructional decision making in which teachers engage before, during, and after classroom instruction. The first phase comprises all the thought processes which teachers perform prior to classroom instruction—the planning phase. The second includes those mental functions performed during the teaching act—the interactive phase. The third is the reflective phase in which teachers look back to compare, analyze, and evaluate the decisions that were made during the planning and teaching phases. Finally, there is an application phase in which teachers abstract from what has been learned during their own critical self-reflection and then project those learnings to future lessons. They then cycle back to the planning phase.
Towards cognitive autonomy we facilitate coach's and teacher's construction of a mental map: a protocol of specific objectives for the planning and the reflective conferences. Once the coach and the colleague have internalized that map, they can be totally present with each other. Coaches can then use their relationship skills, knowing that trust and rapport in the relationship is paramount if their colleague is to be able to think. As a result of cognitive coaching over time, our intent is to develop their colleague's ability to self-monitor, to self-analyze, and to self-evaluate. Indeed, the ultimate purpose of Cognitive Coaching is to modify another person's capacities to modify themselves.

**COACHING COMPETENCIES**

To accomplish these goals, five non-judgmental mediational competencies of the coach are required. The coach must remain non-judgmental throughout the coaching process so that people can think without fear of being judged. When people feel judged, their thinking shuts down.

The first ability is posing carefully constructed questions intended to challenge their partner's intellect. The second process is paraphrasing. According to Carl Rogers, the paraphrase is probably the single most important communication tool and yet the most underused. Paraphrasing communicates that "I am attempting to understand you, therefore I value you." Because it conveys such powerful empathy, its use permits deep and tenacious probing.

The third is the skill of probing for specificity, clarity, elaboration, and precision: "Which students specifically?" or "What criteria will you be using to assess the accuracy of student responses?" or "What else were you considering when you reorganized the assignment," for example. Probing invites and promotes deeper, more detailed thinking that results in greater consciousness and more analytical, productive decision making.

The fourth skill is using silence. As we know, wait time has been found by Mary Budd Rowe (1986) and others to be a significant linguistic tool leading to more creative and reflective thinking.

A fifth competency is that of collecting data and presenting it objectively. Skillful coaches assist the teacher in designing strategies for data collection, or they draw from their own repertoire of data gathering techniques relevant to the teacher. The coach and teacher can then examine the data in a literal and non-judgmental way (Costa, D’Arcangelo, Garmston & Zimmerman, 1988).

Thus, the cognitive coaching process is much like a Socratic dialogue. The better thinkers coaches are, the more capable they are of producing and stimulating thinking in others.

**THE COGNITIVE COACHING PROCESS**

Cognitive Coaching is a model used for supervision or peer coaching. It is equally appropriate for educators and others who are serving as mentors or peer coaches: anyone in a helping relationship. It is NOT evaluative. As a supervisory process, it is very close to the original clinical supervision model developed by Anderson and Goldhammer (1969) and Cogan (1973). Their intent, which has been distorted in some recent "clinical supervision" models, was to provide a collegial relationship that supports teachers in becoming critically self-reflective about their work. We have simply overlayed their process with a "cognitive," developmental dimension.
Cognitive Coaching includes a planning conference, a lesson observation, and a reflective conference. Thus, the format of the coach's role is compatible with the four phases of thought that effective competent, thoughtful problem solvers perform.

We attach great importance to the planning conference. Without it, teachers are more likely to be anxious about the observation, and coaches will lack the teacher's valuable guidance for their data collection. A second, more compelling reason for the planning conference is that we believe planning is the most important of all the instructional thought processes. The quality of the plan affects the quality of all that follows. One critical mental process during planning is to mental rehearsal: to identify lesson outcomes, and to envision what students will be doing during the lesson that will indicate whether or not they have achieved those objectives and to form an inner picture of what decisions and actions the teacher will perform to achieve those learner outcomes. Effective teachers, like winning athletes, mentally rehearse what they will be doing to produce desired results prior to performance (Garfield, 1986).

In the planning conference, the coach invites the teacher to elaborate on the learning goals and to describe how the teacher will ascertain, during the lesson, whether students are learning. Skillful coaching assists the teacher in imagining, elaborating and designing strategies to monitor such formative cues indicating student success during the lesson.

The teacher is asked about his or her instructional strategies for reaching these outcomes. In addition, the coach asks what he or she should pay attention to and collect data about in the lesson that will support the teacher's growth. The coach does this by becoming another set of eyes for the teacher and a mediator of the teacher's processing of their own teaching experience.

During the lesson itself the coach collects only that data the teacher requested during the planning conference. Such observations may focus on student performance indicating goal achievement, on-task behavior or a particular student's problem behavior. The coach may also be requested to collect data about techniques which teachers are striving to perfect: wait time, questioning strategies, proximity, movement, clarity of directions, etc.

