

What Makes Teachers Effective?: Profiles of innovative classroom practice

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Introduction

This chapter reflects on the Effective Classroom Practice (ECP) project, a two-year, multi-disciplinary study, which used an integrated, mixed method design (Day *et al.*, 2008a; Kington *et al.*, 2011). The project investigated variations in teachers' classroom practice, and relationships with school phase and school context, which built on and extended a four-year longitudinal research study (Day *et al.*, 2007) into variations in teachers' work, lives and effectiveness (VITAE). The ECP study identified key factors that contribute to effective and highly effective teaching in primary and secondary phases of schooling. The project aimed to: i) describe, analyse and explain the variation in effective primary and secondary school teachers' classroom behaviours and practice, focusing on English and mathematics teaching; ii) explore effective and highly effective classroom practice of teachers in Years 2, 6 and 9, across different school contexts, professional life phases and ages in relation to observation of practice and professional, situated and/or personal factors; and, iii) draw out implications from the findings of (i) and (ii) above for policymakers concerned with raising standards, for schools and for teacher development. The identification of these teachers as *effective* or *highly effective* was based on a combination of factors:

- value-added data collected over three years or more (*as expected OR above expectation*);
- social, affective and behavioural data collected via a pupil questionnaire survey (*neither +ve or -ve OR most +ve*); and,
- judgement ratings based on the ISTOF and QoT observation schedules (*more strengths than weaknesses OR predominantly strong*).

This chapter provides an overview of the key themes identified by the project, focusing on the similarities within the whole sample of teachers, as well as differences between the

effective and highly effective teachers identified by the research. These factors have been generated through a synthesis of complex and varied individual analyses of each data set. In addition to exploring the classroom factors impacting upon teachers' effective practice, the chapter also considers other mediating factors, such as leadership, school culture, teacher commitment and well-being, which were shown to influence effectiveness. Finally, we present three conclusions important for the development of teachers and reflect on the need for teachers to be consistently positive and more reflective, complex and contextually responsive in order to be highly effective practitioners.

Effective teachers and innovative effective classroom practice

In research on effective schools student-teacher interactions and classroom climate (Creemers & Reezigt, 1999; Freiberg & Stein, 1999; Mortimore *et al.*, 1988; Muijs & Reynolds, 2000; Rubie-Davies *et al.*, 2006; Rutter *et al.*, 1979; Wubbels & Brekelmans, 2005) have been identified have been consistently correlated with student achievement (Kyriakides, 2005; 2008; Sammons *et al.*, 2008). There is also evidence that pedagogical approaches can make an important difference to student learning (Brekelmans *et al.*, 2005; Coker *et al.*, 1988; den Brok & Levy, 2005; Fraser & Walberg, 2005; Lapointe *et al.*, 2005; Mortimore & Macbeath, 1994; Wubbels *et al.*, 1991). For example, research on classroom design and instruction (Bosker & Muijs, 2008), teaching styles and artistry (Bennett, 1988; Kyriakides, 2005; Opdenakker & Van Damme, 2006; Sternberg, 1988), knowledge for teaching (Shulman, 1987), awareness of pedagogical issues (Mortimore & Watkins, 1999), and the nature of expertise (Berliner, 1992) have all been found to contribute to effective classroom practice. However, the school and teacher effectiveness research tradition tends to focus on the school as the central unit of research, containing nested layers of departments, classrooms and pupils. Most of the research is based on multi-level models where conditions such as policy and leadership affect conditions within classrooms, notably effective teaching and student outcomes (e.g. Lee & Burkam, 2003; Rumberger & Palardy, 2004; Willms & Raudenbush, 1989). We contend that the central difficulty of an over-reliance on these types of investigations is the lack of attention given to the dynamic, unpredictable nature of classrooms, and more specifically the central importance of the quality of teaching and learning of the teacher.

