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What constitutes teacher expertise? New research points to the answer

Date: December 21, 2022

Source: University of Warwick

Summary: Research has identified key characteristics and practices of expert teachers.

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FULL STORY

Research led by the University of Warwick has identified key characteristics and practices of expert teachers.

In the largest ever review of teacher expertise, including data from over 1,000 teachers from around the world in primary and secondary school education, 73 features common to many expert teachers have been identified.

The study offers the most detailed, holistic description of expert teachers to date. This includes a description of their knowledge, beliefs, personal characteristics and, critically, how they teach and facilitate learning.

It offers findings that will be beneficial to those training as teachers, current teachers, teacher quality assurance and curriculum development around the world.

This includes, among other findings, that expert teachers:

- Are driven by moral duty towards their learners -- motivating them to work hard, reflect critically and exhibit unconditional care for learners
- Have a passion for teaching, positive self-image and a desire to succeed in their profession, helping them cope with challenges
- Have three qualities central to expert teacher professional development: reflection; lifelong learning and collaboration with peers
- Assess progress, spot misunderstandings and offer ongoing feedback
- Offer individualised support and feedback throughout the lesson

Funded by the UK Economic and Social Research Council, the research was conducted by Assistant Professor Jason Anderson, of the University of Warwick's Department of Applied Linguistics, and Dr Gülden Taner, currently of İzmir University of Economics in Turkey.

Assistant Professor Jason Anderson at the University of Warwick commented: "Our study is the first ever systematic review of teacher expertise research. It was made possible through an innovative use of the meta-summary methodology, including findings from research on 1,124 teachers from around the world.

"We analysed 106 empirical studies in our research, identifying 73 features of expert teachers across different domains -- from cognition to practice.

"From the meta-summary, we describe the expert teacher, a prototype in a sense, rather than a prescriptive checklist, which professionals in education can draw upon for support in their roles.

"This study is more holistic than previous research in the field, hence its value in painting a more complete picture of teacher expertise than individual studies have been able to do to date. It links aspects of the knowledge, cognition, practice and personalities of expert teachers in ways that are likely to benefit stakeholders across primary and secondary education."

Story Source:

Materials provided by **University of Warwick**. *Note: Content may be edited for style and length.*

Journal Reference:

1. Jason Anderson, Gülden Taner. **Building the expert teacher prototype: A metasummary of teacher expertise studies in primary and secondary education**. *Educational Research Review*, 2023; 38: 100485 DOI: 10.1016/j.edurev.2022.100485

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