BOOK REVIEWS

Improving teacher education practices through self-study
John Loughran & Tom Russell (Eds), 2002
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Improving teacher education practices through self-study has its roots in the work of the Special Interest Group of the AERA: Self-Study of Teacher Education Practices. Most of its members work as teacher educators at institutes in different countries, although most of the articles published in this book are from authors who work in the United States and Canada. Their aim is, as is stated clearly in the title of the book, to improve teacher education. Not an easy task, but a necessary one, especially because the work of teacher education has to be exemplary for future teachers. ‘Those of us who are actually aware of the potential for contradiction between the content and the process of our teaching and who wish to minimize such contradictions seem to be drawn to the self-study of teacher education practices’ (p. 3). This theme continues in the chapters in the book. According to Russell, self-study is a way to respond to the criticism that teacher education is unable to practice what it preaches.

The book consists of four parts with a total of 14 chapters. To give the reader an idea of the contents of the book, I describe one chapter from each part as an example of the theme of that particular part.

Part I, ‘Understanding teaching in teacher education’, contains four chapters addressing various aspects of teaching in teacher education. The contribution by John Loughran and Amanda Berry, ‘Developing an understanding of learning to teach in teacher education’, deals with their efforts to improve teaching by collaborative teaching and sharing their experience with each other and their students. With great honesty the authors offer insights in their discussions and their own learning about teaching about teaching.

The theme of part II is ‘Studying teacher educators’ roles and responsibilities’. In this part various authors write about the ways teacher educators should, and sometimes do, develop roles that are more consistent with the developments in recent thinking about learning and teaching. All chapters in this part make it clear that taking up new roles and pushing the, rather fixed, borders of the traditional curriculum and teaching is a complex task for teacher educators. The study of Sandy Scheck and
Gilda Seagull, ‘Learning about teaching from our graduates, learning about our learning with critical friends’, suggests that teacher educators can learn a lot from their own students, experienced teachers and each other. This learning is not easy and sometimes uncomfortable, but it is in their own words ‘extremely beneficial’.

Part III deals with a topic that for a long time has been and still is, unfortunately, important in teacher education: ‘Fostering social justice in teaching about teaching’. Enora R. Brown describes her study in which she, as an African-American teacher educator, investigates the views of her European American students to find that ‘for these white students ‘race’ is not an issue. ‘Through this self study, I gained insight into the disjunctive between our lived experiences of race, and the social construction of two independent myths: the “racelessness neutrality” of the whites and the “salient, bias” of people of color’ (p. 158). The change towards social justice is a difficult one, both on the individual level and on the institutional level, as can be read in the contribution of Mary Lynn Hamilton.

Finally, in part IV the theme ‘Exploring myths in teacher education’ is addressed. In the chapter ‘Myths about teaching and the university professor, the power of unexamined beliefs’, Belinda Y. Louie, Richard W. Stackman, Denise Drevdahl and Jill M. Purdy explore three myth categories: the illusion that professors can control everything, and especially the learning, that occurs in the classroom; the notion that one cannot teach well unless one is fully ready; and the notion that the excellent teacher employs certain approaches and techniques. Analysing myths in teacher education does not automatically, let alone easily, lead to changes:

It is important to note that simply identifying one’s myths about control, preparation and approach does not eliminate the beliefs and experience that precede them. However the impact of many of our myths has been curbed in subtle and visible ways. Our awareness has led to changes in how we think about teaching and how. (p. 202)

Reading the 16 chapters of this part is as looking at videos of a teacher or teacher educator at work. Teacher educators or others who do watch videos like this as part of their jobs may have experienced the fascination of the audience when looking at them. The backside is that each of the contributions is a story in itself and the connection between these stories, even within the four parts, is not always clear. The result is that the answers to two important questions are scattered throughout the book.