Although models of teaching (Joyce & Showers, 1991; Joyce & Weil 1996; Carroll, 1989; McBer, 2000) such as the comprehensive and dynamic model of educational effectiveness (Creemers, 1994; Creemers & Kyriakides, 2006; 2008) and the differential effectiveness model (Campbell *et al.*, 2003) have included factors such as the quality of teaching, classroom management, classroom climate, and relationships as explanatory variables (Creemers, 1994; Croll & Moses, 1988; Pollard *et al.*, 1994; Powell, 1980; Teddlie *et al.*, 1989), there have also been two major limitations of teacher effectiveness research (Ingvarson & Rowe, 2008):

- the conceptualisation of effectiveness by its proponents as being driven by '*available technicalities of measurement*' (Campbell *et al.*, 2003: 349). Recently quantitative researchers have acknowledged that the use of integrated models of teacher effectiveness is problematic as the concept of 'quality of teaching' has not been defined precisely (Kyriakides, 2008);
- although it has been suggested that teachers vary in their effectiveness in different areas of the curriculum (Sammons & Smees, 1998), and across grades within the same school (Luyten, 1995; Luyten & Snijders, 1996), little research has been conducted that combines factors which affect teaching with factors which affect *variations in teacher effectiveness*; explores how teacher effectiveness *changes over time*; and has explored whether teachers are equally effective in different areas of the curriculum and in terms of different types of outcomes (cognitive and social/affective).

This study therefore attempted to explore these knowledge gaps by combining observational studies with other key factors that affect the quality of teachers and pupil outcomes, and explored these in relation to school phase and school contexts.

Research design and methods

The project was conducted over four phases. **Phase 1** involved the sampling of schools to cover a range of areas (inner city, suburban, metropolitan, rural) and a range of ethnic diversity and socio-economic disadvantage. The final sample consisted of 81 teachers who were broadly representative of age, experience and gender, with enough schools in each

year/subject group category to allow both within- and across-category conclusions to be drawn. All Year 2 (6{-}7 year-olds) and Year 6 (10{-}11 year-olds) teachers in primary schools and Year 9 (13{-}14 year-olds) English and mathematics teachers in secondary schools in the sample were asked to complete a short questionnaire. The questions related to their classroom teaching (pupils, staff relationships, leadership, culture and external policies) and issues connected with their effectiveness (efficacy, motivation, commitment, job satisfaction, stress, work-life balance). In Phases 2 and 3 the study sought to establish a multi-dimensional picture of effective classroom practice by integrating a range of teacher, headteacher, and pupil perspectives, classroom observations and included a contextual perspective based on level of disadvantage of school intake. Within the multi method approach, data collection centred on observations of classroom practice using the International System for Teacher Observation and Feedback (ISTOF) schedule (Teddle *et al.*, 2006) and The Quality of Teaching (QoT) schedule (Van de Grift *et al.*, 2004), as well as detailed fieldnotes (n = 81). Other methods used included semi-structured and repertory grid interviews with teachers (n = 81) and school leaders (n = 38), and a questionnaire survey (n = 1258) and focus group interviews with approx 480 pupils.

Finally, **Phase 4** involved the further analysis and integration of all datasets. Following analysis of observation and pupil questionnaire data, a number of summary measures were added to the database as additional attributes. In these ways, new knowledge of teachers' effective practice was associated with qualitative and quantitative data, the former locating the teaching in personal, situational and professional contexts, and the latter locating teaching in behaviours and pupils' socio-economic contexts. Having completed this further level of analysis, teacher profiles were created in order to create holistic pictures of the effective practices of individual teachers.

Main outcomes and results

This section reviews the main findings from the study, addressing the key characteristics and practices of the *effective* teachers and the differences between these and the *highly effective* teachers through the use of teacher profiles (Day *et al.*, 2006; Day *et al.*, 2008b), and highlights the key characteristics of effective practice identified. Nearly one quarter of primary and half of secondary teachers involved in the study were classified as *highly*

effective as determined by an examination of school value added data over the past three years combined with overall scores for teachers from the pupil survey. The teacher profiles are not representative, but are sample illustrations of the similarities and differences between the effective and the highly effective classroom practitioners involved in the study (Table 1).

Illustrations of effective and highly effective teachers

The effective teachers

Amy (*as expected VA data; neither +ve or–ve pupils views; more strengths than weaknesses*)

Amy is a Year 2 teacher in a medium sized, mid-high SES, community primary school with 252 pupils on roll. It is located in a suburban area where the majority of pupils are from white British backgrounds. Amy is 34 years old and has been teaching for 12 years, the last 5 years in this school. She is a key stage manager and very highly committed to her work. However, she feels that her additional responsibilities take her away from her classroom commitments and that this, in turn, impacts upon her effectiveness. She works approx 50 hours per week and reports only moderate levels of motivation and job satisfaction. Amy does not feel she receives much support from the headteacher.

