

Defining teacher mind frames

August 2018

How could teacher mind frames be defined in the context of the ILETC project?

What were we looking for?

The ILETC team collectively set out to define the notion of teacher mind frames through a literature-based reflection about the issues central to our project. The aim was to map out a common research landscape that the large multidisciplinary research team could navigate across, as well as to frame the study and provide a scope to respond to the project's key research question.

What did we find out?

Teachers have a significant influence on the classroom learning environment, and hence, the student learning that occurs within it. Within the vast literature of teachers' cognition, which is interdisciplinary in nature, a suite of terms have been used to describe teachers' thinking or thought processes. The ILETC team differentiates between teacher 'mind sets' (the epistemological beliefs held by teachers) and 'mind frames' - the mechanisms teachers consciously use to implement their beliefs. Of the latter, 'teacher beliefs' is a more commonly used term, however 'teacher mind frame' has emerged as a more holistic term.

In the context of the ILETC project, teacher mind frames can be defined as the ways that teachers consciously think about their teaching roles, the content and pedagogical knowledge, which in turn has an impact on their attitudes, actions and decisions that are likely to have significant impacts on student learning. This project applies Hattie's conceptualisations of teacher mind frames (2012; Hattie & Zierer, 2017), which sets the scope for the study. The set of ten mind frames—the ways teachers think about their role, their impact and their success—underpin teachers' every action and decision that impact positively on student learning. While a teacher's mind frames are essentially cognitive and behavioural in construct, the possibility exists to treat them as measurable actions. The first three mind frames relate to impact, the next two to change and challenge, and the last five to learning focus.

Impact

1. I am an evaluator of my impact on student learning.
2. I see assessment as informing my impact and next steps.
3. I collaborate with my peers and my students about my conceptions of progress and my impact.

Challenge and change

4. I am a change agent and believe all students can improve.
5. I strive for challenge and not merely "doing my best".

Learning focus

6. I give and help students understand feedback and I interpret and act on feedback given to me.
7. I engage as much in dialogue as monologue.
8. I explicitly inform students what successful impact looks like from the outset.
9. I build relationships and trust so that learning can occur in a place where it is safe to make mistakes and learn from others.
10. I focus on learning and the language of learning

What does this mean for the project?

The interplay between spatial characteristics and teacher characteristics in a learning environment is central to the project. Through clearly defining the mind frames that teachers can aspire to, a good theoretical framework is established for the ILETC project to explore ways of supporting teachers in their transition to and use of innovative learning environments



For further information see full report: Mahat, M., Bradbeer, C., Byers, T. & Imms, W. (2018). Innovative Learning Environments and Teacher Change: Defining key concepts. Melbourne: University of Melbourne, LEARN. Retrieved from: <http://www.iletc.com.au/publications/reports>



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