

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 if 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 appropriate usual competent

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

Task 8 Video – Every kid needs a champion

(https://www.ted.com/talks/rita_pierson_every_kid_needs_a_champion)

Listen to a classic TED talk on education by Rita Pierson. What is her main message?

Task 9 Reading - Making a difference

Read the article quickly. What impact did the teachers at each of the writer's schools have upon his life?

ONLY CONNECT

Every year, hundreds of thousands of sixteen year olds in the UK leave school with few or no qualifications. What, if anything, can be done to stop schools failing young people?

I left school at the age of 16 and lost my sense of direction. Fifteen years later, this memory was triggered by a TV experiment called *Dream School* in which a celebrity gathers together 20 kids who hate school and asks some of Britain's smartest people - none of whom are trained teachers - to teach and inspire them. And in the faces of the kids – alternately bad-tempered, unable to listen and desperate to change – I can see my younger self. There are half a million such kids in Britain, and during this rough and ready attempt to turn a few of them round, some of the so-called 'teachers' try aggressive discipline, others try sympathetic indulgence, and beneath this pedagogical chaos the ideal solution becomes clear.

On the first day of my first secondary school, I remember thinking, 'How dare they tell me what I'll be doing every day?' I loved to learn – I was always reading – but my reaction to being ordered to do it made me come across as hostile. The teachers responded to me scornfully, which led to mutual hatred. So I was always skiving off school, always on the brink of being expelled, until I dropped out as soon as I legally could. Although distressed by my behaviour, my parents were unable to convince me to stay on to do my 'Advanced' level exams. Since they left school at 16 too, they didn't really have a leg to stand on. Anyway, I spent a year playing video games and having fantasies of being 'discovered'. (For some reason I thought I was going to be an actor, even though I am utterly incapable of acting, in the same way that today's kids dream of achieving fame through reality shows like *The X Factor*.)

Finally, I was persuaded to try out another school, although I didn't have high expectations. But something happened that I had never found in the education system before; there were teachers there who took the time to figure out why I was so resistant to their praise and to find a way of teaching that would nurture me. Outwardly indifferent and unimpressed, I was inwardly astonished. My sense of self began to change and I began to think, for the first time, that I might have ability. It was their encouragement and caring that turned my life around. Some were strict and some were soft, but it was the emotional connection that mattered.

You can see the same process happening in *Dream School*. These kids associate education with being told they are useless. One of the 'teachers' tells them, in effect, to pull themselves together. But that sends them back into shame and rage. The 'teacher' then shifts strategy, instinctively sensing the need to get to know them individually. **Suddenly, it works** and the kids begin to react. There can be discipline – indeed, the kids want it, deep down – but first there has to be a bond. They then begin to work – like plants finally given water and sunshine. But can a principle like this be introduced into our education system?

My first school let me down. What do you do then? The rap artist, Plan B, has talked about how his educational misery only ended when his school set up a Pupil Referral Unit – a calm place where he could be given one-to-one attention by sympathetic and consistent teachers. When a child is seriously misbehaving, it should be a flashing light that they need to establish a relationship with someone. Until the government is prepared to invest money in schemes like this, the principle uncovered in the experiment will be just that – dreams.

Look at the phrase *Suddenly, it works* in paragraph 4. What does it refer to and how is this different from what they are used to?

Choose the answer (A, B, C or D) which you think fits best according to the text.

1. In the first paragraph, the writer mentions the Dream School experiment on TV because
 - A) he has experience with the type of incoherent teaching techniques shown in it.
 - B) he can identify with the attitude of the students who took part in it.
 - C) he once participated in a similar research project himself.
 - D) he is convinced that the idea will fail.

2. The writer left his secondary school because
 - A) his parents did not recognise the value of education.
 - B) he had already set his heart on a specific job.
 - C) he resented the way he was treated there.
 - D) his teachers believed he had no academic potential.

3. The writer's experience at the next school he attended was more successful because
 - A) he had already made up his mind to adopt a co-operative attitude.
 - B) he was inspired to fulfil his potential.
 - C) he felt the timetable provided more flexibility.
 - D) he realised the need to focus on a future career.

4. The writer believes the students at the *Dream School* did not initially respond to the experiment because
 - A) it took time for them to accept the discipline.
 - B) none of them would admit that they needed help.
 - C) they were made to feel unworthy of attention.
 - D) the subjects were taught badly.

5. In the writer's view, schools should try to
 - A) help difficult children by ensuring there is a caring adult available for them to talk to.
 - B) make sure the same education is available for both rich and poor alike.
 - C) ensure that all students have a voice by providing smaller classes.
 - D) put pressure on government to fund voluntary social projects where needed.

In the text highlight all words and phrases related to education.