Phillip (*as expected VA data; neither +ve or–ve pupils views; predominantly strong*)

Phillip is 44 years old and has been teaching for 22 years, the majority of which has been in his current school. He is a teacher in a large comprehensive school of 935 pupils in a relatively disadvantaged urban area (mid-low SES). Apart from being a Year 9 maths teacher, Phillip is also assistant headteacher and a key stage manager, which sometimes puts pressure on his personal life. He is looking to take up another position within the leadership team or move to another school as he wants to reduce the number of hours he spends on his job, working a 60-hour week regularly. In spite of this, he has high self-rated levels of motivation, commitment and job satisfaction.

[[Insert Table 25.1 here]]

The highly effective teachers

Kate (*above expected VA data; most +ve pupil views; predominantly strong*)

Kate is a Year 6 teacher in a large, low SES, primary school of 490 pupils located in an inner city area with a high level of ethnic diversity, pupils with English as a second language, and social and economic disadvantage. Kate is 28 years old and has been teaching for 6 years, all in this school. She is also a subject coordinator and a member of the senior management team. She reports a high level of motivation, commitment and job satisfaction, and works for approx 45 hours per week. Kate believes that much of her success in teaching is due to having supportive and effective colleagues. She is considering applying for deputy headship, but is undecided as she has just got married and it would also mean moving to another school.

Michael (*above expected VA data; most +ve pupil views; predominantly strong*)

Michael, a Year 9 maths teacher, teaches in a large, high SES, specialist science secondary school with 967 pupils on roll. The school is located in fairly affluent, suburban area with little ethnic diversity. Michael is 51 years old and has been teaching for more than 28 years, all in this school. He is an assistant head and advanced skills teacher within the school and typically works up to 60 hours per week. He reports a high level of motivation, commitment and job satisfaction, but is starting to consider retirement now that his children have left home. Michael has very high expectations of the pupils and feels well supported in the school.

Classroom factors impacting on effective practice

Analysis of the quantitative observation data revealed a number of underlying core characteristics of teacher practices and behaviours (Table 25.2).

[[Insert Table 25.2 here]]

The categories shown in Table 25.2 are, inevitably, broad descriptions of classroom practice (for a more detailed account of this analysis, see Sammons & Ko, 2008). However, differences in effective classroom practice were noted in terms of: the learning environment; learning approaches; pupil needs; relationships; teaching strategies; and, planning and organisation. There follows an exploration of the themes that arose from a

grounded analysis of the qualitative (e.g. interview, observation fieldnotes, focus group) data which support these core characteristics.

Positive teacher-pupil relationships

The ability to build and sustain good relationships with pupils was an issue that emerged from the vast majority (96%, n = 78) of both primary and secondary teachers as contributing to their effectiveness. A number of factors influenced this, e.g. getting to know the pupils well, establishing good rapport and interaction, using humour, listening to what the pupils had to say and communicating effectively with them. Engendering trust and maintaining respect were also important factors. Teachers highlighted the need for teacher-pupil relationships to be based on fairness and consistency, and offered in a supportive and caring way.

The effective teachers observed were calm, caring and focused during the lessons. The promotion of positive teacher-pupil relationships was a common feature, and most teachers were sensitive to group and individual personal and learning needs. The promotion of positive pupil-pupil relationships was observed more widely in primary classes. Teachers often used humour as a tool to make the subject or topic more relevant to pupils' daily lives. Engendering trust and maintaining respect were also important factors. Teachers highlighted the need for teacher-pupil relationships to be based on fairness and consistency, and offered in a supportive and caring way. Primary teachers were more likely to mention the importance of letting the pupils get to know them as a person (Brown *et al.*, 2008a), whereas secondary teachers were more inclined to retain a more distanced position (Kington *et al.*, 2008a). Primary teachers also said that it was important to encourage pupils to build relationships with each other.

Varied from the kids who are friendly, and you see in the corridor and stand and chat with through to ones who are more needy in terms of emotional and who need a lot more chatty encouragement type, through to the ones who need to see boundaries, who feel more comfortable when they're on the edge of things, and know that they're being watched and respond to that in terms of their work. (Phillip, R1 Pre-observation interview)

It's all about building a relationship with them and getting to know them and them getting to know you. {...} They like to know about you as well, you know what I mean, that you've got a life and things like that. (Amy, R1 Pre-observation interview)

Later in the year, she went on to say:

You get to know the children, you get to know the parents and family situations. You get to know what level they're working at and what to expect from them, whether they are actually struggling or just lazy and need stretching. You just get to know more about them and build that relationship as the year goes on. (Amy, R2 Pre-observation interview)

The observation and interview data show that the highly effective teachers gave more time to developing individual relationships with pupils, and focused upon building self-esteem, engendering trust and maintaining respect.

