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# Teacher Education Advancement Network

## TEAN Conference 2024 Abstracts

This is a large document with full conference abstracts – DO NOT PRINT!

Use the hyperlink below to go to the 'at a glance' conference programme

Use author names or keywords or the presentation code number to search for specific abstracts

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## **Presentation 29: Combining the science and psychology of learning to promote learner agency – starting with self-assessment?**

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The doctoral study at the heart of this session adopted principles from critical pedagogy (Freire, 1972) to engage teachers in consideration of fixed ability grouping and its reported effects. It sought to offer teachers time and space to explore alternatives to fixed ability grouping. Teachers self-selected onto the project and engaged with two sessions of CPD focussed on Pedagogy for Transformability (PFT) (Hart et al. 2004) – a framework based on core principles of Trust, Co-agency and Everybody. It seeks to enhance children's self-concept and efficacy in learning.

The current drive in Initial Teacher Education is to base all training in the science of learning and how the brain works – not forgetting the constant focus and emphasis on curriculum knowledge – almost to the exclusion of the psychology of learning. Consequently, teaching is increasingly being reduced to a formulaic and instrument endeavour, evidenced through the proliferation of schemes of learning delivered through a series of transmissive, teacher directed slides.

This transmissive approach is commonly seen in mathematics, where mastery resources utilise much of what is known about brain function in the learning process and breaks concepts down into small, carefully sequenced steps, presented through pictorial representations. It seeks to move all children's learning forward at the same pace and is founded on the principle that all children are capable of learning mathematics. However, challenges in developing children's sense of self-concept and self-efficacy, to support their developing mathematical and learner identities, are ignored.

Teachers in this study explored adjustments to their practice on a half-termly basis before sharing their observations and reflections in focus group discussions, over three different cycles. The study concluded with an interview which provided participants the opportunity to share any new or adjusted practices and

understandings. The analysis framework for the transcribed data was structured around Kemmis' (2010) 'doings, sayings and relatings'. Three core themes were crafted from the transcriptions: control, competence and confidence, and were related to the challenges and benefits for both children and teachers of PFT.

An important adjustment to practice emerging from the study concerned the re-positioning of self-assessment within a lesson, as a means of enacting the principles of PFT, and challenging the perceived need for fixed ability grouping. This consideration brings together valuable understandings from both the science and the sociology of learning, moves learning forward in carefully sequenced steps and positively impacts learners' self-concept and self-efficacy (Dweck & Yeager, 2019).

### Key References

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## Presentation 30: Grading the Practicum: Calibrating assessment of professional competence in initial teacher education

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Teacher quality and competence has been recognised internationally, as being central to effective education, societal wellbeing and economic development (OECD, 2018), and to prepare teachers appropriately, the practicum is a key component of Initial Teacher Education (ITE) (White and Forgasz, 2016). A tension has been identified however between the various roles of the supervising tutor in terms of providing formative feedback in this context whilst also being aware that they are formally assessing student teacher progress (Lunenberg et al, 2014). Pedder and James (2012) argue that explicit assessment procedures allow for new understandings and perspectives to be developed. The purpose of this comparative study was to consider the assessment processes employed in two international jurisdictions: the USA and Northern Ireland, to ascertain how there could be greater calibration of understanding between university tutors and student teachers on the most appropriate means of assessment of competence as displayed in the practicum experience. The comparative nature of this study provided opportunities to analyse the role of core values and institutional forces that shape key processes across different settings.

The study employed a qualitative, interpretive design with data initially being collected from two specialist group, purposive samples (Newby, 2010) of participants in each of the jurisdictions. The first was a group of university tutors and the second, a group of student teachers. The questions related to the application of assessment criteria to observed practical teaching and the opportunities and challenges, arising from the assessment process. Secondly, focus groups of tutors and students were conducted to explore the emerging