

## Teacher effectiveness and children's achievement

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### Abstract:

*The quality and the effectiveness of the education is the priority of all countries all over the world. Outstanding teachers at all phases can have a profound positive impact on pupils' performance, which in turn leads to better outcomes in further education, pay, wellbeing, and for society at large. Based on the literature review, this paper will answer some questions related to relationship between teacher's quality and student outcomes. The results of this study will help faculty to better understand the effectiveness, to see deeply to the characteristics of their prospective student teachers and to identify those students who have those qualities in order to attract and motivate them to be the best future candidates for the teaching profession. This study will help principals during the process of recruitment, selection and retaining the best teacher candidates for their schools. Also it will help prospective student teachers to better understand themselves in terms of effectiveness in order to be more committed and closed to the profession in the future.*

**Key words:** teacher's effectiveness, qualities of an effective teacher, evaluation of the effective teaching and teachers, children's achievement

## **INTRODUCTION**

Education continues to be seen worldwide as the vital instrument for national development. The quality and the effectiveness of the education is the priority of all countries all over the world. An education system is qualitative as qualitative and effective has its own teachers. The developments of policies that seek to improve the quality of teachers and ensure that all students receive quality teaching are the central concern of governments in the world. Evidence is clear that outstanding teachers at all phases can have a profound positive impact on pupils' performance, which in turn leads to better outcomes in further education, pay, wellbeing, and for society at large. Having weak teachers in the classroom is, therefore, detrimental not just to pupils' achievement that academic year but to their, and hence the country's, future prospects. (House of Commons, Education Committee, 2012) Research by the late 1990s and early 2000s have found that effective teachers influence academic achievement of their students. If students along the path of their education are guided by at least two consecutive unqualified teachers, they will not reach the academic level as their peers. (Cooper M. James & Alvarado Amy, 2006, fq.6) Ko, J. Sammons, P.& Bakkum, L. (2013) in their review found that quality of teacher education and teaching appear to be more strongly related to student achievement than class sizes, or teacher salaries. This article has in its focus teacher effectiveness. The study attempts to analyze the definition, characteristics, evaluation of the qualities of an effective teacher and also offers different points of views expressed by different stakeholders about the teacher effectiveness. This study is based on review of literature to answer the below questions.

*Definition:* What is teacher effectiveness?

*Qualities of an effective teacher:* What makes a teacher highly effective? What are the qualities of an effective teacher?

*Assessments of the teachers' effectiveness:* Who are best placed to judge teacher effectiveness? How can we measure effectiveness of a teacher?

This study will help teacher educators to better understand the effectiveness, to see deeply to the characteristics of their prospective student teachers and to identify those students who possess those qualities in order to attract and motivate them to be the best future candidates for the teaching profession. This study will help principals on the process of recruitment, selection and retaining the best candidates' teacher for their schools. Also it will help the prospective student teachers to better understand themselves in terms of effectiveness in order to be more committed and closed to the profession in the future. Additionally, the results of this review will help parents to have the clear idea what qualities to look for, when they are in the process of choosing the best teachers for the education of their children. The results of this article would be of great help also to the teachers, both effective teachers in order to remind them for continued improvement and for others to be aware as they take steps to enhance their effectiveness.

## **THE DEFINITION OF EFFECTIVENESS**

To respond to this question, first we have to better understand “*effectiveness*”. The phrase “effective teaching” is often used to relate some teacher quality with some specific student outcome. When you analyze deeply the root of “effective” you of course see, “effect”, as in a cause – effect relationship. When we measure teacher effectiveness, teachers are viewed as the agent of cause. While some measures outside the teacher is studied as the possible effect. To the extent to which the teacher achieves

this effect is the extent to which the teacher can be considered “effective” at least in regard to that effect. (Pahl, 2008) Among researchers this term is really an elusive, complex and controversial. (Ko, Sammons, & Bakkum, 2013; Stronge, 2007) However measuring the teachers’ qualities and characteristics as an agent and considering the numerous effects that may come from the cause – effect relationship can bring the complexity of effectiveness. A teacher’s influence is far reaching, so it is challenging to define what outcomes might show effectiveness and how those outcomes should be measured.