The first question is ‘What did the authors as a group learn about improving teacher education?’ Many of the teacher educators involved in these self-studies report that they learnt very much and it would be a challenge to collect and discuss these central issues. It would support teacher educators who want to improve teacher education and it may even help them not to make the same mistakes other made before. In that way, teacher educators as a group can improve their teaching step by step and the new self-studies form the Special Interest Group (and other research) could have gone from that point. One thing I learnt from many of these self-studies is that improving teacher education and doing self-study is often an enterprise of a few dedicated people.
The second interesting question is ‘What did the authors as a group learn about self-study?’ When reading this book to review it I was also engaged in reading an article by Wideen et al. (1998) called ‘A critical analysis of the research; making the case for an ecological perspective on inquiry’. In this article the authors criticize the research about learning to teach that they have analysed. They discuss four main issues that in my view are also important to improve self-study. The article of Wideen et al. is about teacher education (their subject being ‘Learning to teach’) and they foster non-traditional research (hence the subtitle of their article). This makes their comments worthwhile for those involved in self-study.

Wideen et al.’s first concern is the internal validity of the research they analysed. Not many of the authors of the various chapters in the book discussed here state clearly what kind of methodology they use. The one mentioned most is ‘action research’. Even less explicit attention is paid to the way the data were gained and the process of drawing conclusions from the data are hardly ever explained, although some, like Schuck and Segal, mention that they analysed their data though a grounded theory approach. The description of the process of analysing will not only make the conclusions more faithful, but will also give other teacher educators insight in the use of, for example, grounded theory.

The second concern of Wideen et al. is the ‘Self-fulfilling prophecy’. In several of the studies they analysed: ‘It appeared that the expectations rather then the events contributed to the findings claimed by the researchers’ (Wideen et al., 1998, p. 164). In their chapter about their self-study ‘Framing professional discourse’, Mary C. Dalmau and Hafdis Gudjónsdóttir explicitly call for ‘research partnership; critical and supportive contacts with “questioning others” and support to go beyond unconscious local assumptions about the status quo’ (p. 116). Many of the authors mention collaboration and ‘questioning others’, but seldom do they describe the influence of these in there study nor the dilemmas and contradictions that may raise from their partnership in the self-study.

‘Story and claim’ is the next item discussed by Wideen et al. They are concerned about the easy way researchers draw conclusion from a few, or even only one, story or narrative. Some of the authors explicitly refer to the use of stories, like Deborah Tidwell, who tells the stories of three individual students and by reflecting on them she tells her own story of gaining insight in, among others, the notion that “The pre-defined roles of “professor” (expert, lecturer, authority) often creates conflicts with teaching that values the individual student’ (p. 41). Like Tidwell other authors involved in self-study who report in this book are quite reserved about drawing conclusions about the stories or narratives they use. Usually they write down what they themselves have learnt from their study. Although stories and narratives are used by several authors, they seldom refer to the methodology. It could give their self-studies more power if they did describe this methodology in a way that suits their self-study. A combination of several stories collected and analysed by different researchers may also add to more powerful self-studies.

The final concern is ‘The Snark Syndrome’ (From Lewis Carol’s The Hunting of the
Snark). Wideen et al. refer to Byrne (1993) who ‘used this term to describe the assertion of an alleged truth, belief or principle on the basis of the sheer repetition of an idea, rather than basing that assertion on considered examination or empirical evidence’ (Wideen et al., 1998, p. 166). This syndrome is not exclusive to research in teacher education; on the contrary—it can be observed in all kind of publications about education. In this book several authors mention ‘big names’ like Zeichner, Schön and Dewey without explicitly describing the meaning of their thoughts for their own self-study. Also words like ‘belief’, ‘constructivism’ and ‘narrative’ are often used without defining them. Perhaps everybody agrees about their meaning, but I think that a discussion about the meaning of for example ‘constructivism’ will be very interesting.

