Towards a Theory of Development in the Management Domain

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Paper presented at the Australian Association for Research in Education Annual Conference, Newcastle, New South Wales.
Tuesday, 29 November, 1994.

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Purpose of the theory
One goal of teacher education is to assist teachers in their development of expertise in the classroom management domain. Research on teacher cognition and teacher education can contribute to the movement of teachers toward expertise through assisting in the construction of a ecologically valid understanding of the nature of teacher development and the influences that affect this development. This paper stems from grounded theory research into development toward expertise in the management domain. A basic principle underlying this research and theory was that there are multiple subjective realities experienced by student teachers in their professional development. The research included a study of schema change and development path patterns to provide an understanding of development in this domain. This study was designed to assist in the formulation of a research-based conceptual framework to assist teacher educators in both understanding the process of teacher development in the classroom management domain and in planning teacher education components to facilitate such development.
The initial sections of this paper are devoted to an explanation of the nature of management expertise as the goal of development in the management domain, a brief description of the nature of schema types and development path patterns, and two mini-case studies of development path patterns. The subsequent sections focus upon factors and influences upon development in this domain and include a discussion of the issues to be addressed by teacher educators in developing and implementing programs to facilitate this development.

Management expertise

This theory of development of management expertise explores the capacity of student and inservice teachers to respond fully and sensitively to management events in a classroom situation. The fullness of the management response, as seen in experts, requires the capacity to bring to the interpretation of a situation and choice of response the total management schema (declarative and procedural) and the whole self (personal and professional). The expert's management schema is richly differentiated but highly and abstractly structured so that in decision making the schema is used with high efficiency. Experts have an openness which reflects a readiness to select from possible responses on the basis of the appropriateness of responses to the particular situation. The commitment is to nurturance of groups for productive learning whenever possible and appropriate. The schema remains open to the short term use of other, and at times apparently incongruent, ways of ensuring students focus upon learning. Sensitivity in response requires a capacity to use the schema in an anticipatory fashion to predict or anticipate the implications of one’s response to different needs and circumstances and to be flexible in the selection of a response within one’s domain conceptualisation and instantiated conceptual framework. Sensitivity in choice of a response will include taking into account both the group and individual pupils’ perceptions based on prior experience both within and outside the classroom. The focus is upon the development and learning of the students rather than upon teachers' personal needs for order or relationships.

Schema types and development path patterns

The grounded theory nature of this study of development required the use of data-derived and conceptually-related schema types. Both empirical and conceptual validation of types were used for examining the appropriateness of the schema types for the study of development path patterns. The empirical validation entailed the analysis of both the cross-sectional and longitudinal data sets while the conceptual validation entailed the examination of the credibility of the schema types as evidenced through the fruitfulness of the use of the types for analysing schema differences over time, identifying the presence of patterns within the schema differences, and providing conceptual tools for examining schema change processes over time (Eisner, 1991). The key characteristics of each type are presented below. The five schema types were grouped into three levels (low-types 1 and 2,
high-types 3 and 4, and very high-type 5) across which schema change occurred. The classification of the schema types into the three levels was based upon the differences in schema meaning and structure evident across these three groupings of schema types and the incidence of the different types in the data. Types 3 and 4 were referred to as high levels of schema types because the management approaches expressed in belief statements were more similar than those of Types 1 and 2 to those of the experts (Type 5). Since the occurrence of schema type 5 was rare this schema type was collapsed with high. Schema type levels were used for reporting whether teachers stayed at low or high levels or moved across the low-high threshold. While a professional goal is for teachers to be expressing higher level schema types it was expected that there would be movements across the low-high threshold as student teachers addressed particular aspects of their development in the management domain.

Type 1 see themselves as the source and controller of events thus using a directive strategy. The objective varies across forms of knowledge with declarative knowledge being marked by idealistic focus on learning while an orderliness focus tends to take over as knowledge becomes proceduralized. Because of their having few ideas about teaching, the still sparse instructional ideas come to dominate in the management schema causing confusion within the schema expressions across declarative and procedural forms of knowledge. Despite this they see themselves as being moderately effective in producing learning outcomes.

