

Executive Summary

What are the best bets for teachers to invest time and effort in if they want their students to learn more?

We have reviewed existing research studies and frameworks that are relevant to the components and routes to improvement of teacher effectiveness. Our aim is to help teachers make better decisions about what they can best do to improve their effectiveness. In summary, we have identified four priorities for teachers who want to help their student learn more:

1. understand the content they are teaching and how it is learnt
2. create a supportive environment for learning
3. manage the classroom to maximise the opportunity to learn
4. present content, activities and interactions that activate their students' thinking

We present a model that comprises these four overarching dimensions, with a total of 17 elements within them. An 'element' is defined as something that may be worth investing time and effort to work on to build a specific competency, skill or knowledge, or to enhance the learning environment. There is no implication that the complexity of teaching can be reduced to a set of techniques, but evidence suggests the best route to expertise is likely to involve a focus on developing competencies, guided by formative feedback in a supportive professional learning environment.

This review is the first stage of an ambitious wider project to create a 'Toolkit' that will:

- personalise the curriculum for teacher learning (according to ages and subjects taught, school context and student characteristics, current profile of expertise, etc.)
- develop systems and instruments to provide formative, actionable feedback that helps teachers to focus their learning, evaluate their impact and track their professional growth
- coordinate networks for peer and expert support to generate, share and apply evidence about the most effective ways to improve

The individual elements of the model for Great Teaching are as follows.

1. Understanding the content

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| 1 Having deep and fluent knowledge and flexible understanding of the content you are teaching | 2 Knowledge of the requirements of curriculum sequencing and dependencies in relation to the content and ideas you are teaching | 3 Knowledge of relevant curriculum tasks, assessments and activities, their diagnostic and didactic potential; being able to generate varied explanations and multiple representations/analogies/examples for the ideas you are teaching |
| 4 Knowledge of common student strategies, misconceptions and sticking points in relation to the content you are teaching | | |

2. Creating a supportive environment

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| 1 Promoting interactions and relationships with all students that are based on mutual respect, care, empathy and warmth; avoiding negative emotions in interactions with students; being sensitive to the individual needs, emotions, culture and beliefs of students | 2 Promoting a positive climate of student-student relationships, characterised by respect, trust, cooperation and care | 4 Creating a climate of high expectations, with high challenge and high trust, so learners feel it is okay to have a go; encouraging learners to attribute their success or failure to things they can change |
| | 3 Promoting learner motivation through feelings of competence, autonomy and relatedness | |

3. Maximising opportunity to learn

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| 1 Managing time and resources efficiently in the classroom to maximise productivity and minimise wasted time (e.g., starts, transitions); giving clear instructions so students understand what they should be doing; using (and explicitly teaching) routines to make transitions smooth | 2 Ensuring that rules, expectations and consequences for behaviour are explicit, clear and consistently applied | 3 Preventing, anticipating & responding to potentially disruptive incidents; reinforcing positive student behaviours; signalling awareness of what is happening in the classroom and responding appropriately |
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4. Activating hard thinking

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| 1 Structuring: giving students an appropriate sequence of learning tasks; signalling learning objectives, rationale, overview, key ideas and stages of progress; matching tasks to learners' needs and readiness; scaffolding and supporting to make tasks accessible to all, but gradually removed so that all students succeed at the required level | 2 Explaining: presenting and communicating new ideas clearly, with concise, appropriate, engaging explanations; connecting new ideas to what has previously been learnt (and re-activating/checking that prior knowledge); using examples (and non-examples) appropriately to help learners understand and build connections; modelling/demonstrating new skills or procedures with appropriate scaffolding and challenge; using worked/part-worked examples | 3 Questioning: using questions and dialogue to promote elaboration and connected, flexible thinking among learners (e.g., 'Why?', 'Compare', etc.); using questions to elicit student thinking; getting responses from all students; using high-quality assessment to evidence learning; interpreting, communicating and responding to assessment evidence appropriately |
| 4 Interacting: responding appropriately to feedback from students about their thinking/knowledge/understanding; giving students actionable feedback to guide their learning | 5 Embedding: giving students tasks that embed and reinforce learning; requiring them to practise until learning is fluent and secure; ensuring that once-learnt material is reviewed/revisited to prevent forgetting | 6 Activating: helping students to plan, regulate and monitor their own learning; progressing appropriately from structured to more independent learning as students develop knowledge and expertise |