It would be a mistake to think that there is no information about self-study in this book. In many of the chapters there are references to self-study and the way it could be carried out. For those interesting in self-study, two contributions in particular are worth while: ‘Self-study as a way of teaching and learning: a research collaborative re-analysis of self-study portfolios’ by Lis Bass, Vicky Anderson-Patton and Jerry Allender, and the final chapter written by John Loughran. In this last chapter ‘Understanding self-study of teacher education practices’, Loughran reviews the history of Self-Study of Teacher Education Practices, the history of self-study, the impetus for self-study and the importance of collaboration.

Thinking about teacher education and self-study has not come to a halt with this book. In a key note paper given at the International Study Association on Teacher Thinking conference in Leiden in July 2003 called ‘Knowledge construction and learning to teach about teaching’, John Loughran (2003) elaborates on the subject in a compact and reflective way. A very useful contribution to the discussion.

The chapters in this book address teacher educators, who will find recognition and information about innovation in teacher education and self-study. They will also be inspired by many of the chapters, because, if one thing becomes clear, it is that the teacher educators who contributed are without exception deeply involved in educating teachers and are willing to share the outcomes of their self-studies in a very honest way. By doing this they show teaching and improving teaching as it is: a struggle, risk-taking, disappointment, but also fulfillment and improvement. But inspiration is not the sole benefit of the book. Teacher educators may also learn from the self-studies: learn about their own teaching, learn how to change their own teaching, learn to overcome problems when trying to improve teaching and learn about doing self-study.

This book, in my view, is equally important to administrators. Several self-studies make it clear that the administrators are not always the ones initiating innovation and change in teacher education and that they do not always support individuals who try to improve their own teaching by doing self-study (see, for example, the chapters written by Charles B. Myers and Mary Lynn Hamilton). This book may give administrators insight in the work and study done by teacher educators and may help them to support those members of their staff who reach for quality. It may involve
risk-taking for administrators as well, but it will also mean that they support those who really want to reach the goals written down in mission statement of teacher education institutes.

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**Behind closed doors: teachers and the role of the teachers’ lounge**

Miriam Ben-Peretz & Shifra Schonmann

Albany, NY, SUNY Press

$15.95

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Research on teachers and teaching has come a long way since the early days of the process–product tradition. In those days, the primary unit of analysis was the correlation between the perennial and subtle relationships of teachers’ subject matter knowledge and students’ outcomes in these subjects as measured on standardized tests. After almost four decades of research we have realized that the pursuit of that relationship is fruitless and that there are infinite ways to configure it. Collectively, we have generated a host of new exciting questions addressing a whole range of issues relating the kind of understandings and beliefs about subject matter necessary for effective teaching, and the contexts where these developments typically take place. Moreover, the notions of ‘effective teaching’ and ‘the knowledge base of teaching’ have themselves become problematic. We have realized that the world of teachers and teaching is a complex and multidimensional set of issues, as well as fluid and elusive. Within this tradition the teachers’ lounge has gradually emerged as a key site where socialization and professional development takes place. Yet, it has not featured as a unit of analysis in much research on teachers and teaching. The teachers’ lounge has been treated as a kind of ‘black box’ with input (new teachers) and output (veteran teachers socialized into the dominant culture of teaching), not unlike teachers’ subject matter knowledge was treated in the early days of the process–product tradition in research on teaching. This book will change that.

