

# Teacher Training vs. Trainer Training in Education

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Although people outside the education field may use teacher education and teacher training interchangeably, education theorists distinguish the terms clearly. In the context of teacher preparation, training corresponds to learning real-life classroom skills while education refers to more abstract knowledge about modes of learning and instruction. When referring to the process of preparing future teachers, education specialists find "teacher education" more consistent with the idea of developing versatile, reflective practitioners with a wealth of professional knowledge. In education theory, training refers to acquisition of concrete skills for meeting specific goals in a real-life, applied situation. This often includes "closed skills," like typing or juggling, that have absolute ceiling on mastery or where the only way to improve the skill is to do it faster or while multi-tasking.

For teachers, training might include how to maintain a grade book or calculate reading fluency scores. In contrast, education focuses on more abstract knowledge and open-ended concepts, like the ability to design factory equipment or write poetry. Open skills rely on abstract understanding and have no absolute ceiling on performance. Examples from teaching include how to design an original lesson plan or promote critical thinking. This distinction is subtle since abstract concepts can empower students to meet real-life goals, similar to training. Furthermore, training in concrete skills can foster understanding of an underlying concept, similar to education. Some theorists distinguish education from training based on intention. Education aims to improve the mind while training aims to improve performance. In many cases, education and training go hand in hand. This paper, attempts to critically analyse the similarities and differences of teacher training and trainer training in various domains. To attain this objective, the paper is divided in to five main parts. Firstly it helps the reader understand some key concepts in the field, namely, student; teacher; teacher trainer; trainer trainer/educator. Then a distinction between teacher training and trainer training settings in various domains is presented. After that some approaches to training that can be used in both contexts will be discussed. Next, two distinctive ways of reflection used in each of the contexts are highlighted and finally, some ways each context conceive knowledge, and how they apply in practice.

## II. UNDERSTANDING KEY CONCEPTS

Pedro, is attending grade 12 at Alda Lara— a secondary school with the dream of becoming a teacher, just like his English teacher Miguel, who is already a Bachelor at ISCED-Luanda and is writing his BA monography with his tutor

António. Apart from being a teacher at ISCED- Luanda, Antonio is also an MA student and right now, they are having the module on how to train trainers with his trainer trainer/educator Afonso.

Explaining the chain of the terms student; teacher; teacher trainer; trainer trainer/educator in not that easy exercise. The hypothetical vignette above adapted from (Richards and Farrell 2005) attempts to display the linkage between the terms to facilitate the understanding.

As can be seen in the hypothetical vignette above, Pedro who is studying at Alda Lara Secondary School is a learner/student. According to the online Merriam Webster Dictionary (2017), a student is a person formally engaged in learning, especially one enrolled in a school. Miguel is a student teacher, because he teaches at a secondary school but at the same time he studies at ISCED. A student teacher is someone who knows or is learning about different teaching methods, techniques and materials s/he can use to get the message through; someone who will be-Luanda able to adapt her/his way of acting according to students' needs and characteristics leads students to the successful acquisition of knowledge, and its successful use in real-life situations (Castro 2008; Sambeny 2017). All these techniques, methods and strategies are transmitted by Antonio (a teacher trainer), who works for the training Institution— ISCED. Antonio's job involves providing instruction, guidance and support to student teachers and who thus renders a substantial contribution to the development of teachers (Castro 2008). Furthermore, in education theory, training refers to acquisition of concrete skills for meeting specific goals in a real-life, applied situation. This often includes "closed skills," like presenting new vocabulary or checking for understanding, that have absolute ceiling on mastery or where the only way to improve the skill is to do it faster or while multi-tasking. Besides teaching at ISCED-Luanda, Antonio is also a student at the same Institution, but at the MA level. When he finishes his MA course, he will become a trainer trainer or trainer educator. Trainer training or trainer education focuses on more abstract knowledge and open-ended concepts, like the ability to design a training program. Open skills rely on abstract understanding and have no absolute ceiling on performance. Examples from teaching include how to design an original lesson plan or promote critical thinking.

