6 TIPS for Effective Teachers

Teaching is an exciting and challenging profession. There are several fundamental skills that make the classroom experience more productive and enjoyable for both teachers and students.

Anyone who aspires to be an outstanding teacher

needs some practical advice on developing skills and strategies that are most effective. These strategies are based on years of observing teachers and students within the classroom environment. They are essential for any teacher, regardless of years of experience or grade level.

1 **Engage your students as soon as they walk into the classroom.** You should be ready to teach without delay. All materials should be easily available and in place. Your complete attention must focus on the students. Make eye contact. Walk around the room. Set the tone for the lesson immediately by hooking students' interest.

2 **Include a variety of materials and activities in each lesson to keep the momentum going.** Capture students' interest by using a variety of strategies. These can include employing or using visual aids, a read-aloud, an educational game, crossword puzzles, word searches, questioning techniques, hands-on activities, PowerPoint presentations, DVDs, or an art activity to illustrate the content of the lesson and enhance the presentation.

3 **Involve all of the students.** Ask pertinent questions to determine prior knowledge, and then relate the lesson content to the background of the students. Students need to understand why it is important that they learn the content. Classroom diversity can be addressed by using cooperative learning groups when appropriate, offering assignments that vary in difficulty, and pairing students in a creative way to enhance learning for all.

4 **Establish some classroom procedures.** Students need to feel comfortable and safe in a classroom so that learning can occur. A chaotic environment creates stress for both the teacher and the students. Establish some reasonable rules with the students so they can feel a part of the process. Create a seating arrangement that is conducive to your style of teaching.

5 **Find ways to reduce interruptions and distractions during the lesson.** Students who are busily engaged in the learning process do not have time to create distractions. Monitor the interest level throughout each lesson. If you sense that one or two students are becoming restless or disinterested, move to another instructional strategy. The pace of the lesson must also be considered. Are you moving so quickly that students are unable to process the information? Are you moving so slowly that the students are totally bored? An effective teacher is proactive and addresses a problem before it occurs. This can be done through constant interaction with and observation of the students. The teacher needs to continually monitor the classroom environment.

6 **Plan, plan, plan.** Planning is a key element in being organized. Are you ready for class when the students arrive? Are the questions written on the board? Is your lesson plan complete? Are the worksheets on your desk? Are the materials ready for the activity? Is the seating arrangement in place and appropriate for the activity? Will the lesson be enough to fill the designated time period? Plan your lesson with more activities and materials than you will need. When using equipment, there is always a possibility that something may go wrong, so always have a backup plan in case the computer is not working or the PowerPoint presentation has failed. Students may not respond to all activities with the enthusiasm and interest that you anticipated. Plan each lesson with an adequate reservoir of activities and instructional materials that you might need.

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