



## How do Teachers Teach? A Study on Characteristics of Teaching Practices

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### Session Information

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Paper Session

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### Contribution

#### How do Teachers Teach? A Study on Characteristics of Teaching Practices

In educational research, specially in Portugal, conceptions and representations on teaching practices have been more emphasized than descriptions of actual practices themselves. This research aims at illuminating better this area by means of creating and validating an instrument, based on observed teaching practices, intended to characterize actual teaching strategies. The present study is based on the assumption that improvement of school and students' learning implies a more accurate knowledge on this variable - the ways teachers do teach - as critical to improve the quality of school service and related improvement of students learning, as many international studies have shown (TIMSS, PISA, among others). The concept of teaching that will be mobilized relies on conceiving teaching as a deliberate, sustained and intentional action oriented towards promoting someone's learning of something (Roldão, 2007). Thus, the present study aims at contributing to the detailed characterization of teaching practices, namely about strategies and their supports, in order to build a typology of tendencies that might be used as a tool of diagnosis and analysis that will support a variety of transformative or formative actions in specific contexts.

#### Method

The present study aims at contributing to the detailed characterization and analysis of a field that has been relatively hidden; how can be described actual current teaching practices, namely about strategies and their conceptual supports? This aspect, importing Ivor Goodson's expression, has largely remained a "secret garden" (Goodson, 1997). Even educational research, as described in several reviews, emphasizes the qualitative study of representations and conceptions of teaching

rather than the description and analysis of actual practices themselves (Roldão et al; Rodrigues e Esteves, 2003). It has been developed a study that allows for the building of a typology of tendencies that might be used as a tool of diagnosis and analysis that will support a variety of transformative actions in specific contexts, On the other hand, a more focused analysis of how do teachers perceive their practices and which concepts they mobilize will also be part of the research agenda. - In a 1st step, relying on available literature and national and international research, and based on the observation of a set (225 to 250 hours)of videotaped classes (3 classes, one week per class, at every discipline or area from 1st, 2nd and 3rd cycles of 3 elementary schools) (a) a descriptive categorical framework of observed teaching practices will be produced and (b) This framework was used to identify tendencies within the observed sample. The framework was afterwards validated in other classes and schools in order to improve its accuracy. - In a future second step, a sample of teachers involved in the observed classes (representative from every discipline and cycle) will be interviewed and their teaching plans and curriculum and evaluation materials analyzed and discussed in order to (a) identify their perception and justification for the adequacy and effectiveness of teaching strategies they used and (b) get their understanding and use of teaching and curriculum basic concepts , such as - strategy, objectives/competencies, content, assessment, differentiation, among others that may emerge.

## Expected Outcomes

From the 1st step a valid instrument of characterization of actual teaching practices has been produced, that may be used for self and hetero-evaluation and improvement. From 2nd step, it is expected to obtain a qualitative analysis of teachers perceptions on their teaching and mastery of organizing concepts of teaching, that will help to interpretation of descriptive data obtained in 1st step.

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