

The most effective teachers are in a class of their own

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These are the latest findings of research funded in primary and secondary schools by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) into what makes good teachers even better.

The two year Effective Classroom Practice (ECP) was conducted by Professor Christopher Day, Professor Pam Sammons and Dr Alison Kington at the School of Education University of Nottingham from 2006-2008 and funded by ESRC.

The principal investigator, Professor Christopher Day believes the research provides a unique picture of the more effective teacher.

"More effective teachers create a positive climate for learning by challenging pupils' ideas, inspiring them, being more innovative in their practice and differentiating amongst pupils according to their abilities and interests where appropriate". This means, according to Professor Day, "Pupils have more control over and engagement in their learning and more opportunities for success".

The results show the best teachers are not necessarily those with the most experience. They are the ones with enthusiasm for their work, high aspirations for the success of every pupil, positive relations, high motivation, commitment and resilience. Combining good knowledge of their subject and teaching practice and providing support tailored to the individual needs of each child, these teachers focus on building [self esteem](#), engendering trust and maintaining respect.

The two-year study built on previous work by the research team on the work, lives and effectiveness of 300 teachers to investigate the classroom practice of teachers from schools whose pupil exam results were either typical or better than expected. It involved 81 teachers (45 primary and 36 secondary), 38 head teachers and 3,000 pupils and included a series of teacher and pupil questionnaires, observations of classroom practice and post-observation tools to allow in-depth probing of issues relating to data strands, such as teacher effectiveness, leadership issues, teacher identity, professional life phase and teacher efficacy.

"By including the collection and analysis of different kinds of observational data it was possible to get below the surface", he explained, "to reveal the interactions between classroom practice, teacher characteristics, professional life phase, school contexts and effectiveness as defined by pupils' context value added scores which take account of prior learning and a range of socio economic factors, together with [teacher](#) and pupil perceptions of effectiveness".

The main impact relating to teaching practice has been for training and development purposes. The research points to the importance of providing teachers in service with structured, regular opportunities to reflect on their roles and classroom practices and learn from examples of best practice in a variety of school and classroom settings. It points to the value of classroom observation and feedback as part of this process.

Source: Economic & Social Research Council ([news](#) : [web](#))

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