

Content knowledge and pedagogy - what comes first?

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What makes great teaching?

- The two factors with the strongest evidence of improving pupil attainment are:
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- Specific practices which have good evidence of improving attainment include
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- Common practices which are not supported by evidence include
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What makes great teaching? Coe and Higgins

- The two factors with the strongest evidence of improving pupil attainment are:
 - teachers' content knowledge, including their ability to understand how students think about a subject and identify common misconceptions
 - quality of instruction, which includes using strategies like effective questioning and the use of assessment
 - <http://www.curee.co.uk/publication/characteristics-high-performing-schools-teach-first-research-report>



What makes great teaching? Coe and Higgins

Specific practices which have good evidence of improving attainment include:

- challenging students to identify the reason why an activity is taking place in the lesson
- asking a large number of questions and checking the responses of *all* students
- spacing-out study or practice on a given topic, with gaps in between for forgetting
- making students take tests or generate answers, even before they have been taught the material



What makes great teaching? Coe and Higgins

Common practices which are not supported by evidence include:

- using praise lavishly
- allowing learners to discover key ideas by themselves
- grouping students by ability
- presenting information to students based on their “preferred learning style”



What comes first in Exceptional and Strong schools?

- *Exceptional schools* focussed hard on developing and maintaining an explicit school model of pedagogy
- In *strong schools departments* developed their own
- *Exceptional schools prioritised* subject knowledge over pedagogic knowledge and skills
- Strong schools prioritised pedagogic knowledge/ skills
- In *Exceptional Schools* all recruits are expected to own the school's values and pedagogical model
- <http://www.curee.co.uk/publication/characteristics-high-performing-schools-teach-first-research-repor>



Illustration 2 Exceptional schools compared with strong schools serving vulnerable communities

- *Exceptional schools* invested very systematically in professional learning (PL)
- *In strong schools* CPD was centrally led and teachers' responsibility for Professional Learning varied from department to department
- *Exceptional schools* invested systematically in training for CPDL facilitators EG mentors and specialist coaches, across the school and in monitoring its effectiveness
- *Strong schools* focused less on structuring CPD, on training facilitators and making it systematic



Subject/ pedagogic development chez vous?

Development activities with potential for extending/enhancing...	The development of depth in subject knowledge	Fully developed (green) More potential (Amber) not used (red)	The development of pedagogic knowledge	Fully developed (green) More potential (Amber) not used (red)
Curriculum SOW planning				
Book scrutinies				
CPD activities				
The SEF				
Observations/ Learning walks				
Performance review				

Evidence re CPDL reinforces the point

- A systematic review of systematic reviews highlights the importance of a sustained rhythm of:
 - Facilitation from people with in-depth expertise in the subject, in evaluation *and* in CPDL
 - contextualising for subjects
 - specialist external input to:
 - » challenge orthodoxies *supportively*
 - » Expand possibilities
 - » Extend internal capacity.
 - Embedded via peer support and AFL for teachers
- And shows generic pedagogic CPD doesn't work



Teaching is complex

(Pedagogical) content knowledge

As well as a strong understanding of the material being taught, teachers must also understand the ways students think about the content, be able to evaluate the thinking behind students' own methods, and identify students' common misconceptions.



Silver Bullets

- Are we searching for the right ones?
- Do they even exist?



Why?

- If we don't know how learners learn, then how do we know which educational theories to ignore?
- Learning styles anyone?



NFER

- <http://thenferblog.org/2015/11/16/the-importance-of-knowing-what-doesnt-work/>



Beware...

- Overconfidence about knowledge of what is effective
- Focus on teaching rather than learning
- Thinking that we are doing it already
- Overconfidence in assessments (even if formative) of teaching quality
- Thinking that if we assess teaching we must attach consequences to that (cf 'assessment for learning')



We must

- Challenge the ‘we think we do that already’ trap
- Keep the main thing the main thing: student outcomes
- Build in impact evaluation: Does using it improve outcomes?



It's not easy

- the behaviour of effective teachers and less effective teachers are not easily characterised; much depends on the particular way that teachers and classes as people relate together



CPDL

- professional development programmes with demonstrable benefits for learners mostly included some attempt to engage with teachers' existing theories, values and beliefs



Teacher Effectiveness Enhancement Programme (TEEP)

- Builds on existing knowledge, beliefs and values
- Learning for teachers and learners alike
- Rhythm of professional learning
- Synergy between specialist knowledge and pedagogical thinking

It goes to the heart of teaching and learning and helps to remind us of our core purpose. It's practical, real and based on sound theory, so it really does work!

Recommend to all teachers!

TEEP secondary school

TEEP has shifted the culture and ethos of the school. Staff are enthusiastic about teaching and learning again, are discussing pedagogy, planning together and sharing good practice. Fantastic!

As an academy, we have made a significant investment in TEEP in terms of time and money. Absolutely the right decision. This has changed our practice quicker than I could have ever hoped.

TEEP school



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Email me and I will send you an anonymised case study of an exceptional and a strong school

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