## III. TEACHER TRAINING VS. TRAINER TRAINING CONTEXTS

Distinction between teacher training and trainer training/trainer education context is subtle because both are training contexts and many common topics are discussed in

both contexts. However, scholars observe that both contexts differ in many instances, including perspective, vision, mission, objectives and intention (Edge, 2002; Castro, 2008; Sambeny 2017). While education aims to improve the mind, training on other hand aims at improving performance. However, in many cases, education and training go hand in hand.

#### *Teacher training*

Teacher training refers to activities directly focused on a teacher's present responsibilities and is typically aimed at short-term and immediate goals (Richards and Farrell 2005). It involves understanding basic concepts and principles as a prerequisite for applying them to teaching and the ability to demonstrate principles and practices in the classroom. Teacher training also involves trying out new strategies in the classroom, usually with supervision, and monitoring and getting feedback from others on one's practice (Richards and Farrell 2005). The content of training is usually determined by experts and is often available in standard training formats or through prescriptions in methodology books. The following are examples of goals from a training perspective:

- a) Learning how to use effective strategies to open a lesson
- b) Adapting the textbook to match the class
- c) Learning how to use group activities in a lesson
- d) Using effective questioning techniques
- e) Using classroom aids and resources (e.g., video)
- f) Techniques for giving learners feedback on performance

#### *Trainer training*

Trainer training generally refers to general growth not focused on a specific job. It serves a longer-term goal and seeks to facilitate growth of trainees' understanding of teaching and of themselves as trainers (Richards and Farrell 2005). It often involves examining different dimensions of a teacher's practice as a basis for reflective review and can hence be seen as either "bottom-up" or "top-down" depending on the circumstances.

The following are examples of goals from a development perspective:

- a) Understanding how the process of second language development occurs
- b) Understanding how our roles change according to the kind of trainees we are training
- c) Understanding the kinds of decision making that occur during lessons
- d) Reviewing our own theories and principles of language teaching
- e) Developing an understanding of different styles of teaching
- f) Determining learners' perceptions of classroom activities

Khan (2019) and Nkwocha (2004), align to the idea that

strategies for trainer training often involve documenting different kinds of teaching practices; reflective analysis of teaching practices, examining beliefs, values, and principles; conversation with peers on core issues; and collaborating with peers on classroom projects. However, although many things can be learned about teaching through self-observation and critical reflection, many cannot, such as subject-matter knowledge, pedagogical expertise, and understanding of curriculum and materials. Professional development, therefore, should go beyond personal and individual reflection. For example, it can include exploration of new trends and theories in language teaching; familiarization with developments in subject-matter knowledge such as pedagogical, composition theory, or genre theory; and critical examination of the way schools and language programs are organized and managed, to name but a few (Chin, 2016)

Furthermore, it is concerned with exploring questions such as the following: What is the nature of teacher knowledge and how is it acquired? What cognitive processes do we employ while teaching and while learning to teach? How do experienced and novice teachers differ? These questions are themselves dependent on our conceptualization of the nature of language teaching and our understanding of the knowledge, attitudes, skills, and processes we employ while teaching (Richards and Farrell 2005).

#### *In the classroom*

A process-oriented approach to training teachers and trainers in ELT field is nowadays commonplace. To operate such an approach, both the teacher trainer and the trainer need to be able to handle the skills involved in each context. Both training classrooms can be seen as consisting of parallel sets of facilitating skills, of course, and at this level of analysis there is thus an underlying potential for transfer from one context to the other. However, training classrooms are more likely to differ significantly in terms of a) the nature of the audience (i.e., teacher trainees vs. trainer trainees) and b) the subject-matter involved (i.e., teaching reading strategies vs. linkage between learning/teaching theories and existing teaching methods)

#### *The nature of the audience*

Generally speaking, the vast majority of teacher trainees attending training courses have very little experience in teaching. Most of them attend training course with the intent of gaining basic insights about how to teach. Therefore, most of the pre-service courses are conceived from specific to more general issues, in other words, it start looking at very basic issues, like, what is a strategy which one to use when teaching reading, to more complex ones—what method to be used in a reading lesson, added to some practical issues like classroom management, teaching practice, to mention but a few. One key element to be highlighted here is that most of the teacher training courses are static, meaning that they come as a pre-packaged, sometimes with one or other slight change.

