

Comments on Qualities of a Good Teacher

Cartoons: Making A 'Super' Teacher



BOSTON — For years, people thought the number of students per teacher was the most important factor in learning. Then educators focused on the size of schools. Now, more and more research shows that teacher quality matters most. But what makes a good teacher?

You might be impressed if your kid’s teacher has a master’s degree from Harvard’s School of Education. But researchers say you should think again.

“The things we think typically matter to make an effective teacher — how many years experience, how many degrees you have, whether you have a degree in this or a degree in that — don’t seem to matter much at all,” says Prof. Bob Pianta, dean of the Curry School of Education at the University of Virginia.

Pianta is one of the foremost experts [on teacher quality](#). He’s an education school guy, so you might expect him to stand behind fancy schools. But years of research have led him to see past the ivory towers.

“What we find matters the most is what teachers actually do with kids in classrooms,” he says. “How do teachers interact with kids? How do they deliver instruction? How do they engage them? Those by far outweigh anything about a teacher’s background.”

He says good teachers display “behavior in three big buckets.” Another way to put this is a good teacher has to play three different roles: a good teacher has to be a social worker, a manager and an instructor.

The social worker forms good relationships with kids and supports them emotionally.

A video, audio, and full notes of the classroom presentation of Lesson 4 – Qualities of a Good Teacher – are available at www.ThyWordIsTruth.com