

University of Washington, Tacoma  
Teacher Certification  
6/03  
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I want to talk with you today about CHANGE and HOPE. Take a few minutes with me to look back. Let's look at the process of change that you have experienced over the past year. As I reflect on this year, some images came to me... sometimes kind of silly, but if you will forgive a bit of irreverence about the significance of your year, I would like to share them with you.

Last summer you came to us..... ready to change from what ever you were before, into a teacher. Most of you already were fairly intuitive and natural teachers. Some of you thought that Maybe a little bit of change was necessary, but I know for some, there was an idea that this program was just a hoop to jump through to get the certificate and you didn't think anyone would notice the changes, because they would be fairly subtle.

However, from my perspective you looked a bit like one of my favorite British comics, Mr. Bean. One day Mr. Bean went to the beach. He needed to change his clothes, but didn't want anyone to notice. So he wriggled and squirmed, and went through all sorts of contortions to remove his core undergarments... without first removing his outer garments. Now if you haven't seen this video, just imagine trying to do that now... of course no one will notice! I believe your family and the faculty can attest.... That the change process you experienced over the year was noticed... and we know at times it was quite uncomfortable—for all of us. We can look back now together and laugh.

Then Autumn came. You had finished some core coursework in teacher education.. you knew some methods, some behavior strategies... and now were observing some real teachers with real kids. You immediately recognized what those teachers needed to do to change and get it right! I heard bold comments such as “if I were the teacher, I would...(you fill in the blank—have more control, be more interesting, spend more time one-on-one with the kids, work harder....)

The image I have of your experience during autumn is sort of like my relationship to the Mariners. I have been a baseball fan my whole life. I love to go to games and watch many on TV. In fact, I know so much about baseball, that I can tell you right now exactly what Freddy Garcia needs to do to change and get out of his slump. Actually, the little bit of knowledge I really have (just enough to be a critic) is dangerous! I could no more DO BASEBALL, than you could teach at the beginning of Autumn quarter. Fortunately, (in contrast with my life in baseball) this period was short lived for you, and ended in about December.

After the break, came Winter quarter and you moved into your student teaching classrooms. These days of change were anticipated with excitement and maybe a bit of fear. Then, one day in January, the bottom dropped out because the teacher left you alone with the kids for about 3 minutes and chaos broke loose. Just about the time you were sure things couldn't get any worse, your supervisor dropped in for a surprise visit. You realized that they actually expected that you could corral 25 or 30 kids with all kinds of different behaviors and attitudes— and SHOCK! some of them really did not want to be there!--- and you were supposed to get them to change in some significant way, every day. By February, some of you were sure now that you had chosen the wrong profession, that all kids must have really rotten parents... and you wondered why you couldn't be like the most famous quick change artist of all time.... Superman! Some of the folks knew you—and maybe you thought of yourself—as Clark Kent the mild-mannered reporter. Where was that phone booth with the magic costume where you could pull out that super-human self you needed to save the day?

One thing that is different between you and Superman... Superman and Clark Kent could never be in the same room at the same time. As a teacher, you are both, always in the room at the same time.

I know last February, some of you just wanted to go back into your role as Clark and forget all those ideas about helping kids change. But, you couldn't go back. Because, like Superman, you had the power. You knew what to do.

Fortunately, Spring came. My image of you this spring comes out of my aquarium at home. I have a salt-water marine tank, and among other creatures, I have hermit crabs. Sometimes the fish harass the crabs. One evening, I watched and thought

my hermit crab who had been greatly harassed was dying. It seemed just be crumpling up in a ball and withering away. I watched and watched--- sure that the stress had become too much for it. Then, this miraculous change happened. The crab backed out of its exoskeleton, all in one piece. It gradually regained strength, stood up, larger, and more colorful, and then abandoned the old, outside self. It was an amazing change process.

Well, by spring you began to conquer the stress. Your master teacher and supervisor helped you become more comfortable being in charge of your class. You realized that kids were resilient and didn't actually die when your lesson plan flopped. On occasion, you saw that yes, they actually were learning something. In this process we began to see a new self emerge out of you. You recognized that you were starting to see a change in your students (by the way, some folks call this a positive impact on student learning!) You did it! You knew how to initiate this change. You knew how to measure it! It was not a magical transformation, but a very real, organic change. You were having fun, and now--you are already missing some of those wonderful kids whose lives you touched.

Today, as your time with us is over, you know---for sure, your job is about change.... you know, teaching is about sharing knowledge—just as you thought last summer. But knowledge comes and goes and changes so quickly... that is not enough. In fact, that may be the least important aspect of our jobs.

Eric Hoffer once said, “In times of change, the learners will inherit the earth while the learned will find themselves beautifully equipped to deal with a world that no longer exists.”

Your job is helping children change,

Change from:

- not knowing—to knowing.
- not understanding—to being able to make sense about their world
- not being able to do—to doing
- disbelieving they could ever hope to learn—to knowing they are able.

We have tried replicate this change process with you—to walk through this year, in exactly the same way. Your supervisors, cooperating teachers, staff, faculty... walked with you, but we didn't do it for you. You had to do it for yourself.

- Teachers provide skills and tools (like reading, math, writing, and critical thinking)
- Teachers provide experience (like considering important social issues and ideas, appreciation of art and the natural world, service learning, and exploring other cultures through literature)
- Teachers scaffold and support (through a climate of safety, pleasure, and strength) to make growth and change possible.
- And teachers try to help one another determine, in a time of change, what of the new we must embrace, what of the old we can release, and what is so dear that we must hold on—never letting go.

We are here today to honor you for having the courage to step into this wonderful, challenging, change building profession. You have worked so hard this year to prepare yourselves, and you have changed, so now you are ready to help others. We have a certificate for each of you that honors the completion of our program. In the end, I hope you will take this knowledge of the change process with you. That is our real gift to you.