The Context of teaching

Lecture 2: Wed 20\textsuperscript{th} Jun 2012

EDG11 Professional Standards
Postgraduate Certificate in Teaching
Tonga Institute of Education

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Outline

How you teach

- Personal characteristics
- Experience (+ Education)
- Context of teaching
A brief outline of today's class.

Key factors that influence teaching:

They have influence your teachers and very likely will influence you practice as well

From research, three broad areas influence teaching (what, how, why teachers do what they do)

Vilimaka Foliaki, 6/20/2012
Personal characteristics: **GENDER**

Research shows that (on average):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Female teachers</th>
<th>Male teachers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More able to maintain warmer classroom atmosphere</td>
<td>More authoritarian and dominant</td>
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<tr>
<td>More tolerant of misbehaviours</td>
<td>More organised, teacher-controlled classrooms, task-oriented</td>
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<tr>
<td>Praise students more frequently</td>
<td>Send fewer students for disciplinary action</td>
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<tr>
<td>More likely to provide the correct answer when students can’t/don’t</td>
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<tr>
<td>More students initiate a question or make statements</td>
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<tr>
<td>Students give more correct answers</td>
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<tr>
<td>More students take risks and guess</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Personal characteristics: **GENDER (cont)**

- The differences more prominent in secondary that in primary
- Female teachers consider boys:
  - as more active, loud, aggressive
  - Less teachable and hard to work with
- Female teachers describe girls as:
  - Talkative and sensitive
- Both female and male teachers:
  - pay more attention to boys
  - perceive boys demonstrate more initiative, more independent
  - Believe boys a less likely to criticise them
Personal characteristics: GENDER (cont)

- Both female and male teachers:
  - rate boys and girls the same – in terms of ability
- **White** male teachers perceive **white** female students as less able
- Both spoke of equitable treatment of boys and girls
  - Actions are contrary
- **Student learning:**
  - No effect of teacher’s gender on how much is learned
Personal characteristics: **AGE**

Research shows that (on average) that age and years of teaching experience:

- < 3 years experience are less effective;
- Effectiveness improve steadily and peak at ≈ 5yrs, dwindles thereafter
- Younger, less experienced teachers more satisfied with teaching
- Younger, less experienced teachers more receptive to change, innovate more
- Younger (and beginning) teachers more authoritarian
- Younger (and beginning) teachers given more demanding tasks
Personality – totality of character and behavioural traits unique to a person. For example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Your personality traits</th>
<th>How each of these impact your teaching?</th>
<th>How might the absence of these impact your teaching?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Warm</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Sensitive</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Emotionally stable</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Enthusiastic</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Take risks</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Tolerant of ambiguity</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Beliefs guide actions. Research shows that teachers act on their beliefs.

Some important teacher beliefs from research:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher beliefs</th>
<th>Possible impact on teaching?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More-able students pose fewer behaviour problems</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Students should be organised homogeneously (e.g. streamed)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Good learners can learn more complex ideas</td>
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<tr>
<td>Attractive students are brighter and more sociable</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Experience (+ Education): Educational experience

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educational experience</th>
<th>Possible impact on teaching?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How you were taught</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning style</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Teaching style</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proficiency in your teaching subject(s)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Teacher-education preparation</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

- Still remember your favourite teacher(s)? Why are they memorable?
  - You **preferred** their teaching; their teaching consistent with your learning style
  - Your teaching now reflects both your learning style/preference and the learning styles of your past teachers
Knowledge of subject matter (content):
- Very important
- This ALONE does not ensure good teaching.
- We need also to know how to help students learn (pedagogy)

Teachers’ content knowledge affects BOTH what and how he/she teaches. For example:
- “what to teach” - more emphasis on content we are more knowledgeable in (teach less/skip areas we don’t know much)
- “how to teach” – We are more likely to ask thought-provoking (higher order) questions if we are knowledgeable of content
Experience (+ Education): Teacher education

1. The better the teacher’s knowledge
2. The better the students will learn

- The better your knowledge/skill in planning, delivery, assessment etc, etc, the better your students will learn
- With no pedagogy, teacher is forced to use instinct, trial-and-error approaches
- Teachers with little teaching experience:
  - more authoritarian, more likely to plan lessons to control misbehaviour than to promote participation and learning.
## Context of teaching

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contextual factors</th>
<th>Impact on teaching</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student diversity – learning style, culture, socio-economic background, developmental</td>
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<tr>
<td>Size of class or classroom</td>
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<td>Resources – type, quality</td>
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<td>Available time</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Nature of learning objectives/outcomes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Society priorities (e.g. TVET, ICT, Tongan language and Culture, ESD, Climate change, etc)</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Context of teaching: Student diversity

• Teacher has (or little) control over
  – Therefore, learn to know who they are

• New teachers tend to see class as homogeneous;
  – Ability to provide for diverse learners improves with experience
A well-resourced classroom has a lot of potentials for instruction and meaningful learning.

Teachers are limited by unavailability of resources.

Teachers in poorly resourced schools tend to:
- lecture more!
- do ‘blackboard’ experiments more!

Time is a limited resource to teachers
- Indirect teaching/exploratory teaching strategies used when time is available.
- Higher-order skills are learned (better) when time is available.
Objectives/outcomes statement guide choice of teaching strategies and assessment
Context of teaching: Society priorities

- Pressure from outside about exam marks:
  - Teach to the test (exam-oriented curriculum)
- Desire to make good use of new technology
  - Use ICT in teaching/learning
  - Computers labs
- Climate change:
  - Reduce printing
  - Use of e-copies more
Some final thoughts!

1. Should teachers-to-be be screened by relevant authorities to find out if their personal characteristics, experience, and preparation make them suitable for the classroom in Tonga?

2.Which personal characteristics (gender, age-experience, personality, beliefs) of the teacher are most important in the classroom in Tonga?

3. What kind of teacher experience and preparation are most important for the Tonga classroom?

4. How can the contexts of teaching in the classroom in Tonga be used to best advantage?