Expert teachers

The study

John Hattie and his colleague Richard Jaeger conducted a study comparing expert teachers with experienced and novice teachers. This PinPoint article summarises the key findings.

The conclusions

All 16 dimensions can successfully classify 84% of the teachers correctly. But three alone can classify 80% correctly. These three attributes, therefore, hold the key to becoming an expert teacher. They are:

- Challenge
  Students are constantly urged to engage deeply and meaningfully with subject content.

- Deep Representation
  This means far more than academic subject knowledge which, while essential, doesn’t distinguish experts. Instead, it refers to pedagogical subject knowledge. This is the ability to present key concepts to suit the prior learning and ability of your students. It takes years to develop.

- Monitoring and Feedback
  Expert teachers are ravenous for feedback on their students’ learning. They are meticulous in checking their hypotheses.

The findings

There were five major distinctions of excellent teachers. They:

A. ETs have deeper representations about teaching and learning
   They don’t have more subject knowledge — they organise and integrate it better.

B. ETs are proficient at creating an optimal classroom climate for learning.
   They build climates where errors are welcomed, student questioning is high and engagement is the norm.

C. ETs are more adept at developing and testing hypotheses about learning difficulties or instructional strategies.
   They are meticulous in checking their hypotheses.

D. ETs have high respect for students.
   They are involved in their students’ successes and failures.

E. ETs enhance surface and deep learning.
   They successfully address both surface (content) and depth (understanding).

Only when we dependably identify excellence... can we provide the goalposts to aim for.

John Hattie

REFERENCES

Paper to Australian Council for Educational Research Annual Conf.