

April 1, 2019

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Quality teaching and the tradition of didactics - abstract

It is widely recognized that quality in education and teaching is important and that teachers are the single largest factor that matters to quality (Cochran-Smith 2003; Wang et al 2011; Hattie 2009; Konstantopoulos & Chung, 2011; Rivkin, Hanushek, & Kain, 2005; Rockoff, Jacob, Kane, & Staiger, 2010). However, when it comes to the definition of quality and to the specification of what it is about the teacher that matters, there is much less consensus. Is it specific teacher characteristics (Béteille & Loeb 2009; Wilson, Floden, & Ferrini-Mundy 2002), teachers' cognitive resources (Wang et al. 2011) or their mindset (Stockero et al. 2017)? Is it the teacher's content background and degree status (Goldhaber & Brewer, 2000; Wang, 2010)? The use of use of specific methods (Hattie 2009)? Teachers' professional knowledge and expertise (Darling-Hammond, Darling-Hammond, 2000, 2010)? Teachers' ability to plan lessons and facilitate student learning (Wang, 2010), the character of their instructional decision making (Weimer, 2009; Wenglinsky, 2002) or their instructional behaviors (Good & Brophy, 2000; Goodlad, 2004).

This paper addresses the nature of the concept of quality in relation to the tradition of didactics. Taking it's starting point in the distinction between good and successful teaching that are found in Fenstermacher & Richardson (2005) and Wang et al (2011), where good refers to teaching practices that uphold some standards in the profession and is normative, whereas successful refers to teaching that yields student learning or otherwise has a recordable effect, it analyses different ways of thinking about quality, considering their relevance to thinking about teaching within the tradition of didactics. Based on this and using empirical data from a recently completed study on the understanding of discipline-specific knowledge over the past 50 years, it develops a conceptual framework for reflecting quality in teaching.