Towards quality and equity: The case for Quality Teaching Rounds

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Abstract
Improving the quality of school teaching through the professional development of teachers is a global concern echoed with growing urgency in a vast array of political and educational circles. In this paper, I outline our research on Quality Teaching and Quality Teaching Rounds, emphasising the importance of a strong pedagogical framework and adherence to principles of effective professional development in systematically avoiding the weaknesses associated with many approaches to pedagogical improvement. The power of combining evidence about professional learning communities, instructional rounds and Quality Teaching in our approach to teacher professional development, known as ‘Quality Teaching Rounds’, will be demonstrated using evidence from NSW and ACT schools. Our data indicate significant impact on the quality of teaching, the level of productive collaboration among teachers, and student outcomes (using NAPLAN data).

Interviews with teachers and principals corroborate these positive impacts, with many describing Quality Teaching Rounds as the most powerful professional development in which they have participated. With systematic observation and feedback on teaching high on national and international agendas, these encouraging results demonstrate how we can better support all teachers to produce high-quality teaching for all of their students.

In this paper, I summarise results from a program of research in which we have made a number of conceptual and methodological moves with important consequences for understanding how to improve both quality and equity. I argue that the Quality Teaching model of pedagogy and Quality Teaching Rounds approach to teacher development provide a powerful framework for enhancing teaching practice and offer tremendous potential for increasing both quality and equity in schools. In New South Wales and Australian Capital Territory schools – where Quality Teaching and Quality Teaching Rounds are already in use – we are already seeing this potential realised.