On the other hand, the term "in-service" means that working teachers receive the instruction, as opposed to pre-service student teachers. Most of the times in-service training often are designed from general to specific, including training topics, such as how do learning/teaching theories can fit with the teaching methods and techniques. Apart from that, in-service training might also address new research findings, the principles behind new education laws or other abstract concepts. Contrary to pre-service training contexts, the in-service trainer training contexts are more flexible, they depend strictly on the results from the context and needs analysis.

#### *The subject matter*

It is always advisable for the course contents and its sequencing to be in alignment with outcome of a training needs analysis. This requires the teacher trainer and the trainer trainer and their staff to make use of different types of materials according to their own experience, the expertise of subject matter specialists and experience sharing with fellow professionals (Sambeny ND). Therefore, content selection represents a crucial part effective course development, to equip trainees with necessary input they will need in their arena of service. Once the material on the subject matter has been collected through different sources, the next step, to design the course contents, is to determine the sequence of lessons in a particular course. Such sequencing can be made on the basis of some major criteria like job performance order, logical order and psychological order (Sambeny ND).

While determining the sequence of tasks and the elements within a task in both contexts, some of the considerations that need to be kept in mind are:

- Easily learned tasks should be placed early in the course;
- Broad concepts and technical terms which have applications throughout the course should be introduced at an early stage;
- The concept or skill in the task, which is most likely or most frequently to be used, should be properly placed in the course contents.
- The task which is difficult to learn and the elements and concepts in areas where transfer or related skill is not likely to occur should not be 'overloaded' in the course.
- Complex or cumulative skills should be placed relatively late in the course sequence.

These are only some of the guiding principles to ensure the designing of a course. It is for the trainer to make the best use of only such guidelines that suit the proposed course most.

#### *Classroom management*

In both contexts issues on management are quite similar. Trainers usually decide on what to adopt, depending on the context. In both classrooms trainers may decide to work with whole class, groups pairs or individuals, depending on the purposes of the session. Arrangement of the classroom

also will depend on factors like: chair, numbers of trainees, type of lesson, to mention but some. As far as classroom discipline is concerned, punishment or rewards are more likely to happen (Michael 1998). Most of the time trainer training classrooms are made up by adult responsible practitioners, this would mean that some laissez-faire methodology might be predominant. However, this does not imply the absence of punishment. One aspect that trainers should bare in mind is that providing a frame for rewards and sanctions in advance is an act that may prevent misbehaviors. Furthermore, what is strongly advisable to both classrooms is that more should be done to maintain trainees' interest and motivation (Michael 1998).

#### IV. APPROACHES TO TRAINING

There is no shortage of guidance in the teacher training literature about how to put a process-oriented teacher training approach into practice, in the form of examples of activities and advice about procedures (Doff 1988; Ellis 1990; Wallace 1991 Woodward 1991; Parrott 1993). The use of proper training approach is a prerequisite condition of the effectiveness of conducting a training programme. The selection and use of such approaches/methods becomes all the more crucial as the participatory nature of the activity demands that the training should be not only educative, but also equally stimulating. Use of a single most effective approach or combination of approaches promotes greater interaction between the trainer and the trainee and, hence, creates a productive learning experience. This apparently simple question does not lend itself to a straightforward answer. The first problem is the notion that you can 'give knowledge' to the trainee. This presumably means transmitting information to the trainee, by talking or giving reading material or directing them to websites. There is no doubt that you can offer knowledge to the trainee. Whether the trainee receives it and does anything with it is another matter. 'Constructivism' is the concept that holds that knowledge is not just received but is constructed. In other words, for a trainee to 'know' something, they have to make sense of it themselves. Individual trainees bring different experiences, motivations, and intentions to bear on new knowledge that they encounter. They therefore make their own personal meaning. This means that the same piece of knowledge offered to, say, five trainees, will be received and then constructed in five different ways. It is as though to make it meaningful, it has to be 'translated' by each of them into their own context or framework of existing knowledge.

Paul Ramsden suggests three theories of training, which can be adopted in both classrooms: 'three generic ways of understanding the role of the trainer in higher education, each of which has corresponding implications for how trainees are expected to learn' (Ramsden 2003: 108):

- Theory 1: Training as telling or transmission. Teaching is about transmitting knowledge; learning is about acquiring knowledge. Learning is separate from teaching.

