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Issues of contingency in teaching for ‘mastery’.

Adams, G. (ed.), Proceedings of the British Society for Research into Learning Mathematics (BSRLM). Vol. 35, No. 3. Proceedings of the day conference, University of Reading, UK, November 7, 2015. London: British Society for Research into Learning Mathematics (BSRLM). 120-125 (2016).

Summary: Inspired by the 2015 special issue of “Research in Mathematics Education” – ‘Mathematics teaching: tales of the unexpected’ – this paper relates ideas about contingency to the demands on primary school teachers in England to deliver a new ‘mastery’ National Curriculum. Drawing on an observation of and interview with one newly qualified teacher, Mandy, this paper explores how her ability to enact a ‘mastery approach’ is stifled by both her commitment to the established school routine for lesson planning and her lack of experience. Unexpected events from her lesson are described and related to the concept of contingency as outlined in the special issue and the question is asked: is a well-rehearsed response repertoire necessary for teaching for ‘mastery’?

Classification: D32 D42 C49

Keywords: primary education; teacher education; educational research; teaching; mastery approach; curriculum; contingency; lesson planning; response repertoire; case studies; unexpected reasons from pupils; subject content knowledge

<http://www.bsrlm.org.uk/IPs/ip35-3/BSRLM-IP-35-3-21.pdf>