What you have to make sure is that every child in that class believes that you've been talking to them, and that you are with them and not anyone else. It's to do with moving around the room, it's to do with eye contact, it's to do with calling out names and getting people to the board, trying to get as many people as you can answering questions. And if you've got a good relationship with a group if they don't understand something they'll soon tell you in a way that is helpful. (Michael, R1 Post-observation interview)

Michael also suggested that respect was important when interviewed later in the year:

The {...} most important thing is the teacher cares about them. Being polite, treating them as equals, all the things that you'd hope you would see in a teacher, I hope you see in me, I hope so. (Michael, R2 Pre-observation interview)

Kate shares her own experiences to build relationships with the pupils:

I bring in lots of my outside life into it and we talk about lots of stuff that have happened and they do the same, they like to talk about experiences and I think that's maybe the difference. (Kate, R2 Pre-observation interview)

Because I have a small group you work alongside them a lot so you get to know {-} I know exactly what they find difficult and what they find easy and all the different areas but I think our relationships are really strong actually.{...}they know the expectations and we have a laugh as well so they know what the limits are. (Kate, R2 Pre-observation interview)

Praise and feedback to pupils

Many of the effective teachers (91%, n = 74) identified praise and feedback both as means of building relationships with pupils and in support of learning targets or objectives, assessment for learning and other forms of informal assessment (Kington *et al.*, 2008b). Teachers talked about the importance of responding to and acknowledging that some children needed more public praise whilst others preferred feedback to be more private.

It's having the time to plan,{...}and to give the kind of feedback you want to give the students, never been someone who is happy with giving the students anything less than the best I can give them. (Phillip, R1 Post-observation interview)

In terms of comments, from marking their books, praise points, both through things that are written in the exercise books from myself and during the course of the lesson for good work. (Phillip, R2 Pre-observation interview)

You might stop the dance and give them feedback as you go along, or ask the children to show a really nice movement they've just done to give the other children more ideas. And just praising as they go along if they are working well. (Amy, R2 Pre-observation interview)

Examination of observation and interview data shows that the highly effective teachers used praise extensively to promote positive relationships, develop rapport, and establish boundaries. They offered opportunities to reflect, self-evaluate, engage in dialogue about learning, and recognise their own improvements giving pupils additional confidence in influencing their own learning.

My skill is to walk around the room, listen to their questions and then make a decision that they haven't actually understood this fully and I might stop the group and talk to the group again or it might be just one of two of that need a little bit of a hint. (Michael, R2 Pre-observation interview)

Michael's skills are evident in the pupils' comments regarding his feedback strategies:

[Michael] gives a lot of encouragement. He helps you by going through it and helping you understand where you get wrong. He jokes around and he gives individual help and you can see him at break or lunch. He checks we understand the work. (Pupil focus group)

Kate gave additional confidence to pupils through extra sessions.

Well yeah, I mean, lots of encouragement, a lot of revision, got them revision books, I've done extra sessions in the morning for people who wanted to practice mental maths, I've done an ICT club as well, they did a lot of revision in that as well as an extra thing just to keep them going really before they burn out at the end of the year, bless them. (Kate, R2 Pre-observation interview)

Teacher academic expectations of pupils

All primary and secondary teachers in the study, regardless of level of effectiveness, reported having high expectations which were clear, consistent and understood by pupils. They also emphasised the value of establishing rules and boundaries at the outset. Some teachers (53%, n = 43) commented that they based their expectations around targets or learning objectives which provided a consistent way to demonstrate their aspirations for the

class (Brown *et al.*, 2008b). The importance of differentiating expectations according pupils' abilities was also mentioned by 93 per cent (n = 75) of teachers.

Firmness, consistency, teaching them properly, them seeing themselves making progress, them seeing that I care about what they do and care that they put the effort in, following up when they're not; just the standard things that teachers do but doing it effectively and consistently throughout the year rather than now and again.
(Phillip, R2 Pre-observation interview)

[Phillip] always wants you to do well. He's always got things you can do. (Pupil focus group).