*Behind closed doors: teachers and the role of the teachers’ lounge* is the result of many years of study of teachers’ lounges in several Israeli schools. The book’s major contribution to research on teachers and teaching is that it firmly places the teachers’ lounge on the
research agenda in this field of study. This book illustrates clearly the multidimensionality of the activities that take place behind the closed doors of the teachers’ lounges. It is impossible to account for his multidimensionality with only one theoretical perspective. Ben-Peretz and Schonmann have taken multidimensionality of the teachers’ lounges into account in their analysis—both with regards to choice of theories and research approach. They have transformed themselves into *bricoleurs* and have created a kind of *bricolage* in their analysis (Lincoln & Denzin, 1994). They are *bricoleurs* because they have foraged wide within a wide spectrum covering the most subjects in the humanities and the social sciences for theories and concepts to help them understand the phenomena of ‘the teachers’ lounges’, as well as adopting a battery of statistical instruments, both standardized and tailored to the topic. This process is described in the first chapter of the book. This *bricolage* of both theory and method has put big question marks around a long enduring illusion or myth in our community about the ‘lone teacher’. If anything, this book shows teachers are not lonely, and becoming a teacher is not a sentence to a lifetime of loneliness as some studies have tried to show. This book shows very concretely that Israeli teachers have a community to relate to, professionally, emotionally, socially and culturally. If anything, it is an invitation to lifetime of hard work, that is often characterized by rich and varied professional, emotional, social and cultural engagement.

The introduction to the book starts with a series of questions regarding teachers’ lounges, the first one creating the overall theme of the book: ‘What happens in the lounge behind it’s closed doors?’ The authors go on to argue that the lounge is where the heart of the school lies. Three assumptions for the study is spelled out with the second assumption: ‘The teachers, as adults interacting in the lounge, create their own social organization’—and the third one being the most important: ‘The lounge is the natural site for the development of professional communities in schools’. Drawing upon the work of Clandinin, Connelly and Schwab the authors present the argument that classrooms are places where teachers have practical experiences, which become storied in the context of the teachers’ lounges when they tell and re-tell their stories. Transforming experiences into a narrative that carries meaning to others requires a narrative structure. Different successive events are only related to each other on a temporal basis, that they just happened one after another. Telling a story means to imbue the set of events with a meaning so that others can re-live it and learn from it. The stories teachers tell of their encounters with children and curriculum are all kind of similar in structure all over the world since the ingredients are basically the same. Yet, each story is unique in that it happened to that child, in that class and at that time. Now that time has passed and the only echo of the episode is in the narrative told and re-lived by those that heard the story.

The myth of the lonely teacher is tackled head on in the second chapter aptly titled ‘Social situations’. That myth has survived for more than a quarter of a century or since Lortie (1975) first proposed it in *Schoolteacher*. Initially Lortie argued for the idea of the lonely teacher because of the unique relationship between teachers and children in places called classrooms. Dan Lortie probably never looked into the
teachers’ lounge because his units of analysis did not ‘tell him to do that’. Had he done that he would have seen a room physically ‘arranged’ for social interactions, tables and chairs arranged in most instances in such a way that everyone faces inwards, to the centre of the group.

In this book, Ben-Peretz and Schonmann propose different concepts and metaphors in order not just to look, but also to see, what goes on in teachers’ lounges. In fact, they propose a language of practice to talk about and what goes on in the special room in schools called teachers’ lounge (Gudmundsdottir, 2001). These concepts and metaphors are developed in subsequent chapters, carrying titles like ‘dramatic language’, ‘blurring of boundaries’, and ‘metaphors and monologues’. These words evoke poetic responses with readers, as well as the content of the chapters. The poetic responses are reinforced by the fact that they are all richly embroidered with narratives from the informants in the study. We hear the informants’ voices telling stories of their struggles, of their longing to belong and share in the collegiality of the established teachers. Like generations of ethnographers before them, Ben-Peretz and Schonmann appropriate two ‘native’ words, in their case Hebrew, to capture a special quality of the collegiality teachers’ lounges. *Firgun* (p. 32), they claim, is a special ‘term in Hebrew that expresses lack of envy for the success of others’. *Gibush* (p. 32) is a term that captures the Israeli notion of social cohesion. When *Firgun* and *Gibush* qualities are manifested in the teachers’ lounges they shape the culture that facilitates good collegiality, which in turn is instrumental in transforming a group of grown up people into a professional community sharing visions and identity, people who care about each other and their professional image. Although different teachers are acting upon different definition of *Firgun* and *Gibush* they have enough in common to be able to understand each other and establish a common platform. This is the stuff of a language of practice. The language of practice needs to be further developed to facilitate the analysis of the complex processes that shape the professional identity of not just Israeli teachers, but teachers throughout the Western world where there are special rooms for teachers in schools to talk and exchange ideas.

