

Emotional ecology: The intersection of emotional knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge in teaching

Michalinos Zembylas^{*,1}

Open University of Cyprus, Nicosia, Cyprus

Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to offer some theoretical as well as empirical examples that describe the interrelations between pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) and emotional knowledge in teaching and learning. The argument put forward is that there is a need to expand current conceptions of PCK and acknowledge the role of emotional knowledge. It is shown how a teacher's emotional knowledge about teaching and learning is an inextricable part of the ecosystem of teacher knowledge; this is called *emotional ecology*. Our research shows that the construct of emotional ecology occurs on different planes as there are different types of emotional knowledge that are aspects of PCK. The implications for pre-service and in-service teacher development are discussed.

© 2006 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

Keywords: Emotional ecology; Emotional knowledge; Pedagogical content knowledge

1. Introduction

In the past two decades, “teacher knowledge” or “teacher practical knowledge” has emerged as a major area of exploration for educational researchers (Carter, 1990; Connelly & Clandinin, 1985; Elbaz, 1983, 1991; Grossman, 1990; Hashweh, 2005; Shulman, 1986, 1987). In the literature about teacher knowledge, educational researchers have examined teacher thinking, beliefs, attitudes, and teaching practices and have built on Shulman's work on pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) as a specific form of teacher knowledge. Shulman (1987)

defined PCK as “that special amalgam of content and pedagogy that is uniquely the province of teachers, their own special form of professional understanding” (p. 15). In other words, “teacher practical knowledge” builds bridges between subject matter concepts and pedagogical ideas.

One aspect of teacher knowledge, however, that has so far received limited attention is its *emotional* dimensions. Absent from past conceptualizations of pedagogical content knowledge, in particular, is how teachers understand the emotional aspects of teaching and learning—for example, how teachers and students develop “emotional understanding” (Denzin, 1984) of each other or of the subject matter that they explore. Emotional understanding, according to Denzin (1984), “is an intersubjective process requiring that one person enter into the field of experience of another and experience for herself

*Tel.: +357 22411600; fax: +357 22411601.

E-mail address: m.zembylas@ouc.ac.cy.

¹Current address: 5 Ayiou Antoniou, Strovolos, 2002 Nicosia, Cyprus.

the same or similar experiences experienced by another” (p. 137). In recent articles, Rosiek (2003) and McCaughtry (2004) identify the need to expand current conceptions of PCK and pay attention to the emotional understanding of student learning.

In this paper, I argue that any effort to expand current conceptions of PCK should also include the connections between PCK and *emotional knowledge* in general—that is, a teacher’s knowledge about/from his or her emotional experiences with respect to one’s self, others (e.g. students, colleagues), and the wider social and political context in which teaching and learning takes place. In particular, the importance of “teacher emotion” in pedagogy and curriculum has been addressed in recent research (see e.g. Day & Leitch, 2001; Hargreaves, 2001, 2005; Schutz & DeCuir, 2002; Sutton & Wheatley, 2003; Van Veen & Lasky, 2005; Winograd, 2003; Zembylas, 2005a). Several studies have provided detailed accounts of teacher emotions and the role they play in teachers’ professional and personal development. However, theory and research on PCK has tended to ignore the emotional knowledge of teaching from analyses of teacher knowledge. Although, it has been pointed out that “knowledge” in the term “teacher knowledge” is used as an overarching concept “summarizing a large variety of *cognitions*, from conscious and well-balanced opinions to unconscious and unreflected intuitions” (Verloop, Van Driel, & Meijer, 2001, p. 446, added emphasis), the literature on PCK and the literature on emotions in teaching and learning remain unconnected.

At the same time, one cannot avoid but notice that Verloop et al.’s reference to “cognitions” reflects a dichotomy that remains problematic. That is, on the one hand, “emotional knowledge” is never acknowledged as such nor is it considered as a valid component of teacher knowledge; on the other hand, the statement about “the tacit and intuitive components of teacher cognitions” (p. 447) suggests that not only emotional aspects (i.e. tacit knowing and intuition) are simply “components” of cognitions, but also teacher cognitions are assumed to be consisting the whole of teacher knowledge. Such a definition of teacher knowledge seems to perpetuate the traditional dichotomy between cognition and emotion—always, of course, at the expense of the latter.

Therefore, I share McCaughtry’s (2004) remarks that, “Although enlightening and beneficial, research on PCK has also been one sided” (p. 33) in

not considering the complex emotional dimensions of teacher knowledge. Not surprisingly, an analysis of teachers’ understandings of the emotional dimensions of teaching and learning is needed to supplement the research focused on the cognitive aspects of teacher knowledge. To be sure, an analytic distinction between emotional and cognitive aspects is not rejected as unimportant; however, any such distinction is viewed as a product of the theoretical imagination rather than a reflection of isolated phenomena in the real world (cf. Wertsch, 2005). The purpose of this paper is to offer some theoretical as well as empirical examples that describe the *interrelations* between PCK and emotional knowledge in teaching and learning. The argument put forward is that there is a need to expand current conceptions of PCK and acknowledge the role of emotional knowledge. To do so, one has to explore the full range of what Clandinin and Connelly (1996) and Connelly and Clandinin (1999) have called “teachers’ professional knowledge landscapes”—a territory of private and public knowledge, of curricular requirements and passionate explorations, of emotional knowing and cognitive outcomes. This is undertaken on the assumption that issues about content, curriculum and pedagogy cannot be separated from emotional issues and that all those are inseparable to a teachers’ PCK.

2. Emotional ecology

I argue that teacher knowledge is a form of *knowledge ecology*—a system consisting of many sources and forms of knowledge in a symbiotic relationship: content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, curriculum knowledge, knowledge of learners, emotional knowledge, knowledge of educational values and goals and so on. These forms of knowledge involve many agents—teachers, students, classrooms, resources, school, parents, community and so on; it is within this ecology that teaching and learning occur. Clearly, the interactions among teachers and learners are at the core of this ecology. The performative function of this ecology can be seen in the emotional experiences of teachers and learners, that is, how emotions are enacted in the context of teaching and learning (Zembylas, 2005a). Inevitably, then, a teacher’s emotional knowledge about teaching and learning is an inextricable part of the ecosystem of teacher knowledge; I call this *emotional ecology*.

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/375062>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/375062>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)