You try to be quite informal but at the end of the day you have to maintain behaviour and to establish that they have to know where the boundaries are. (Amy, R2 Pre-observation interview)

When [Amy] explains a lesson and then it is more easier and that makes a very good lesson.
(Pupil Survey)

The highly effective teachers also focused on expectations that were individualised, consistent, sequential and differentiated, giving pupils more control over their learning.

For a long time now we've been genuinely concerned about the children, we like children, care about children, and I think we've built a team of people who are prepare to work hard in helping children and I think that makes a difference. It's having high expectations of children and I come back to the point I made earlier about telling them all they're level 7{...}high expectation and leading by example.
(Michael, R1 Post-observation interview)

I establish some very clear ground rules at the beginning which is, they are here to do maths, they can enjoy it, we will succeed, you have to listen to me, if there's going to be any comedy, I'll be the comedian, you know, I'll warn you when you step out of

line and every now and again you do have to warn them, but they're children and you do have to remind them. I think the relationship's always been good. (Michael, R2 Pre-observation interview)

Pupils in Michael's class viewed his approaches positively.

To have a choice of what we do helps make a good lesson. (Michael, Pupil survey)

The learning environment

Observations within classrooms showed that our sample of teachers verbally set clear academic and behavioural expectations, especially in the primary classrooms and this resulted in a high level of pupil engagement. All the teachers commented within interviews on how they sought to encourage positive learning, emphasising the importance of creating an open and trusting environment where pupils could feel happy, calm and relaxed. More than a third (36%, n = 29) of teachers also said that lessons should be pupil led or interactive and that a vital part of teaching was ensuring pupils were motivated.

I think that it's an ordered environment which learning takes place, one in which the students feel valued and cared for and one in which mutual trust exists. (Phillip, R1 Pre-observation interview)

He continued:

The notion that they can and are being successful. Kids love success. They love to feel that that's the case and I like to{...}the strategies to make them feel that can succeed, so they can see their own success. (Phillip, R1 Pre-observation interview)

[Amy] tells us how to improve our work, gives specific targets, sometimes she writes it in our books. (Pupil focus group)

The highly effective teachers demonstrated the creation of a positive climate for learning by challenging pupils' ideas, inspiring them, being more innovative in their practice and differentiating amongst pupils according to abilities and interests where appropriate.

They have good behaviour, I have a seating plan, and I moved children around so they sit next to people they work well with or sit on their own...}i like them to sit in friendship groups really. I have made them sit in alphabetical order, boy-girl, by height by shoe size, by their birthdays, by how many children in their family, and every time they came into the room they had to sit differently. (Michael, R1 Pre-observation interview)

The headteacher had a strong belief in Michael's ability to create a positive learning climate:

I hope you'll see in some of the lessons you see is some sense that children's responsibility for their learning is becoming real for them in the lessons they're involved in and therefore I would expect you to see more questions and statements; I'm expecting you to see lots of pupil activity rather than teacher led activity...}I hope you'll see a lot of interactivity in the lessons and I think what you will see in the classrooms around the school is a climate of inquisitiveness of children being genuinely motivated by the desire to learn and teachers facilitating that. (Headteacher interview)

This approach to creation of a positive learning environment was also seen to give pupils a greater sense of control over their learning and opportunities for success.

Teacher creativity and flexibility

Nearly half of the primary teachers (47%, n = 21) and a third of secondary teachers (33%, n = 12) said that flexibility was vital and that often plans could change throughout a lesson depending on the needs or interests of the class. All teachers commented on their confidence in deviating from a strict plan in order to respond appropriately to broader learning needs as they arose. Around a third of primary (31%, n = 14) and a quarter of secondary teachers (25%, n = 9) commented upon how having the freedom to emphasise

creativity in lessons was a factor in pupil engagement. Primary teachers spoke more than secondary teachers about learning from mistakes and being reflective about their practice.

I may end up doing more, I may end up doing less. Obviously there's a need to be flexible and depend on how things are going. (Phillip, R2 Pre-observation interview)

Amy also states that flexibility and refining practice is important:

I've been trying out some of the lessons and the planning and ideas from the new framework so although I haven't taught this one before, I've taught bits of it, but I guess I'm working on refining my practice and trying out new ideas. But even if it's not, you know, doesn't quite go according to plan, at least then I'll learn from it and can change it to make it better for next time. (Amy, R1 Pre-observation interview)

She continues by saying:

I think one thing probably is sort of being given freedom to experiment, try out new things and not being afraid to learn and not always just doing as it has been done or just textbook, but being encouraged to be creative, try new things. (Amy, R1 Post-observation interview)

Drawing on analyses of observational and interview data, we found that the highly effective teachers had a more consistent approach to balancing creativity, task-centred progress and fun with the maintenance of discipline.