It is this development of a language of practice to study teachers’ lounges that is unique about this book. I have just mentioned *Firgun* and *Gibush*. But there are more, equally fascinating. In the chapter on ‘Dramatic language’, the notion of *catharsis* is developed. First we get to know how this concept is used in drama, and by way of *Firgun* and *Gibush* this term is brought into the teachers’ lounge as a ‘tool’ to analyse the collective process of catharsis. The units of these analyses are stories teachers tell, and it is through the narratives by Yardene, Shosh, Hannah and Esther that we get intimate with how catharsis is manifested in the social life of the teachers’ lounges in Israeli schools. The notions of ‘time’ and ‘proxemics’ are unpacked and transformed into analytic tools in the chapter about blurring of boundaries between the teachers’ lounges and the rest of the school, both spatially and metaphorically.

The notion of ‘root metaphor’ is appropriated from literary theory (Sarbin, 1986) and developed empirically into an analytic tool and again richly illustrated with empirical data. The root metaphors are: ‘Teachers’ lounges as a beehive’, ‘Teachers’
lounges as home’, ‘Teachers’ lounges as a kitchen’, ‘Teachers’ lounges as a coffee shop’ and ‘Teachers’ lounges as a central station’, each with an appropriate cluster of images. Together the root metaphors capture essential qualities of the social functions the teachers’ lounges play. These functions are captured by the rich imagery suggested by the metaphors. These are complex and multidimensional processes that evade even the most sophisticated of quantitative analysis.

With *Behind closed doors: teachers and the role of teachers’ lounge*, Miriam Ben-Peretz and Shifra Schonmann have broken new ground in research on teachers and teaching. They have developed a tool kit and a language of practice that will enable us their fellow students of teacher and teaching to develop units of analysis to appropriate as we approach this unique social space in schools. And this is only the beginning. As I write these words I can’t help but think: ‘Who would have imagined in the early 1960’ties at the dawn on research on teaching that today at the dawn of the twenty-first century that we would conducting research on teachers’ lounges’. Now we have the concepts, the tool kit, to capture the complex processes at work at this important site. The work can begin. Research on teaching has surely and squarely come of age.

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**Models of learning—tools for teaching (2nd edn)**

B. Joyce, E. Calhoun & D. Hopkins, 2002

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**Context**

I was intrigued to see the title of this book. It seemed to imply that the contents would be considerably transformed from the original conceptualization, *Models of teaching* by Joyce and Weil (1986), which I had read in its first edition in 1972. When I read that first edition, I was a relatively new teacher and curriculum developer and appreciated the authors’ efforts to make explicit the range of instructional approaches available. Others must have felt the same because me as two other editions were published, the last in 1986. In the late 1980s, I became an academic specializing in teaching and learning in higher education. Given this change in my role and my greater experience
as a teacher, I recognized that I would bring a quite different perspective to the book than I had in that initial reading.

My life is not the only thing that has changed in the 30 years since the first edition of the book. Western societies and the field of education have been in transition. For instance, socially we are learning how to respond to new technologies, burgeoning amounts of data that need transforming into knowledge, and reduced government funding for social services including schooling. Educationally, research into learning has provided substantial evidence that learning involves both internal and socially constructed processes and is mediated by affect and motivation (for example, Laurillard, 2002); thus, there is a call to create learning environments that support more active engagement in learning on the part of students (for example, Rogoff, 1990). The assumption is that a more student-centred approach to teaching will tend to support higher order learning (Gagne, 1992). Since different pedagogical methods activate different cognitive processes in the service of learning (Clark, 1994), the question is how and on what basis we as practitioners establish links between what the research says about learning and the teaching decisions we make to support the kind of learning we want students to undertake. It was with an awareness of the aformentioned perspectives, particularly the critical issue of links between learning and teaching, that I approached the reading of the book.