With Type 2 a directive for order approach emerges. Declarative, but not procedural, knowledge about organisation and deviancy becomes extensive and very important, showing a belief in order but with little knowledge about how to achieve it. There is a problem, however, as relationships ideas are also of some importance. Conflict is possible as, say, the wish to be on good terms and be liked interferes with behaviours necessary to obtain order. Consolidation at a Type 2 level requires a resolution of this disequilibrium and an acquisition of procedural knowledge. Efficacy levels are still moderately high suggesting a confidence level which may be unrealistic and unfounded in practice.

Type 3 is characterised by a clear commitment to obtain learning but with more variability in strategy. Directiveness is favoured more often than facilitative. Teaching/learning becomes congruently very prominent in both the extensive declarative knowledge and the limited procedural knowledge base. Here relationships and, possibly, organisation have become shelved for the time being. Thinking across categories is narrowed so that relationships and organisation ideas have a low prominence but within these constraints it becomes more complex and logically related.

Personal efficacy about teaching outcomes is high and somewhat unrealistic suggesting a rigidity resulting from the move away from Type 2.
The learning goal of Type 4 becomes more pervasive across all knowledge forms and a facilitative strategy replaces directiveness, especially in procedural knowledge. There is a change of ideas. Instructional ideas are very important but relationships and organisation are also prominent so conflict could come from reconciling three prominent categories with each other and with the variability in strategies. A Type 4 schema is more organised, business-like and practical in its approach to management in concrete situations but the process causes confusion as they try to form general guidelines from their experiences. Confidence in efficacy to achieve outcomes decreases from high to moderate.

The Type 5 schema is remarkable in that there are consistent aims to achieve learning and to nurture group well-being. Strategy and the complexity of thinking are, however, flexibly adapted to contexts. They describe themselves as basically facilitative but do not hesitate to be directive where appropriate. Management is seen as important but as a means for achieving the main purposes. Across all forms of knowledge there is a richness and extensiveness of ideas and particularly in procedural knowledge they establish and maintain routines wherever possible. Resolution of tension allows a focus away from self and onto the needs and perceptions of learners.

The schema has a logical and hierarchical integrated structure enabling complex and abstract thinking. They are confident about dealing with difficult children and overcoming contextual factors but they are not as confident and possibly more realistic about their efficacy in achieving learning.

Development path patterns and transitions in development

Teachers’ developmental paths are the routes teachers take as they bring their actions to more effective states by means of adopting new ways of conceptualising and responding to phenomena. These new ways of conceptualising and responding subsume, at least in the long term, the former ways of conceptualising and responding. They are paths in that there is movement toward a goal with no assumption that all teachers follow the same route toward that goal. They are developmental in that there are changes in the teachers as they move towards higher levels of development or expertise, though this does not mean that each movement along the path is overtly in the direction of a higher level of development. Development path patterns provided a two dimensional view of development, across three or more occasions, indicating both the overall direction of the movement (axis) and the schema type level(s) involved in that movement (See Figures 1 and 2 for representations of induction and decline development path patterns).

Four major categories for the analysis of preservice teachers' development path patterns emerged which allowed the movements in schema types across different occasions to be traced. These categories were: induction-low/high, decline-high/low,
plateau-low, unstable plateau-low.

Figure 1- induction low-high development path pattern

Figure 2 - decline high-low development path pattern

Mini-case studies of development path patterns
Two mini-case studies prepared from the ordered tree and questionnaire responses are presented below. They illustrate, methodologically, how a rich description of a participant’s management schema, personal classroom management history, and situational factors can be obtained from ecologically valid data collecting procedures. The induction and decline development path patterns were chosen to highlight the way different factors influence development in this domain.

