

Being a teacher is something I have always known I wanted to do. When I was in eighth grade, I had a math teacher that essentially changed my life. He set very high expectations in the classroom, pushed students to be the best that they could be, and always found a way to keep us engaged and motivated. That was the year that I decided I wanted to be able to impact other people's lives the way he did mine, and one day, become a teacher. I believe that an effective teacher has a true passion for children and learning, a desire to motivate people, high but attainable expectations, and content knowledge that they are excited to share with their students. An effective teacher has the ability to develop relationships with their students that creates a positive learning environment where students feel comfortable making mistakes and working towards a deeper understanding of the content. Teachers should have strong communication skills, technological skills, self-evaluation skills, and time management skills. These skills should be used to assess students and make sure they are learning the curriculum. Instructional practices should be used in the classroom to involve students in literacy-based instruction, keep students engaged, and provide scaffolding to help students move through the learning. Teachers hold a professional responsibility to meet the needs of each of their students in order to maximize their learning and growth both inside and outside of the classroom.

A sound curriculum and purposeful assessment are a critical part of learning as they provide the foundation for what students need to understand. In order for students to learn, they must first be engaged. The teacher has to capture the attention of their students and focus the learning throughout the anticipatory set of the lesson. For example, a teacher may show an interesting video at the beginning of class to grab their students' attention and set the focus on what they will be learning. I believe that in order to reach to success, teachers should make content relevant to each student's life. This can make the difference between students knowing

something versus them having a deeper understanding of the content and having the ability to use their knowledge outside of the classroom. Although there is a curriculum that will dictate what students will learn, it doesn't put restrictions on how students must learn. For example, there are many concepts in math that students need to know and learn such as solving equations or graphing data. However, students should have a say in how they will learn. It is important to know what type of learners you have in your classroom (visual, auditory, or kinesthetic). Different strategies should be used to keep the students engaged, keep the class from becoming boring, and to develop a sense of respect between you and your students by valuing their opinions. If a teacher understands the interests of the students in their classroom they can relate the learning to those interests and make the class more enjoyable for the students. I believe this will contribute to more success in the classroom.

Assessment can be used to check the effectiveness of instructional strategies used in the classroom. Formative assessment is the type of assessment where teachers check for understanding. This should be done frequently and does not require a grade. Teachers may use homework, cooperative learning groups, or individual responses to see where their students are and what they need to spend more or less time on. Formative assessment is a critical part of learning because teachers can clear up any misconceptions that students may have, and students can learn how to evaluate their own learning/understanding. For example, if formative assessment is used as frequently as it should be, students will begin to develop self-evaluation skills. (Heritage 2007). Summative assessment is used to evaluate student learning at the end of teaching; this form of assessment is based off standards or a benchmark. Summative assessments are typically based off of tests, assignments, or projects that are used to determine what a student

knows and understands. Summative assessment shows learning progress and student achievement in the classroom and usually involves a grade (edglossary).

Assessment and grading are not the same thing. Typically, the goal of grading is to evaluate student success in the classroom. Grades may be based on tests, homework, completion of assignments, attendance, or anything that the teacher feels aids in the learning process. The goal of assessment is to improve learning and understanding. However, unlike grades, assessment is not something that has to be recorded. Assessment can be done by both teachers and students. It can be as simple as asking a question to check for understanding or giving students the opportunity to assess or evaluate themselves by identifying what they don't understand. It could include anything that helps each individual student make progress towards understanding and meeting their individualized goals for measuring success. Assessment allows teachers to look beyond grades and identify the areas of strengths and weaknesses of each student.

Creating a good classroom environment involves building relationships with your students, establishing a culture for learning, developing good classroom management skills, and providing a sense of community within your classroom. The first step to building a good classroom environment is getting to know your students. This shows the students that the teacher cares about them as individuals, increases their motivation to work hard, puts responsibility on the teacher, and allows them to be open about themselves. Knowing about your students' culture, goals, and interests will establish a culture for learning by allowing for different approaches to teaching the curriculum in a way that fits the needs of all students (Tomlinson & Imbeau, 2011). Developing good classroom management skills includes being able to adjust the speed in which you move through a lesson, creating a concise list of rules to provide structure, organizing

materials, providing focus, and being able to act on the spot when something doesn't go as planned (Tomlinson & Imbeau, 2011). Using all of these skills combined will create a sense of community within the classroom. Building a sense of community has a very positive impact on classroom environment. A class with a good sense of community increases a student's likelihood to take risks in the classroom. If they are comfortable in the class, they will answer questions and challenge themselves without the fear of being wrong. A good sense of community also leads to a decrease in behavioral issues. For example, a positive learning environment will revolve around respect, rules, procedures, expectations, and consequences. The stronger the bond of a classroom is, the more likely the students are to enjoy learning together.

Instruction should correspond with content and standards, be flexible in terms of time and learning strategies, tend to multiple learning intelligences, and help students prepare for independence (Tomlinson & Imbeau, 2011). A lesson includes a list of goals/objectives, an anticipatory set, an input part of the lesson where knowledge is both acquired and deepened, and a closure that reinforces the focus of the lesson. The anticipatory set is where students will first become engaged; however, the trick is being able to keep them engaged. Students will not always be interested in what you are teaching. However, with the use of various strategies and making the content as relevant to students as possible, it is much easier to maximize student engagement. I believe there should be a balance between individual work, group work, and work as a whole class. This meets the needs of different types of learners and prevents the class from becoming boring. Checks for understanding are a critical component of teaching a lesson. One useful way of doing this is to develop a list of essential questions to ask throughout the lesson. These questions are open ended questions that allow the students to think at a higher level. The job of a teacher is to facilitate in the classroom. By asking these types of questions, you are not

only facilitating discussion, but you are assessing how well the students understand the content. The teacher should then provide feedback by clearing up any misconceptions or misunderstandings that students may have. Feedback should always be purposeful. It is an essential part of education as it allows students to reach their full potential, helps students identify their strengths and weaknesses, and provides students with the opportunity to improve their quality of work.

Being a teacher requires a great deal of professional responsibility. A teacher is not only a leader of their students, but they are representing the community as a whole. Being a professional educator is important both inside and outside of the classroom. A teacher should reflect upon their teaching, keep track of records, seek advice from colleagues, and always work towards being a better teacher day in and day out. There are always things that can be improved upon which is why self-evaluation is such an important part of professionalism. Self-evaluation includes recognizing how effective your teaching was, how engaged students were, and what areas your teaching could have been improved. Evaluating your students can help you evaluate yourself as well because if the majority of students aren't understanding, then there's a good chance something went wrong in the process of teaching and the content may need to be re-taught. Keeping records is another important aspect of professionalism. Both the teacher and students should be aware of student achievement in the classroom. Keeping track of completed assignments and the grade received on those assignments makes this possible. Lastly, being a professional educator requires the ability to communicate. Parents should be aware of how their children are doing in school and if their child is struggling in the classroom. Parents should feel comfortable contacting the teacher and the teacher should be honest with parents about their child and respect their beliefs and values.

Curriculum and assessment, classroom environment, instructional practices, and professional responsibility are all important components of teaching. I believe that with experience teachers become more experienced in these areas. However, having this knowledge before going into the profession can create a strong and effective teacher from the beginning. It is one thing to be able to talk about what it takes to be a good teacher, but it is another thing to have the desire to transfer what you know and believe about education into your classroom. Being a teacher is something I have always known I wanted to do. By expanding my knowledge of each of these components and combining it with my desire to help people I hope to be able to not only be a teacher, but rather an effective one.

Reference Page

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