The book

The first chapter begins with a series of scenarios of classroom interactions before setting out the underlying premises of the book. (I was intrigued that there was no description of the long history of the ‘models of teaching’ work.). The authors’ assumptions are:

- ‘Learning experiences are composed of content, process and social climate’ (p. 7).
- ‘Methods make a difference in what is learned as well as how it is learned’ (p. 11).
- ‘The challenge of designing learning experiences is the central substance of the study of teaching’ (p. 11).

I concur with these assumptions. At the same time, I was looking for other premises: the essential role of explicit learning outcomes in designing learning experiences, and the impact of assessment on learning since we know from higher education research that how students are assessed strongly influences how and what they learn.

Further, the authors noted that attention to context is essential and I agree. Teaching–learning contexts (e.g. nature of students, size of class, resources available, subject matter) are critical in influencing decision-making. Thus, if their assertion that the models in the book can be used in varied contexts is to be convincing, the scenarios in the book should have represented a full range of contexts including diverse subject matters and class sizes. However, most of the scenarios demonstrated language/literacy classes. There were no mathematics scenarios and only minimal science ones (e.g. geography); yet we know that subject matter influences the nature
of the teaching and learning task. I was also not convinced by their statement that the models apply at any level including post-secondary education. Again, this assertion would have been more tenable if some of the scenarios had demonstrated university classes. Most are from the elementary level, with a few from high school. Elementary (and secondary) classes in North America are rarely more than 30–40 students whereas most post-secondary classes are large, often up to 400 students. And, many of the models would be difficult to operationalize in classes that large.

Most importantly, early on there is a statement that models of teaching are actually models for learning, yet how ‘model’ is defined is never made explicit. Oser and Baeriswyl (2001) have defined a model of instruction as an interconnected web incorporating the following four elements: (a) a chain of stimulating acts for the purpose of learning, (b) a range of goals, (c) the influence of contexts can be managed (e.g. technology), and (d) connection to personality and human development. As I noted earlier, the authors of the book do not sufficiently address element (c). Oser and Baeriswyl (2001) concur, stating that an earlier description of the models of teaching (Weil & Joyce, 1978) does not address elements (c) or (d). Clearly they view the earlier work, as did I, as centred on ‘teaching’. As I read this introductory chapter, my impression remained the same; this was about teaching not learning, despite the title of the book. More importantly, I looked for but did not find what I was seeking: explicit links between teaching decisions and research on learning, the crux of informed teaching decisions and actions. (For those seeking a thoughtful examination of the links between learning and teaching, Oser and Baeriswyl [2001] elaborate an empirical basis for what they call the ‘choreographies of teaching’.)

The second chapter lays out the structure of the book; in fact, the framework that Joyce has used for over 30 years to represent the diversity of instructional strategies. The framework consists of 26 models of teaching distributed across what are called four families: (a) information processing, (b) social, (c) personal, and (d) behavioural. A family represents similarities in: (a) types of learning promoted, and (b) orientation towards people and how they learn. In the book, only eight models are presented, examples of each family. The basis on which they chose these particular models to represent the four families is never made explicit. Further, as noted earlier, what is meant by a ‘model’ is unclear. I was left wondering ‘on what basis can we judge that the taxonomy of models presented is complete?’

The next eight chapters are each dedicated to a model. The organization of each chapter is consistent. Each begins with several scenarios. Most are at the elementary level, from North America, with some from the United Kingdom and elsewhere. The scenarios are followed by a description of the process of the model. Initially, I perceived these descriptions as sufficiently concrete and procedural enough to be pragmatically useful. However, I tried to develop a plan for one of the models, synectics, and found some critical information missing. In other words, the process is descriptive but not necessarily procedural enough for enactment. This may be a drawback for readers and I believe defeats the intention of the authors since the appendices include self/peer coaching guides for each model that are designed for
readers trying to experiment with the different models. I did not find the guide for
synectics provided me with any more guidance than the chapter had done.

