

What Shapes a Teacher's Practice?

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Abstract

How do teachers develop their practice while working in schools? The research offers complex solutions in the form of peer observations, the positive value of learning communities and collaborative lesson studies. Yet, other more didactic practices like enactment scripts and ready-made learner materials are often criticized for disengaging teachers as thinking professionals. In this presentation, the notion of teacher practice is examined with particular focus on teacher practice for the teaching of reading at the primary school levels. Qualitative findings from a single case study of an experienced teacher in a Singapore school is presented with a view to identifying the factors that shape, impede and encourage the development and growth of her practice. The findings reveal that policy supports usually criticized as instruments of teacher-proofing are helpful in enabling progressive development of this teacher's practice in significant areas. The presentation will end by offering further supports to existing tools employed that shape teacher practice.

Keywords: teacher practice; primary schools; teaching reading; teacher-proofing; teacher development