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Installing “good mathematics teaching”: hegemonic strategies and alliances of researchers.

Straehler-Pohl, Hauke (ed.) et al., The disorder of mathematics education. Challenging the socio-political dimensions of research. Cham: Springer (ISBN 978-3-319-34005-0/hbk; 978-3-319-34006-7/ebook). 107-120 (2017).

Summary: We discuss some examples of direct or indirect involvement of mathematics education researchers in teacher evaluation and curriculum design; and point to hegemonic strategies of persuading sponsors and policy makers how to install “good mathematics teaching”. We illustrate how particular research approaches stabilise “good mathematics teaching” by structuring the meaning around interpretations of learning outcomes in the form of measurements, which are taken as symptoms of a range of social phenomena. Students’ scores on mathematics tests are interpreted as indicators of their potential to become skilled “knowledge workers”, citizens and consumers; teachers’ and schools’ effectiveness in producing gain scores as indicators of the quality of mathematics teaching for which they can be made accountable; and improvements in national measures as symptoms of innovative capacity that predicts relative competitive advantage. Our concern is the alliances researchers might seek in capitalising on the privileged status of mathematics that relies on the reiteration of those imaginations, in particular in contexts where funding of research favours “findings” that emerge from studies that identify “what works”.

Classification: D40 D30 D20 B20

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