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Teacher Adaptive Practices

Extending Teacher Adaptability
into Classroom Practice

 Springer

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Preface

Student critical and creative thinking is an important outcome of schooling systems throughout the world. However, there are as many different pedagogies for promoting student critical and creative thinking as there are operational definitions for these contested constructs. Many of the pedagogical models put forward to promote student critical and creative thinking focus on the design of lessons and units of work that become almost like a DNA for criticality and creativity ready for duplication in the classroom. This model overlooks the important role that teacher interactions have on the expression of this DNA in each lesson. This study observed what teachers do in classroom to either promote or sometimes hinder the development of student critical and creative thinking when the opportunity arises.

Chapter 1 posits a model of adaptive teaching that conceptualises the interaction of the personal and environmental determinants of adaptive teaching that influence the teaching behaviours that promote student creative and critical thinking. Chapter 2 critically examines the personal, environmental and behavioural determinants of this model of adaptive teaching.

Chapter 3 begins with the admission that there are significant reliability and validity threats when classroom observation is used in both educational research and teacher evaluation (Harris 2012). This chapter acknowledges this critique and proposes a third way for classroom observation in teacher improvement. The improvement agenda disciplines the classroom observation and moves it away from pure research or evaluation (judgment of the performance) to help teachers improve their practice. This position is supported by the argument approach to test validation endorsed by the AERA, APA and NCME.

Chapter 4 contains the analysis of the data from 278 classroom observations of 71 teachers for its relationship to the teacher self-report constructs of teacher adaptability, teacher self-efficacy and perceived autonomy support. The study found that only teacher adaptability could predict a sub-scale of adaptive practices that potentially promote student critical and creative thinking. This finding signals an important relationship between teacher adaptability and adaptive teaching given that student critical and creative thinking is a valued outcome of schooling.

Chapter 5 proposes a combined classroom observation and learning improvement programme based on the model of adaptive teaching presented in this study. This proposal positions this research programme within the science of learning improvement that values the development of rigorous yet usable measures that have direct application to the improvement of learning conditions for students in classrooms. It does this through a brief review of the principles of effective professional learning before examining what the emerging field of learning implementation and improvement science might add to these principles. It then applies these principles to three proposals for teacher professional learning that employ the teacher adaptive practice scale as a diagnostic and improvement measure. The final chapter flags future directions for research into a model of adaptive teaching that will investigate the relationship between existing and new personal and behavioural determinants.

The text was written with the intention of promoting informed scholarly debate in an area of classroom research with much promise but not without its fair share of theoretical and methodological challenges. The text addresses these challenges with openness and humility to invite scholarly critique and debate. It is also the author's hope that the text will provide a theoretical and practical scaffold for those teachers wishing to refine their practices so that more students get the opportunity to feel the joy and liberation of being critical and creative thinkers in an education system seemingly obsessed with examinations and instrumental outcomes.

Sydney, Australia/Beijing, China

Tony Loughland

Reference

Harris, D. N. (2012). How do value-added indicators compare to other measures of teacher effectiveness. *Carnegie Knowledge Network Brief* (5).

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