Capturing Teacher Priorities: Using Real-world Eye-Tracking to Investigate Expert Teacher Priorities across Two Cultures

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Teacher’s gaze patterns could reveal the different priorities expert teachers and novice teachers might have in their classrooms, according to a recent study published in Learning and Instruction. Using eye-tracking glasses, McIntyre and colleagues investigated how gaze proportions might be different for teachers of different expertise and culture, indicating differences in teachers’ priorities. Twenty secondary school teachers from Hong Kong and twenty secondary school teachers from the United Kingdom participated in this study. Teachers were considered as expert teachers if they had six years’ or more experience, were selected by their school leadership as experts in teaching, had professional membership within the field of teaching, and scored highly in performance ratings.

Teachers’ gaze proportions were measured during questioning (information seeking) and lecturing (information giving) in normal timetabled lessons, for their gaze frequencies on the students, student materials, teacher materials and non-instructional regions (such as door, windows). The findings were as follows:

- Regardless of culture, expert teachers prioritized their gaze to students during both questioning and lecturing, while beginning teachers prioritized non-instructional classroom regions
- HK teachers prioritized their gazes to teacher materials while UK teachers prioritized it to non-instructional regions during lecturing
- HK expert teachers also used more teacher materials gaze than the UK expert teachers

The authors suggested that the finding of prioritization of gaze to students by expert teachers was consistent with other research since prioritization of students deepens students’ understanding of the subject, emotional security, security with peers, and their interest in subject materials.

Source: Learning and Instruction, 60:215-224.