The reflective conference is frequently begun with an open-ended question such as, "How do you feel the lesson went?" We say "frequently" because, while coaches have certain conferencing objectives they intend to meet, the dialogue is more individualized and Socratic than it is a recipe. An open invitation allows the teacher to decide how he or she will enter this conversation and begin self-assessment. The next question may be something like, "What are you recalling from the lesson that's leading you to those inferences?" This question focuses on another important cognitive function of teaching—monitoring and recalling what happened during a lesson. This differs from some coaching systems in which the coach simply feeds back what was observed and recorded on a tape script. Because the ultimate goal of Cognitive Coaching is self-modification, teachers need to develop the ability to monitor their own and their students' behaviors and to recall what happened in the lesson. Data collection is fundamental to their self-analysis and self-coaching. Processing the data from the lesson enables teachers to reconstruct and analyze what went on while they were teaching to make the teaching experience intelligible.

Next, the teacher may be asked to interpret the data—to compare desired with actual outcomes: "How did what happened in the lesson compare with what was desired?" The teacher may also be asked to infer what he or she observed in the lesson in terms of cause-effect relationships.
Based upon this analysis, the teacher is asked to project and apply what has been learned: "How will you use these insights in future lessons or in other aspects of your work?" Notice the positive presuppositions that are embedded in these questions. This is a process concerned with self-motivation and self-directed growth. The job of the coach is to support the teacher in this natural mental journey.

OUTCOMES OF COGNITIVE COACHING

Several studies report increases in such factors as efficacy, expanded teaching repertoire, suspended egocentricity, cognitive development, job satisfaction, and inferred increases in student learning (Garmston and Hyerle, 1988; Edwards, 1992, 1994; Lipton, 1993).

Teachers and coaches report that they are deriving enormous satisfaction from using this process. Coaches make comments such as: "A teacher came up with alternatives that would have never occurred to me," or "A teacher who has not been very reflective is telling me that he now is watching himself teach, almost like he had a camera on himself, and that when he catches himself in old patterns, he now employs alternatives." Administrators describe how they use the coaching process with each other as they talk through plans for staff development training or a crucial parent meeting. Teachers report that the process is enjoyable and exciting, that it makes them think, and that as a result of the coach's modeling higher level questions, probing and paraphrasing, they are using those same non-judgmental behaviors with students! Many participants in coaching have remarked on the transference of these non-judgmental behaviors to other settings: with parents, in counseling sessions, in problem-solving groups and at home with spouses and children.

Can such invisible skills of teaching be taught and learned? We believe they can. Adults can continually modify their cognitive capacities. Teachers in staff development workshops often tell us that their awareness and command of cognitive skills has increased—through their learning how to cognitively coach one another. This happens more often, however, in training programs and with those models of supervision which focus primarily on the thinking that underlies instructional behaviors, rather than on the behaviors of teaching alone.

We have learned—and this is consistent with everything we know about good staff development—that the kind of changes toward which we strive do not happen quickly. A district should make a 3-year commitment that begins with a 7-day training program. We ask the district to plan a support system that assists cognitive coaches in their application of the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that were acquired in the workshop (Garmston, 1987). This application phase requires a sustained focus where two aspects are monitored: frequency and mutations. Frequency is important both to help the coach internalize skills and to produce maximum benefits for teachers. Studies have demonstrated the obvious; the more engagement, the higher the benefits. The benefits are transformational in nature when the frequency of coaching of up to six or seven times a year is achieved (Foster, 1989; Garmston, 1989; and Garmston & Hyerle, 1988). After that, the cognitive skills of self-coaching are in place—and the frequency of coaching may decrease. Mutation monitoring is also important. There is a tendency, left unchecked, to mutate back toward evaluative behavior from the coach. This is natural given the history and environments of many schools. Trained resident leadership in each district or region can help sustain the integrity of the cognitive coaching process by serving as a "meta-coach," by networking with other cognitive coaches, brainstorming solutions to problem situations, renewing coaching skills and challenging ever-increasing coaching complexity.
A final phase we see evolving in districts is policy change. In our experience, policy change usually occurs after there is a critical mass of teachers and coaches who are experimenting with the process. A needed change in policy becomes increasingly apparent as the principles of cognitive coaching are internalized and applied. We begin to observe a shift in district practices from teacher evaluation to goal clarification and coaching, from competition to cooperation, from conformity to creativity, and from control to empowerment. We’ve observed a dissatisfaction with existing curriculum and a shift from acquiring more content to a focus on developing student’s intellectual processes. We sense that cognitive coaching can be the impetus for developing the school as a home for the mind, an intellectual ecology where all the school’s inhabitants’ intellects are mediated (Costa, 1991) and provide a foundation for developing learning organizations and adaptive schools (Garmston and Wellman, 1994; Senge, 1991).

REFERENCES