- Theory 2: Training as organizing student activity. There is an association between teaching and learning. Any problems with learning can be fixed by better management of student activity.
- Theory 3: Training as making learning possible. Learning is a long and uncertain process of changes in understanding. The activities of teaching are context related, uncertain, and continuously improvable. (Adapted from Ramsden 2003: 17–18, 108–112)

John Biggs and Catherine Tang also suggest three levels of training that trainers can adapt at any point in their career. They are characterized by the trainer's focus.

- Level 1 focus: What the student is. Training is 'transmitting/shaping information, usually by lecturing, discussing, researching and others. Therefore, the trainer will have to adopt a variety of training modes, but always taking into account differences in learning.
- Level 2 focus: What the trainer does. Training is based on 'transmitting/shaping concepts and understanding, not just information'; 'there may be more effective ways of training than what one is currently doing'; 'learning is seen as more of a function of what the trainer is doing, than of what sort of student one has to deal with'.
- Level 3 focus: What the student does. Trainers need to be clear about:
  - what it means to 'understand' content in the way this is stipulated in the intended learning outcomes;
  - what kind of teaching/learning activities are required to achieve those stipulated levels of understanding. (Biggs and Tang 2007: 16–19)

Nevertheless, none of the abovementioned approaches is singularly suitable or sufficiently effective for training activities. Every approach has its own advantage or disadvantage. It is from this angle that there is a need to make proper selection quite carefully, taking into account a number of factors and go for the most appropriate one. In most of the cases, however, the training programmes have to employ a combination of approaches. The choice for selecting suitable training approach/approaches depends on certain basic assumptions, as under:

- The trainees have different backgrounds regarding their past knowledge and work experience which have significant bearing on their learning process;
- The trainees learn most in a situation that encourages their participation in the learning process;
- No single approach is effective enough to ensure the maximum impact in terms of learning experience;
- Effective use of a particular approach depends on the intelligence and skill of the trainer;
- The trainer, to whatever extent skilled and intelligent has to understand that the efficiency of the job

performance depends on one's continuous growth in knowledge and experience.

For this reason, trainers have to first 'de-learn' in order to learn the skill of seeking active involvement of the trainees in the learning process during the course of training. Only then the process of learning the principles and practices of training starts. This process of learning has to continue throughout professional career as a trainer (Smabeny ND).

## V. TRAINING REFLECTION

Trainers from both classrooms are called upon to reflect and enhance reflection in their classrooms. However, in teacher training context usually reflection is exercised under the wings of reflection-on-action and the trainer training on the other hand reflects under the wings of reflection-in-action.

Reflection-on-action mostly done in teacher training contexts, involves reflecting on how practice can be developed (changed) after the event 'We reflect *on* action, thinking back on what we have done in order to discover how our knowing-in-action may have contributed to an unexpected outcome' (Schön, 1983, p. 26). Essentially, we reflect after the event on how our knowledge of previous similar events may have led to the unexpected incident and what we need to change for the future.

Reflection-in-action on the other hand, mostly applied in trainer training contexts, is 'action present'; which Schön (1983) describes as reflecting on the incident whilst it can still benefit that situation rather than reflecting on how you would do things differently in the future. This is a useful tool to use in disciplines where the professional has to react to an event at the time it occurs – rather than having the luxury of being able to think about what happened and make changes at a later time. This process is described by Schön (1983, p.68) as 'When someone reflects-in-action, he becomes a researcher in the practice context. He is not dependent on the categories or established theory and technique, but constructs a new theory of the unique case'.

Basically, surprising incidents occur because in a new situation people use knowing-in-action (knowledge that you have gained in other/similar situations) that is inappropriate for the current (unique) situation (Schön, 1983). Thus to overcome this, rather than using preconceived ideas about what should be done in a particular situation; the person reflecting decides what works best at that time, for that unique event/incident.