According to Ko, J.; Sammons, P.& Bakkum, L. teacher effectiveness is referred to in terms of a focus on student outcomes and the teacher behaviors and classroom processes that promote better student outcomes. Also they consider ‘effectiveness’ as a contested term that can evoke strong emotions because of its perceived links with notions of professional competency and high stakes accountability in some systems. Notions of what constitutes high quality or good teaching, the idea that teaching is an art or a craft rather than a science, are sometimes used to raise concerns with narrower concepts of effectiveness. Coe, Aloisi, Higgins, & Major, (2014)<sup>1</sup> define effective teaching as that which leads to improved student achievement using outcomes that matter to their future success. Council of European Union concluded that high quality teaching is widely acknowledged to be one of the key factors in achieving successful learning outcomes, by developing the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that learners need in order to realize their full potential both as individuals and as active members of society and the workforce (The Council of European Union, 2014<sup>2</sup>) We can all agree that effective teachers

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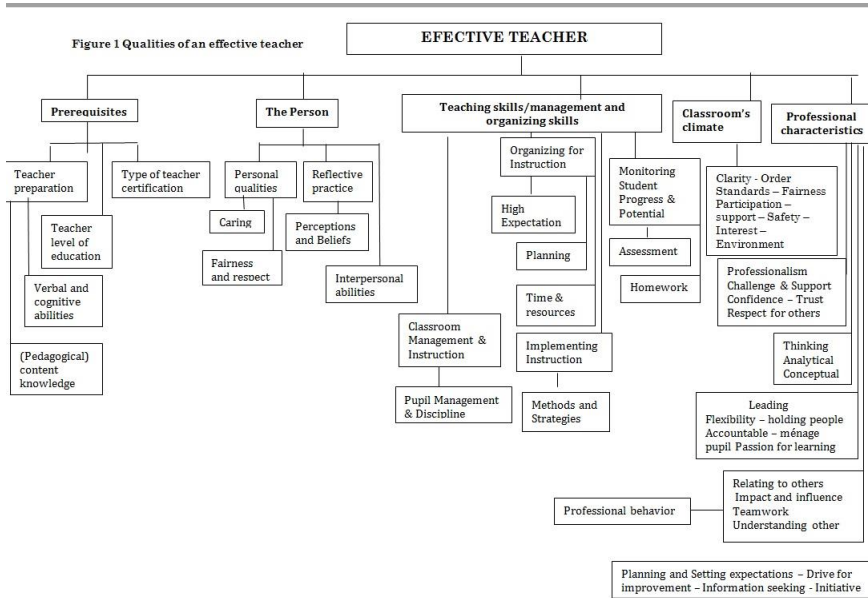
<sup>1</sup> Coe, R., Aloisi, C., Higgins, S., & Major, L. E. (2014). *What makes great teaching? Review of the underpinning research*. Centre for evaluation and monitoring.

<sup>2</sup> (The Council of European Union, 2014)

do have an extraordinary and lasting impact on the lives of students despite the complexity of the term “effectiveness” of the teachers. In order to understand of what teachers do to cause significant student learning, researchers this literature review is focused on the specific characteristics and processes used by the most effective teachers.

## **QUALITIES OF AN EFFECTIVE TEACHER**

Some of the researchers investigated qualities of effective teachers referred to prerequisite of effective teaching, including teacher's background and professional preparation. (Stronge, 2007; Rockoff, Jacob, Kane, & Staiger, 2008; Hammond, 1999; McBer, 2000; King Rice, 2010; Zuzovsky, 2003; Kosgei, Kirwa, Odera, & Ayugi, 2013; Hattie, 2003; Sawchuk 2003; Acevedo, 2009; Zhang, 2008). Others have gone more deeply on the investigation of the teacher as a person (Stronge, 2007; Rockoff, Jacob, Kane, & Staiger, 2008; MacBeath, 2005; Dalal, 2014; Gün, 2014). Additionally, some researchers investigated to teaching skills or management and organizational qualities of an effective teacher. (Stronge, 2007; Coe, Aloisi, Higgins, & Major, 2014; Ko, Sammons, & Bakkum, 2013; McBer, 2000; Gurney, 2007). The researches have studied also professional characteristics (McBer, 2000; Coe, Aloisi, Higgins, Major, et al 2014; Gurney, 2007; Liakopoulou, 2011). Another important thing was classroom climate. McBer, 2000; Coe, Aloisi, Higgins, Major, et al 2014; MacBeath, 2005). Considering all the researches in figure 1 you will find the complete puzzle of the qualities of an effective teacher.



