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Do subject specialists produce more useful feedback than non-specialists when observing mathematics lessons?

Oesterle, Susan (ed.) et al., Proceedings of the 38th conference of the International Group for the Psychology of Mathematics Education “Mathematics education at the edge”, PME 38 held jointly with the 36th conference of PME-NA, Vancouver, Canada, July 15–20, 2014, Vol. 3. [s. 1.]: International Group for the Psychology of Mathematics Education (ISBN 978-0-86491-360-9/set; 978-0-86491-363-0/v.3). 33-40 (2014).

Summary: Schools, districts and inspectorates routinely use non-specialists to observe lessons for accountability and professional development purposes. However, there is little empirical research on how well non-specialists observe lessons. We describe two pilot studies in which education professionals made judgements about mathematics lesson observation reports, written by both specialists and non-specialists. In terms of providing feedback to the observed teachers, the professionals considered the specialists’ reports to be significantly more useful than the non-specialists’ reports. Written advice about a teacher’s practice influenced these judgements. The paper considers theoretical and practical implications, as well as limitations of our findings.

Classification: D69 C79 D39

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