Hatton & Smith, 2005) have identified three different forms/levels of 'reflection-on-action'

The first is concerned with describing and reporting events and providing reasons or justifications for their occurrence and seeking best practice. Hall (1997) describes this level/form of reflection as 'random' and 'descriptive' and considers it as being the lowest level of reflection, which does not always occur. Student teachers return to experience and

are engaged in ‘cognitive retrieval (Strampel & Oliver, 2007, 975). Experience here is used as a future record stage of reflection to help student teachers reflect upon events as they actually happened (Strampel & Oliver, 2007) and see the situation as others would and in a wider context. Students who reach this level of reflection ‘... are beginning to make meaning of the material presented to them’ (Strampel & Oliver, 2007). However, Strampel & Oliver (2007) argue that this level of reflection does not serve deep ‘learning’. ‘Learning’ engages the whole person and involves intellect, emotions, values, experience and daily practices (Boud, Cressey & Docherty, 2006). Strampel & Oliver (2007) argue that ‘students at this level should be able to explain the material and how they understand it, but they most likely will not be able to apply their understanding to different contexts’.

The second is ‘deliberate’ or ‘dialogic’ (Strampel & Oliver, 2007) and is

about re-evaluating experience and using prior knowledge to critically analyse a situation. This stage of reflection is ‘... a process of searching for meaning, coming to an understanding, and applying new knowledge’ and is likely to help students to see the world differently through leading and stimulating them to conceptual change (Strampel & Oliver, 2007). Dialogic reflection occurs when students take a step back while considering, exploring and judging prior knowledge and the current situation or experience to create possible alternative solutions (Strampel & Oliver, 2007). In other words, focus in this level of reflection is on replacing ‘... pre-existing conceptions with new ones’ (Strampel & Oliver, 2007) and exploring alternative hypotheses and solutions and finding practical answers to the problems encountered in a particular context through, for instance, writing journals, talking with critical friends or attending network or special interest group meetings.

The third is of a more ‘critical’ nature and attempts to locate ELT, for example, within wider social, political and cultural contexts, which, according to

Boud (1999) influence teachers, students, learning outcomes and learning activities.

Student teachers at this level reach deeper levels of learning and develop an ability to evaluate and/or judge the value of the existing ELT context from those three perspectives, which leads them to make decisions about the necessity of change in action. Decisions about change can lead student teachers, within the context of this study for example, to apply their newfound knowledge to a variety of situations.

Examples of situations can be classrooms rules, course structures and institutional practices (Boud, 1999). While these levels are different on the surface, they complement and build on one another. Student teachers who are trained to move gradually from one level to another can end up exploring, analysing systematically and understanding

thoroughly the entire context in which they are located.

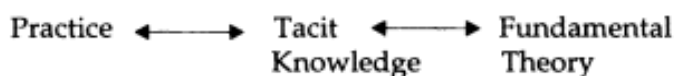
As for reflection-in-action, in the trainer-training context, one could adopt the reflective model suggested by Wallace (1991). This model comprises three main phases: craft model; the applied science model and the reflective model. In the craft stage trainees are introduced to the vast body of existing literature—therories, principles, strategies, and so on, added by demonstrations and performance by the trainer. In the second stage, the applied science stage trainees learn to accommodate the theoretical background learned with the practical reality they live in. in the last stage of reflection, trainees start to gain, shape and improve their own position, taking into account the theoretical background and the context they work in culminating on a critical reflection (Wallace 1991).

## VI. WAYS OF KNOWING

Despite that both contexts—teacher-training context and trainer training context, it is believed that they construct knowledge quite differently. According to Michael (1998) in teacher training classrooms knowledge is acquired from a more traditional manner. Methodology is usually derived from practice, which lays claim to authenticity with respect to teaching and learning over and knowledge derived from the human sciences. As said earlier, most of the teacher training programs are predetermined and they intend to respond the necessities of the wider context. In other words, most of what is to be discussed has already been pondered taking into account the necessities of the country in wide, as can be viewed in the figure below from (Michael 1998):