## PREREQUISITE OF AN EFFECTIVE TEACHING

Studies focused on prerequisites of effective teaching investigated deeply the influence of teacher's background, including here verbal, cognitive and (pedagogical) content knowledge on students' achievements. Also studies were focused on the influence of professional preparation, including here teacher level of education and teachers' certification on students' achievements. These studies all contributed to the educational debate on how to find and to recruit, prepare and maintain effective teachers. This is a common concern among policymakers, faculty professors, principals and taxpayers. They all question whether that traditional preservice programs are preparing candidates with high instructional programs that increase students' achievements. Principals are concerned with the recruitment and maintaining plans and programs in order to identify the best candidate among all teachers' candidate that apply, comparing their effectiveness from different types of backgrounds.

Does a teacher's intellectual ability bring effectiveness in the classroom? Researches all agree that teacher's intellectual ability not always brings effectiveness in the classrooms. (Stronge, 2007; Rockoff, Jacob, Kane, & Staiger, 2008; Hammond, 1999) Schalock, (1979); Soar, Medley, & Coker, (1983) on their studies concluded that there is little or no relationship between teachers' measured intelligence and their students' achievement (Hammond, 1999). According to Hanushek, (1971) general intellectual aptitude typically has not been linked to higher student achievement; however, when teachers perform well on basic 4 Qualities of Effective Teachers, 2nd Edition skills tests, their students also tend to do better on academic measures. (Cited by Stronge, 2007) However, the researchers have suggested that teachers' verbal ability *is* related to student achievement. (Stronge, 2007; Hammond, 1999). Thus, a discernible link exists between effective teachers' vocabulary and verbal skills and student academic success, as well as teacher performance. As communication skills are part of verbal ability, teachers with better verbal abilities can more effectively convey ideas to students and communicate with them in a clear and compelling manner.

## **CONTENT KNOWLEDGE**

Content knowledge is another variable that could be related to students' achievements. This characteristic is related to the subject-matter knowledge teachers acquire during their formal studies and pre-service teacher education courses. Whereas there is a long history of discussion and debate around the connection between teacher knowledge and quality instruction, there is a lack of empirical research testing this hypothesis or even connecting knowledge to student learning. The evidence gained from different studies is contradictory. Several studies show a positive relationship between Teachers' Qualifications and Their Impact on Student Achievement (Darling-Hammond,

1999, 2000; Dalal, 2014; Zuzovsky, 2003; Acevedo, 2009; Rockoff, Jacob, Kane, & Staiger, 2008; Ko, Sammons, & Bakkum, 2013) Ashton and Crocker (1987) found only 5 of 14 studies they reviewed exhibited a positive relationship between measures of subject matter knowledge and teacher performance. (Cited by Darling-Hammond, 1999) Subject-matter knowledge positively affects teaching performance; however, it is not sufficient in and of itself. Teacher training programs that emphasize content-knowledge acquisition and neglect pedagogical coursework are less effective in preparing prospective teachers than programs that offer both content and pedagogical knowledge. (Stronge, 2007)

## **THE IMPACT OF EXPERIENCE**

Experience matters, but more is not always better. The impact of experience is strongest during the first few years of teaching; after that, marginal returns diminish. (King Rice, 2010) Darling-Hammond, (2000) study indicate that teachers develop from novices to masters at different rates, taking from five to eight years to master the art, science, and craft of teaching. Therefore, the number of years in front of a classroom may not necessarily indicate whether a teacher is expert. So, this is another concern for all of us here, to distinguish an experience and effective teacher. The relationship between teacher experience and student achievement is difficult to interpret since this variable is highly affected by market conditions or motivation to work during child rearing period. If less effective teachers are more likely to leave the professions, this may give the mistaken appearance that experience raises teacher effectiveness. (Zuzovsky, 2003) Expert teachers do differ from experienced teachers – particularly on the way they represent their classrooms, the degree of challenges that they present to students, and most critically, in the depth of processing that their students attain. Students who are taught by expert



teachers exhibit an understanding of the concepts targeted in instruction that is more integrated, more coherent, and at a higher level of abstraction than the understanding achieved by other students. (Hattie, 2003)

