

Sutton Trust report Oct 2014 | What makes great teaching?



Prof Robert Coe

Summary:

This report reviews the research that underpins our knowledge of what makes **great teaching**.

2 factors with the biggest influence on great teaching.

- 1. Content knowledge.** Teachers with strong knowledge and understanding of their subject make a greater impact on students' learning. It is also important for teachers to understand **how students think about content** and be able to **identify common misconceptions** on a topic.
- 2. Quality of instruction.** This includes **effective questioning** and the use of **assessment** by teachers. Specific practices, like reviewing previous learning, providing model responses for students, giving adequate time for practice to embed skills securely and progressively introducing new learning (scaffolding) are also found to improve attainment.

Headlines.

"Great teaching cannot be achieved by following a recipe, but there are some clear pointers in the research to approaches that are most likely to be effective, and to others, sometimes quite popular, that are not. Teachers need to understand why, when and how a particular approach is likely to enhance students' learning and be given time and support to embed it in their practice."

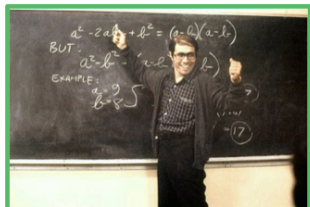
"Given the complexity of teaching, it is surprisingly difficult for anyone watching a teacher to judge how effectively students are learning. We all think we can do it, but the research evidence shows that we can't. Anyone who wants to judge the quality of teaching needs to be very cautious."



Learning happens when people have to think hard.

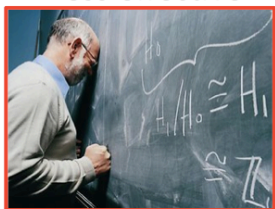
Good quality teachers are the agents of social mobility – able to transform the achievement pupils from poorer backgrounds.

Effective



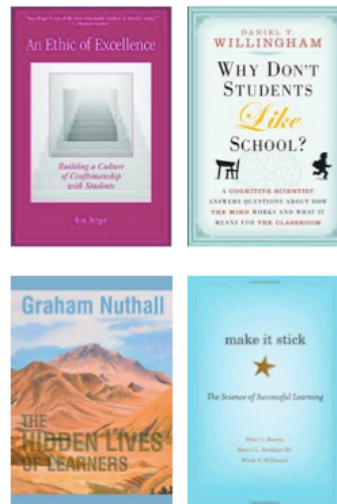
1. (Pedagogical) content knowledge.
2. Quality of instruction.
3. Classroom climate.
4. Classroom management.
5. Teacher beliefs.
6. Professional behaviors.

Less effective



- Using praise lavishly.
- Allowing learners to discover key ideas for themselves
- Grouping students by ability.
- Encouraging re-reading and highlighting to memorise key ideas.
- Addressing low confidence and aspirations before teaching content.
- Presenting information to students in their preferred learning style
- Being active, rather than listening passively, helps you remember.

Further reading...



- **Berger:** Aim for depth of learning not surface knowledge;
- **Willingham:** When students are practising be explicit about the difference between *deep structure* and *surface structure*;
- **Nuthall:** Students need to learn a concept three times before the concept is embedded in their long-term memory;
- **Brown, Roediger & McDaniel:** Create desirable difficulties in the classroom, and use frequent, regular and meaningful testing. @johntomsett

The Golden Thread...

Ultimately, for a judgement about whether teaching is effective, to be seen as trustworthy, it must be checked against the progress being made by students.

What makes great teaching?
Rob Coe et al, October 2014



@johntomsett



Figure 9: What kind of CPD helps learners?



What kind of CPD helps learners? It should be ...

1. **Intense:** at least 15 contact hours, preferably 50
2. **Sustained:** over at least two terms
3. **Content focused:** on teachers' knowledge of subject content & how students learn it
4. **Active:** opportunities to try it out & discuss
5. **Supported:** external feedback and networks to improve and sustain
6. **Evidence based:** promotes strategies supported by robust evaluation evidence

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