You've got to be flexible. You mustn't do, sort of the trainee teacher lesson which is 'I'm going to teach you this, and you're not going to put me off it one way or another and I'm going to read from my notes and we are just going to go' if you're going to be a good teacher you have to be confident about taking off on a tangent, and if you are taking off on a tangent, know how far you take it and whether it's going to be useful or not{...}but yeah, be flexible. (Michael, R1 Pre-observation interview)

It's quite a flexible school so you've got quite a lot of options to try out a lot of stuff as well actually. (Kate, R1 Post-observation interview)

From the data, as well as the illustrative profiles of innovative classroom practice, it is evident that the importance of building positive relationships with pupils was the strongest indicator of effectiveness, as described by teachers. However, this aspect of their work was seen to be mediated by a series of other factors that all contributed to the overall classroom practice. The following discussion explores these key classroom factors further, as well as the ability of teachers to address other mediating factors which can be one of the differentiating characteristics between the effective and highly effective teachers.

Discussion

In this chapter we have discussed the innovative pedagogies evident in effective and highly effective teachers. These teachers are creative educators and represent innovation by their deviation from didactics and by the academic performance of their pupils. The data indicate that there was also a connection between the various pedagogical and relationship factors which defined effective practice and two additional aspects of teachers' professional lives; school environment and personal factors. From the four teacher profiles presented in this chapter, it is clear that each was affected to a different degree by key personal life events, additional responsibilities, and collegial support. This was also reflected across the whole sample of teachers, and has led to the identification of three key statements.

Effective and highly effective teachers demonstrate a number of 'core' aspects of innovative classroom practice

Innovative teaching and learning has been characterised more traditionally through activities such as group work, peer learning, teamwork and use of ICT. Both the effective and highly effective teachers in the sample are effective in all 'core' aspects of teaching practices, and observation findings provide support for the view that there is an overall (or generic) concept of teacher effectiveness. The generic categories derived from the quantitative observation data provide only broad descriptions. However, the qualitative analyses reveal that there is considerable variation in the ways in which these are enacted. In addition, qualitative data provide support for a differentiated concept of teacher

effectiveness. This suggests that effective and highly effective teachers can show both strengths and weaknesses in different aspects of their teaching practices and might vary in their effectiveness over time, in different lessons and for different pupil groups.

In this study, the classroom factors found to be important in the definition of effective and highly effective teachers were largely focused upon innovative pedagogical approaches related to level of teacher challenge to pupils, creativity and flexibility, positive relationships, praise and feedback, climate for learning, learning styles, organisational techniques. These were factors also identified by the quantitative observational data and confirmed findings from previous research, for example, by Fraser (1989) and McBer (2000). The findings also concur with those of Mortimore, Sammons, Stoll, Lewis, & Ecob (1988) who found that the key classroom factors of effective teachers included communication involving high levels of interaction, the facilitation of pupil responsibility and independence, providing challenging work, a positive classroom environment and high levels of praise and encouragement. The teachers who participated in the ECP project utilised these classroom level approaches to ensure the learning experience catered for pupils with a variety of learning approaches, combining verbal, visual, aural and kinaesthetic styles where appropriate, and for the learning needs of both groups and individual pupils. The classroom practice of these teachers not only illustrated unique pedagogical practices, but also demonstrated innovation through modification and adaptation.

Teachers who successfully combine classroom, school and personal factors are more likely to be innovative and effective practitioners

From the teacher profiles, the classroom practice of participating teachers is seen to be influenced by two mediating factors: the school environment, and personal life. School-based factors of positive leadership, school culture and support from colleagues were seen in this study to be vital in the development and maintenance of effectiveness, especially with regard to pupil relationships and overall climate for learning. While a small minority of teachers (11%, $n = 9$) did not feel particularly supported by the school leadership, most made positive comments. These included the supportive or caring nature of line managers and the Senior Leadership Team, the encouragement given to engage in professional development, and the chance to improve their practice through feedback from

observations. Primary teachers were more likely to discuss the provision of resources by the leadership as having an impact on effectiveness, with almost three quarters (71%, n = 32) saying how classroom or teaching assistants had a very significant and positive impact on their effectiveness.