## **TEACHER LEVEL OF EDUCATION AND CERTIFICATION**

According to Stronge, (2007) teacher preparation has included a series of courses focusing on child development, instructional and assessment techniques, and methods and materials related to specific content areas; however, in recent years, teacher preparation programs and their usefulness to the teaching field have received considerable scrutiny. While certification or licensing status is a measure of teacher qualifications that combine aspects of knowledge about subject matter and about teaching and learning. (Darling - Hammond, 1999) In most states, teacher certification status is related to educational background, scores on tests of pedagogical or content knowledge, or both. (Stronge, 2007) Other measures of certification status (e.g., the percent of teachers uncertified, the percent with full certification) are also strong correlates of student achievement. (Darling-Hammond, 1999) Studies support the finding that fully prepared teachers understand how students learn and what and how they need to be taught. In addition, their background knowledge of pedagogy makes them better able to recognize individual student needs and customize instruction to increase overall student achievement. Teachers who are not formally prepared to teach know little about how children grow, learn, and develop, or about how to support learning differences. Teachers with little or no coursework in education consistently have difficulties in the areas of classroom management, curriculum development, student motivation, and specific teaching strategies. They are less able to anticipate student knowledge and potential

difficulties, or to plan and redirect the lesson to meet the individual needs of the students. Among variables assessing teacher "quality," the percentage of teachers with full certification and a major in the field is a more powerful predictor of student achievement than teachers' education levels (e.g., master's degrees).

## **TEACHER AS A PERSON**

Some researchers have gone more deeply on the investigation of the teacher as a person (Stronge, 2007; Rockoff, Jacob, Kane, & Staiger, 2008; MacBeath, 2005; Dalal, 2014; Gün, 2014).

Stronge, (2007) in his book highlighted the importance of teacher as a person. He was focused on a teacher's nonacademic interactions with students and on the aspects of a teacher's behavior that make her loved, respected, and remembered by students as personally effective. Additionally these affective characteristics such as a love of children, a love of work, and positive relationships with colleagues and with children contribute to a teacher's feeling of happiness. Noddings (2005) explained that a teacher's happiness can affect the classroom climate and therefore affect students. Classroom climate is defined as the collective perceptions by pupils of what it feels like to be a pupil in any particular teacher's classroom, where those perceptions influence every student's motivation to learn and perform to the best of his or her ability.

The study of McBer (2000) show that the effective teachers use their knowledge, skills and behaviours to create effective learning environments in their classrooms. They create environments which maximize opportunities to learn, in which pupils are well managed and motivated to learn. From the pupils' perspectives, they are mostly looking to the teacher to create a sense of security and order in the classroom, an opportunity to participate actively in the class and for it to be an interesting and exciting place. MacBeath, (2005) in his book

the importance of personal qualities included kindness, generosity of spirit, honesty and humour—attributes which are hard to learn or to teach but perhaps are all the more important for that. The second category interpersonal skills contained a group of skills that could be acquired or embellished: for example, listening, not shouting, keeping confidences, and emphasizing the positive. According to Gurney, (2007) one of the factor of an effective teacher is an effective interaction between the teacher and the student, creating an environment that respects, encourages and stimulate learning through experience. Gün, (2014) in her study found a correlation between the teacher caring qualities and student academic success. As suggested by other studies in the literature, caring appears to be one of the most important, if not the most important, successful teacher quality from the students' perspective. Liakopoulou, (2011) underlined the fact that the teachers themselves cite *personality traits* as being a dominant contributing factor to their effectiveness. Stronge, (2007) also explored the significance of the teacher's professional attitude and emphasizes dedicated and reflective practice among effective teachers.

