

A Critique Paper on Hennessy et al. (2021)

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Paper Selected

Hennessey, S., Kershner, R., Calcagni, E., & Ahmed, F. (2021). Supporting practitioner-led inquiry into classroom dialogue with a research-informed professional learning resource: A design-based approach. *Review of Education*, 9(3), 1–48. <https://doi.org/10.1002/rev3.3269>

Paper Summary

Hennessey et al. (2021) presented a qualitative research project aimed at supporting practitioner-led inquiry into classroom dialogue. Using a design-based approach involving 74 participants ranging from early education to the tertiary levels, the authors examined the effectiveness of the Teacher Scheme for Educational Dialogue Analysis (T-SEDA) resource pack for promoting teachers' implementation of dialogic pedagogy. By examining data derived from surveys, inquiry reports and interviews, Hennessey and colleagues reported significant effect sizes attributable to the T-SEDA in participating classrooms in terms of classroom dialogue implementation.

This paper began with a clear and purposeful introduction. The authors motivated their study with research gaps and limitations from unidirectional intervention designs — an argument naturally led to a design-based research (DBR) methodology. A brief description of DBR was then given followed by a list of its distinctive features. These paragraphs served non-specialists particularly well in terms of scaffolding and contextualising this project. Subsequently, Hennessey and colleagues linked T-SEDA's design principles to DBR by explicitly positioning practitioners as contributors to research knowledge. The introduction section ended with an outline, giving readers a clear structure and purpose for this paper.

Next, T-SEDA as a professional development (PD) tool were carefully derived in the context of classroom dialogue development. The authors firstly introduced the theoretical foundation of their key concept “dialogue” (Vygotsky's sociocultural theory), carefully distinguished dialogue from talks, and presented the challenges for both students and teachers during pedagogical practices. Prior publications related to classroom dialogue were then presented, with T-SEDA being anchored to the strand of

research that focuses on the forms and functions of classroom discourse. After rejecting the “recitation” model, Hennessy and co-authors listed obstacles to wider implementations of learning-focused dialogue, particularly in secondary schools, and identified PD opportunities as effective remedies for promoting classroom dialogic practices. The success of various PD setup has been mixed, however, due to most PD program’s reliance on external providers, small scales as well as short durations. Although compulsory participation and/or random assignment greatly promote the validity of study designs, such approach removes teachers’ agency—a problem T-SEDA was specifically designed to address thanks to its two-way designs and being an open educational resource (OER).

The paper then described in detail the composition of a T-SEDA pack. The authors provided sufficient information regarding the length (70 pages), content (user’s guide, core resources, and additional resources), as well as how to implement the “reflective cycle” through both texts and diagrams. T-SEDA and similar packages designed under the DBR approach were shown to be widely tested and well received, although the exact motives behind teachers’ engagement with T-SEDA as well as the organisational structures and circumstances conducive to T-SEDA uptake were not well understood. Resultantly, the authors made answering these questions as the mission of this research project.

Credibility Examination

This study has a mix success in establishing its research credibility.

Internal Coherence

Internal coherence refers to the connection between the research questions and the research design. The authors listed two research questions: a) “Why might individual practitioners engage with and disengage from T-SEDA inquiry?” and b) “What are the organisational structures and circumstances supporting engagement with T-SEDA in different local settings?” and employed a design-based approach in exploring the answers. In answering the “why” question, Hennessy and colleagues conducted

Transparency of Research Process

Hennessey et al.'s (2021) study is highly transparent in its research process. Under the guidance of Creswell and Creswell (2018, pp. 185–187), the study authors have demonstrated a purposeful selection of participants, discussed the recruitment strategy, commented on the number of participants, indicated the type of data that had been collected

Validation Strategies

Discussion

References

- Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2018). *Research design* (5th ed.). SAGE.
- Hennessey, S., Kershner, R., Calcagni, E., & Ahmed, F. (2021). Supporting practitioner-led inquiry into classroom dialogue with a research-informed professional learning resource: A design-based approach. *Review of Education*, 9(3), 1–48. <https://doi.org/10.1002/rev3.3269>