Another school factor that was highlighted was the importance of an open culture in the school and how this created a calm or friendly environment which was seen as conducive to effectiveness. The majority of teachers (89%, n = 72) said how a hard-working culture and a culture of good behaviour had a positive impact on their work. Other issues cited by the teachers included the community context of the school, attitudes of parents, and opportunities for professional development offered by the school. Primary teachers were more likely to cite a consistent and open approach to expectations and behaviour across the school as impacting upon their practice, whereas the highly effective teachers were involved in the decision-making processes in the school, especially those related to teaching and learning, behaviour policies, and strategies to increase parental involvement.

In relation to personal factors, maintaining high levels of motivation, job satisfaction and commitment to teaching was key to being a highly effective teacher. The majority of teachers (89%, n = 72) talked about having a high level of motivation and commitment and enjoying the challenges and high standards expected from the job (Kington *et al.*, 2008). Continuing professional development (CPD) was reported to be one of the main influences on motivation, and primary teachers commented upon a rise in motivation as a result of time for planning, preparation and assessment, and having more support in the classroom. The negative influences were tiredness, pressure from external demands and managing different roles within the school. The highly effective teachers reported that they maintained a high level of motivation and commitment by seeking new challenges, seizing opportunities to be involved in a variety of activity in the school, and developing and sustaining positive relationships with colleagues.

Overall, the majority (90%, n = 73) of teachers felt that their work and life were fairly balanced in spite of competing demands, although this fluctuated throughout the year (Kington *et al.*, 2008). Feelings of well-being were enhanced by freedom to make decisions

in the classroom, opportunities for development, and feeling a commitment to the community surrounding the school. The highly effective teachers were seen to be more able to adopt strategies in order to help them manage workload and keep life in balance.

Highly effective teachers are more positive, reflective and contextually responsive

Whilst many elements of effective classroom practice were utilised by both the *effective* and the *highly effective* teachers, the *highly effective* teachers possessed and combined a greater range of teaching and learning strategies in addressing issues in consistently positive and more reflective, complex and contextually responsive ways. Those teachers identified as highly effective gave individual and personalised support to pupils in order to address their needs, leading them to be motivated to engage in learning and ensure inclusion. Furthermore, highly effective teachers' lessons were clearly sequenced, segmented and purposively paced, with well-managed transitions between tasks and a plenary was conducted in their lessons, which was also a finding of Reynolds & Muijs (1999) who presented similar evidence gathered from mathematics lessons. Some aspects of their pedagogy, such as the facilitation of independent learning, opportunities for pupils to reflect, self-evaluate, and engage in dialogue about learning, and the opportunity to recognise their own improvements giving pupils additional confidence in influencing their own learning, reflected Schoenfeld's (1987) study. Finally in highly effective teachers' classrooms, teachers engaged in co-learning with the pupils, and were interested in the intellectual stimulation of the pupils (Slavin, 1983).

Conclusion

The analyses of classroom practices have supported the claim that, for both the effective and highly effective teachers, these practices can change over time and as a result of different experiences and school contexts and, in addition, can be accompanied by changes in school/classroom factors. These factors include teachers' personal experience, the 'micro-politics' of the school setting, and wider socio-cultural contexts. Interplay between these different elements is clearly evident in the teacher profiles showing how an individual teacher draws on a variety of professional, contextual and personal elements for support in their classroom practice.

It may appear, on first examination, that there is nothing particularly innovative about the effective teaching described in this chapter; that these classroom factors are considered and addressed by all teachers. However, what is notable is that the effective teachers in this study use these practices consistently, with success, resulting in positive student achievement. Many additional demands were placed on these teachers, not only in relation to the organisation of their classroom activities but also in managing relationships and interactions with family, colleagues, and school leadership, but in spite of these demands, all of the participant teachers demonstrated and articulated a commitment to their profession.

The chapter has highlighted the fact that whilst there are core classroom competencies in terms of organization and management, pedagogical context knowledge, innovative pedagogical skills, and interpersonal qualities, these are enacted differently by teachers in different sectors, year groups, subject groups and socio-economic contexts. The project was, therefore, able to generate both more detailed and more holistic understandings of teachers' classroom practice and effectiveness than has been possible in previous studies.

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