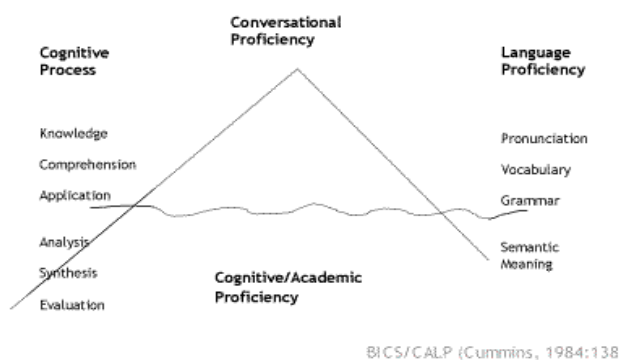
Human Sciences ← Methodology ← Practice

For Michael (1998), the same does not always happen in trainer training contexts, where more flexibility is exercised, mostly depending on the preliminary results of context analysis and needs analysis. In other words, professional knowledge in trainer training context is developed through personal, context-bound practice, and reflection on a range of issues and practical items. Such reflection is holistic, synthetic and of varying degrees of explicitness. What is clear is that some of this reflection is, in some respects, no less theoretical than more objective, scientific theory. But this personal theory is more fundamental, individual and implicitly expressed in practice. No one, teacher or otherwise, plans or carries out activity without some rationale or reason for doing so. This is the nature of any fundamental educational theory. It is expressed in a highly individualistic way, is time and context dependent, and developmental. It is derived from tacit knowledge that is acquired in practical activity, classroom ‘horse-sense’, if you like, and which is also continuously shaped by it (Michael 1998). The relationship might be expressed in the figure below:



### Subject Knowledge

Trainers from both classrooms need to have a number of competences needed not only to embark in the ocean of training, but more importantly to survive. Among various categorizations of competences, Hillyard (2011) observes that trainers need to be adepts (those who can define, describe basic aspects within their field of expertise); adopters (being able to use and manage broad Conceptions in their field of expertise); and adaptors (being able to adapt and integrate broad conceptions in local contexts). Furthermore, using the iceberg model by Cummins & Swain, (1984), Hillyard (2011) contends that trainers ought to be proficient with BICS (Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills) and CALP (Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency), as shown in the figure below:



At the level of BICS, which represents the level above water, Hillyard (2011) observes trainers need to evidence skills in the language of training— explaining various perspectives about the same topic, giving instructions, eliciting techniques, manage the classroom, and implement proper training activities. They must be comfortable in using the instruction language at all times in the classroom and never resorting to the mother tongue except in special circumstances (Hillyard 2011). However, at the CALP level, under the level of water, trainers will have to demonstrate skills in planning, lesson preparation, translating plans into action, ensuring outcomes, understanding of second language attainment levels, promoting cultural awareness and interculturality, applying knowledge about second language acquisition/learning in the classroom, and having knowledge awareness of cognitive and metacognitive processes and strategies in their classroom environment. In addition, trainers need to be sure in knowing about and applying assessment and evaluation procedures and tools, not disregarding the use of technologies (Hillyard 2011).

Not less important, (Mehisto and Marsh, 2008, pp. 232-236): defend that trainers (from both classrooms) will have to demonstrate:

- Knowledge of methodology for integrating both language and content;
- Ability to create rich and supportive target-language environments;
- Ability to making input comprehensible;
- Ability to use teacher-talk effectively;
- Ability to promote student comprehensible output;
- Ability to attend to diverse student needs; and
- Ability to continuously improve accuracy.

### Subject Application

As it is obvious, knowledge acquired in each of the contexts are to be put into practice in a quite different manner, not disregarding some similarities (Michael 1998). While teacher trainees will have to produce coherent lesson plans which take account of the principles and the necessary elements previously learned, trainers trainees on the other hand will have to demonstrate skills and know how on designing and developing plans and programs for training seminars (Michael 1998). Trainers from both sides will have to demonstrate and employ a range of teaching/training strategies appropriate for the context (Michael 1998). Both trainers will have to demonstrate ability to select and use of appropriate resources including information technology for their contexts. Both trainers will have to evidence effective skill to assess and evaluate their trainees, and both counterparts will have to demonstrate ability in presenting the subject content to their trainees (Michael 1998).

## VII. SUMMARY

Training programmes have significant impact in the development of education. However, the term “training” may appear vague if one intends to understand the entire cycle. In this paper, we attempted to state a distinction between teacher training and trainer training in its various domains.

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