Induction development path pattern - (Schema types 1, 1, 1, 1/2, 4 - Year 1 Pre to Year 3 Post)
Over the first two occasions Anne was grappling with the problem of integrating the organisational and relationships aspects, each of which was rich and differentiated. She was unable to find a common theme until the fifth occasion when the focus changed to the needs of pupils and the benefits of pupil-pupil interaction by group work planned, organised and monitored by the teacher. Here she was able to see that what she had to do as teacher was related to what she wanted to do for pupils in a co-operative group environment.
From the start Anne recognised the need for both procedural and disciplinary management and referred in detail to various procedural knowledge practices to ensure that “discipline rules are always present”. She rejected her own pupiling experiences where the teacher dominated and pupils were non-participants reduced to listeners. She gave attention to relationships, seeing rapport as necessary for pupil progress with learning occurring through interaction. This combination of ideas resulted in a directive for learning approach over three occasions which was tempered by relationship ideals so that she remained a Type 1 manager. A further outcome was her recognition of the need for flexibility. After an experience of “both bad and good behaved classes” she concluded that class rapport was allowed to develop “only if the class is accepting and agreeable”. On the fourth occasion control and order were still strong with even more emphasis on flexibility in goals and expectations and relationships were still important. She retained her multi-concept relational structure which was present from the start but her approach became facilitative for learning.
She saw herself as a learner with clear ideas about acceptable standards of behaviour. She rejected teachers who “had given up on their classes” and environment which was neither friendly nor pleasant. Her advice was generally stated with a lower structure and by occasion five the focus was on the self of the student teacher as she suggested
that they “think only of the teachers you had who you feel you have enjoyed their lessons and felt comfortable.”

Her outcomes efficacy increased greatly in year 3 but difficult student efficacy declined more realistically to lower levels. Contextual efficacy was fairly high but decreased on the last occasion.

Decline development path pattern - (Schema types 3, 1/3, 1, 2: Year 1 Pre to Year 2 Post)

Doris declined from high to low schema type levels over four occasions. Initially there was no evidence of any management schema as the focus was almost entirely on instructional and relationships semes in both belief and advice responses with organisation seemingly shelved at this point in development. The idea that the teacher must be prepared and enthusiastic was dominant also in her most satisfying and disappointing management experiences, and in her prior experiences as a pupil.

For the most part this schema continued over the second occasion with some small modification such as an increase in non-declarative semes and with the added qualification in advice to be “pleasant but not too friendly”. This was associated with a decline to a directive for learning approach and a structure decline to a quasi-relational level. Tree logic was consequential and hierarchical.

By the third occasion (pre-year 2) there was evidence of an attempt to shelve relationships ideas and focus on the differentiation of organisational semes which increased frequency and extensiveness in belief and even more particularly in advice. There were, however, signs that the conflict over relationships was not resolved and that management had still not been separated from instruction. In Doris’s self-description there were signs that all three categories were still being juggled as she “also wants students to admire and enjoy my company”. Although her belief structure returned to a relational level, tree structure logic became additive as new semes entered but were not able to be related to the existing structure.

After the practicum, although organisational ideas were still present, they were not further differentiated and relationship ideas returned more strongly. Particularly in her declarative knowledge in her tree, instructional and relationships ideas again dominated although the latter had changed to “not being seen as totally unapproachable”. Attribution to instructional ideas about teacher enthusiasm, methods and interesting content appeared in describing both practicums and in her perceptions of change from primary to secondary classroom practicum situations.

The focus on order was still evident in her advice to others suggesting that while principled procedural knowledge about management was being learnt it was not being incorporated into declarative knowledge. There was very little change in script-based procedural knowledge across occasions.

Doris stayed on the final occasion with a directive for learning
approach but the structure of her beliefs again reverted to a quasi-relational level as she was unable to achieve an integration of these three categories in her thinking. It could be inferred from Doris’s responses that she did not receive the necessary guidance on practicum to facilitate her acceptance of the challenge. She then appeared to walk away from it. Her co-operating teacher in secondary school was rated as having little influence on her practicum experience. The difficult secondary class was rated as having some, and a positive, influence on her beliefs. Doris’s efficacy measures about outcomes rose steadily until the fourth occasion when they declined. Her efficacy for contextual factors rose steadily while efficacy for difficult students was low but steady and declined slightly on the last occasion. Generally low efficacy may have contributed to her decline.

