

Unit 3 Being a teacher

Task 1 What is the one word that all the adjectives below collocate with?

inspired qualified experienced male competent
part-time remedial primary school former

?

Task 2 Teaching your subject

Classroom snapshot

A friend who knows nothing about teaching your subject has asked you to describe a snapshot of a typical moment in a lesson - a picture that captures the atmosphere and the activities going on.

Task 3 Remembering teachers you have known

1. Think back to some teachers (of any subject) you have had in your life. What do you remember about them and their lessons? Can you recall any specific lessons? Specific teaching techniques? What words or phrases characterise the atmosphere of the classes (e.g. positive, encouraging, boring, quiet)?

2. To what extent do you think your personal style as a teacher is / will be based on these role models?

Task 4 Teacher characteristics

What do you think are the core teacher characteristics that help to create an effective learning environment?

The list below includes features that may be important in creating a positive relationship and a positive learning atmosphere. Decide which items are inborn and which could be worked on and improved.

- really listens to his/her students
- is fair
- shows respect
- is patient
- can be authoritative without being distant
- trusts people
- inspires confidence
- is well organised
- is honest
- has a good sense of humour
- is, by and large, authentically her/himself
- gives clear and positive feedback
- is non-judgemental
- does not complicate things unnecessarily
- empathises with students' problems

Task 5 Three kinds of teachers

There are obviously many ways of teaching, and part of the enjoyment of being a student in a good classroom is sharing the unique personal identity, style, skills and techniques that a teacher brings to a lesson.

Having said that, it sometimes gives things a clearer perspective if we simplify rather than complicate. Adrian Underhill has suggested that there may be three broad categories of teaching styles.

A) The explainer

Many teachers know their subject matter very well, but have limited knowledge of teaching methodology. This kind of teacher relies on 'explaining' or 'lecturing' as a way of conveying information to the students. Done with style or enthusiasm or wit or imagination, this teacher's lessons can be very entertaining, interesting and informative. The students are listening, perhaps occasionally answering questions and making notes, but mostly not being personally involved or challenged. The learners often get practice by doing individual exercises after one phase of the lecture has finished.

B) The involver

This teacher also knows the subject matter that is being dealt with. However, she is also familiar with teaching methodology; she is able to use appropriate teaching and organisational procedures and techniques to help her students learn about the subject matter. This teacher is trying to involve her students and puts a great deal of effort into finding appropriate and interesting activities that will do this, while still retaining control over the classroom and what happens in it.

C) The enabler

The third kind of teacher is confident enough to share control with the learners, or perhaps to hand it over to them entirely. Decisions made in her classroom may often be shared or negotiated.

This teacher knows about the subject matter and about methodology, but also has an awareness of how individuals and groups are thinking and feeling within her class. She actively responds to this in her planning and methods and in building effective working relationships and a good classroom atmosphere. Her own personality and attitude are an active encouragement to this learning.

Summarise the main differences between the three different types of teachers. What are the dimensions in which they differ?

Explainer

Involver

Enabler

Task 6 Exam practice

Complete the gaps with one of the expressions below. There are two words that you will not use.

assumptions *challenge* *considered* *exposure* *inept* *largely* *prerequisite*
sadly *subtle* *traced*

When I started teaching, I found that my basic image of what a teacher's job was and how a teacher should behave were drawn (1) from what I had seen my own teachers doing. These internal images were quite deeply held and quite hard to (2) Any teacher starting out needs to check if they have inbuilt (3) about teaching from this (4) to hours and hours of observing your own teachers at work.

If you think about it, you have watched and experienced an awful lot of teaching being done to you - and this can often remain a (5) and deep-seated influence. Whether we acknowledge it or not, much of our view of what a teacher is and what a teacher should do can often be (6) back to these many years of lesson observation from the pupil's seat. (7), a lot of the teaching that has left a deep impression on us was not necessarily very good teaching. As well as some excellent teachers, most of us have probably seen examples of teachers who were boring, unkind, incompetent, sarcastic or (8)

(adapted from Scrivener, J. (2011) *Learning Teaching*. London: Macmillan Education.)

Task 7 Word formation – Prefixes

Prefixes can be used with words to change the meaning. Look at the words in italics – what do they mean?

- You'll certainly lose marks with your handwriting is *illegible*.
- Make sure the information you give is relevant to the question. Again, *irrelevant* information may lose you marks.
- The students at the university called for a *non-violent* demonstration to express their *disapproval* of the government's education policy.

Now add more examples to the lists below using these root words:

able accurate active agree button comfortable convenient credible
experienced fair fold formal literate necessary patient possible
pronounce reliable responsible courage usual

adjectives

un- unjust unkind
in- inappropriate insincere insecure
il- illegal illegible
ir- irregular
im- immature improbable impolite

verbs

un- untie undo
dis- disappear disqualify
mis- misunderstand mishear