The next aspect addressed in each chapter is the research that has been done on the
model. Most of the studies are comparative, quantitative studies. Unfortunately, there
is little detail about the context of each of the studies and, since the nature of the
students, the goals and the subject matter are critical in understanding effects, I could
not really explore the meaning of these studies sufficiently. Further, many of them
were dated. There were some chapters in which no research studies were cited from
the 1990s, and others had only one or two references from the early 1990s. I see this as
an important concern since, as is noted near the end of the book, there are forces in
today’s Western societies that are substantially changing the nature of students and
schooling.

The final part of each chapter is entitled reflection. This section always includes a
figure showing at the top ‘instructional effects’ of the model in that chapter and at the
bottom ‘nurturant effects’. These two terms are never explicitly defined. And as I saw
the elements in these change in each chapter, I felt that the authors had wanted us to
use this changing figure as a means to compare and contrast the different models. And
I was definitely, as a reader, looking for such a tool. But, the authors never described
where these sets of ‘effects’ came from. On what basis are ‘nurturant’ and
‘instructional aspects’ reported? Also, we do not know what the comprehensive set
of ‘aspects’ is that is being drawn from. What I needed and wanted was to see the
overall set of ‘aspects’ they were using as a basis for the analysis in order to understand
how each model is drawing on these. This would have enabled me to see which
models would reinforce each other, which would expand the range of learning skills
practiced, which models may be more comprehensive or more aligned with each
other, which would conflict. In working through the different models, I was seeking a
mechanism to compare and contrast the different models and was not able to find an
overarching framework to do so.

Chapter 12 attempts to provide that framework. Here, the authors address
conditions of learning and our responsibility as teachers to create them for students.
They draw on Gagne (1965). They include a table that relates Gagne’s (1965)
conditions of learning to the different models, but not to the ‘nurturant’ and
‘instructional effects’ that are the basis for the analysis of each model in the chapters.
In other words, they do try to bridge learning and teaching, but this is done minimally
and there is no bridge to the framework used in the chapters.

I wondered why they did not draw on more recent work by Gagne as well as others
who have examined learning. I am not a learning psychologist, but I know there have
been substantial efforts since the 1960s to enhance our understanding of how learning
occurs. For instance, for the past decade the notion of situated cognition (for example,
Lave & Wenger, 1991) has been strongly influencing how we understand learning.

Chapter 13 focuses on implementation. There are three sections, one on working
alone, another working with a colleague, and the last working institutionally. Chapter
14 focuses on educational policies and factors influencing society today; for instance,
immigration, knowledge-based economy, accountability of publicly funded institu-
tions. One of the trends noted is the constant evolution in technologies that can or could be useful in enhancing instruction. I concur; teachers need to and are asking: How can new technologies enable or constrain student experience of the conditions of learning? Yet, only in the chapter on simulations is there a brief discussion of how the new technologies can influence instructional strategies.

The Appendix begins with an explanation of the concept of ‘effect size’, extremely useful since many readers may not understand this concept and it is the basis for the research that is reported. This is followed by the self/peer coaching guides for each of the models presented in the book.

It is evident that I approached reading this book with high expectations about its focus on ‘models of learning’; I was hopeful that it would help the reader link research on learning with the decision-making central to teaching. Having a language and a conceptual framework make us more able to engage in individual and collegial examination of our teaching and student-learning, and hopefully enhance both (McAlpine & Harris, 1999). While I am supportive of any effort to provide a framework for analysing what is often unexamined—our teaching practice and its relation to learning—this book was not what I had hoped it would be!

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