Factors influencing development in management domain
Schema factors—Separation, differentiation and integration of management domain

The expert case studies offered insights into the process whereby the ideas and principles about management become separated initially from other major areas of a pedagogical schema that have to do with instruction and relationships. This separation, into reasonable levels of differentiation, permits the development of a repertoire of conceptual ideas for use in the solution of management problems using the separated management ideas as a distinct mental entity.

During the second part of this process, the connections among management, instruction and relationships are explored and eventually integrated by the experts so that group relationships for the enhancement of learning is elevated to a major goal and good organisation for order becomes a means to an end for the attainment of the major goals. This clarification facilitates a distinction between the stable overarching goals and variable strategies to be employed in different situations. It also shows the fruit of a new conceptualisation of relationships as being concerned with the whole group as well as with individuals.

Experts reported that the process took time to evolve and was hindered earlier by their own need for very high standards in the attainment of order. Anne and Doris showed the challenges involved in this schema separation, differentiation and integration. The attention given to different aspects of management (instructional, organisational, disciplinary, relationships) varied across people and occasions with the development being impeded at times by a rigidity of mindset, or the holding of idealistic goals or untested myths. Development often included addressing the nature of relationships with these being seen at times as an essential part of management while at other times it could be shelved as organisational or disciplinary aspects were established or consolidated within one’s declarative and procedural knowledge bases. For Doris the continuing attention to relationships was a hindrance to development as this schema conflict had not been
resolved and the management schema was not sufficiently separated from instruction

The integration of the different aspects of classroom management remained an issue for Anne during the first two years of her course. The final resolution of this task was facilitated by her comparatively high level of schema integration and her ability in Year 2 to see flexibility as an essential part of management. Doris, on the other hand, was unsuccessful in juggling the different aspects of management. Her unresolved schema conflict impeded her exploring and defining the particular role of each of each aspect of management.

Personal influences
Anne's development was facilitated by her adopting the role of self as learner. This attitude was important for participants if they were to focus upon the reality of their management experiences and reflect upon different ways they addressed particular issues. Such an attitude was also associated in Anne with an ability to learn from and not be impeded by her own pupils' management experiences.

Different patterns in their teacher efficacy scores were noted for Anne and Doris. Anne seemed to have increased in outcomes efficacy while attaining realistic levels of difficult student and contextual efficacy. Doris's decline across high-low schema types was possibly associated with her low efficacy scores.

Situational influences
These two mini-case studies show the role difficult management experiences can play in development. Anne was able to see more clearly the role of relationships and the need for flexibility after her difficult management experiences. Doris, on the other hand, did not address the challenge of the difficult management classes. Her declarative knowledge was not transferred into procedural knowledge. A cooperating teacher could have played a significant role with Doris in acquiring and consolidating procedural knowledge and facilitating the resolution of the schema conflict about relationships, order and instruction.

Implications for teacher education
Teacher educators need to have a concept of development which is non-linear, focusses upon both personal and professional aspects of development and allows for student teachers' movements across schema types in different development path patterns. Their understanding of students' development will be enhanced by the use of schema tasks and measures which provide a comprehensive understanding of students' prior management experiences as pupils in schools, members of family or employees in other occupations. The data from these measures can provide an understanding of the students' schema type and the issues confronting them in their schema development. These issues include the separation, differentiation and integration of the knowledge base with this requiring consolidation for both declarative and procedural knowledge. These processes can be facilitated through the study of role models and the exploration of different management responses to
Management situations. Development can be facilitated through the experience of difficult management classes though this is best accompanied by supportive cooperating teachers who possess a developmental focus for their practicum role. The role of teacher efficacy is important and cooperating teachers and university staff need to be sensitive to changes in efficacy levels as students move across the high-low schema type threshold.

Conclusion

This focus upon development in the management domain questions some assumptions in current teacher education programs and raises issues that need to be included as specific focus points within the interventions offered to individual student teachers. The attention to the declarative and procedural knowledge bases, the sources of schema conflict and its resolution, the importance of the personal dimension in development and the essential role of situational factors offer a framework which can contribute much in the development of teachers' pre-service and professional development programs.

Reference


1 Development path patterns provided a two dimensional view of development, across three or more occasions, indicating both the overall direction of the movement (axis) and the low and/or high schema type level(s) involved in that movement.