## **TEACHING SKILLS/MANAGEMENT AND ORGANIZING SKILLS**

Teaching skills are those "micro-behaviours" that the effective teacher constantly exhibits when teaching a class. Coe, Aloisi, Higgins, Major, et al (2014) investigated the quality of instruction and they found strong evidence of impact on student outcomes. Also they investigated classroom management and found moderate evidence on student outcomes. Stronge, (2007) considers the importance that the management and organizational skills an effective teacher displays, with emphasis on the establishment of an effective learning environment in which routines and discipline are established

and maintained to serve as a backdrop for instruction and student engagement. McBer, (2000) in their study included in the teaching skills the following qualities: High Expectation, Planning, Methods and Strategies, Pupil management and discipline, time resource management, assessment, homework, time on task, lesson flow. What they found in their study was that in primary schools, the outstanding teachers scored higher on average in four out of the seven clusters: High expectations, Time and resource management, Assessment, and Homework. In secondary schools there was stronger differentiation covering all clusters, but it was particularly evident in High expectations, Planning, and Homework.

## **PROFESSIONAL CHARACTERISTICS**

The researches have studied also professional characteristics (McBer, 2000; Coe, Aloisi, Higgins, Major, et al 2014; Gurney, 2007; Liakopoulou, 2011). Professional characteristics are deep-seated patterns of behavior which outstanding teachers display more often, in more circumstances and to a greater degree of intensity than effective colleagues. (McBer, 2000) In their model of professional characteristics were included professionalism, thinking, planning and setting expectations, leading and related to others.

## **HOW DO WE MEASURE EFFECTIVE TEACHING? WHO ARE BEST PLACED TO JUDGE TEACHER EFFECTIVENESS?**

All the researches discussed in this study reveal the idea about the complexity of teacher's effectiveness. But what distinguishes good teachers from bad and outstanding teachers from the merely good? What criteria is used, and in whose judgment— policy makers? Pupils? Or teachers themselves?

Coe, Aloisi, Higgins, Major, et al (2014) summarized their research on observations performed by: teacher colleagues, senior management or principals, external inspectors, students, and self-reports.

The 2009 OECD report on the evaluation of teachers refers to 'the importance of including a diverse set of evaluators and criteria to better reflect the complexity of defining what good teaching is' (p. 32). The document cites the following key players - governments, local authorities, school leaders, educational researchers and experienced teachers, teachers unions and parents. Each of these brings differing perspectives to bear and view school quality and effectiveness through different lenses although frameworks and criteria are now common in most jurisdictions.

MacBeath, (2012) in his book raised the issue of students as evaluators; peer observation as a form of reciprocal learning; collaborative lesson planning, as process in which teachers share and reflect on teaching and learning; mentoring, coaching and critical friendship as high common for teachers in a number of countries; sharing and discussing students work with a focus on quality and criteria for judgments of quality it brings to light unspoken assumptions about what makes a good piece of work, how assessment can be made more formative and raises deeper questions about the rationale for marks out of 10, percentages, grades, comment only marking and the nature of comments that demotivate or inspire; He was focused in the issue of practice – focused workshop; learning wall is a device for teachers to share to their problems, their solutions and breakthrough practice; inspection and external review. Gates, (2013) in their project saw how multiple measures can identify effective teaching and the contribution that teachers can make to student learning. According to their results student perception surveys and classroom observations can provide meaningful feedback to teachers; implementing specific procedures in evaluation systems can increase trust in the data

and the results; there is great potential in using video for teacher feedback and for the training and assessment of observers.

## **CONCLUSION**

What lessons follow up this study?

We have to

- look for a broader definition of teacher effectiveness that emphasizes the promotion of students 'academic, and other kinds of educational, outcomes;
- understand that effective teaching is not automatically guaranteed through teacher training, professional development or long years of experience;
- recognize that teachers may vary in their effectiveness over time (across years) and in achieving different kinds of student outcomes and in teaching different groups of students or in different school context
- encourage monitoring and observation using appropriate research-based protocols to support professional learning and the development of effective practices among teachers and among subject departments
- incorporate the students' perspectives and experiences to promote positive school and classroom climates that engage and motivate learners.
- carefully look to the qualities of an effective teacher in the process of recruitment, in order to recruit the best candidate for the school, but mostly for the children.

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