

YOURE

Education & Training Centre

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*The act of
Teaching*



Preface

Before embarking on a career in teaching, there are at least two things we should think about. First, why do we want to teach? Do we have sufficient, compelling reasons? To help us think about why we want to teach, the exercise “Why teach?” is included below.

A second thing we need to think about is the value of our professional education program. Some would argue that all we need to know is our subject matter - what we will teach. However, nearly every practicing teacher disputes this and argues that knowledge of subject matter is necessary but not sufficient to being a good teacher. To see what one teacher-leader has to say about this consider the essay below “Why we must learn how to teach.”

WHY TEACH?

Congratulations! You are in the process of becoming a VIP in the lives of children, their parents, and caregivers. At this point, it might be insightful to consider the reasons people chose to teach and which of them hold meaning for you. It might also be fun to share your reasons with one another. Finally, it might be beneficial to put your reasons in writing and put that essay in your teaching portfolio. Here are a dozen. Maybe you can think of others.

WHY I WANT TO TEACH

- I will teach because I want to make a contribution to society.
- I will teach because it is an honorable profession.
- I will teach because I want to help others succeed.
- I will teach because I enjoy working with children.
- I will teach because I enjoy being a student and learning.
- I will teach because I enjoy a subject(s) and want others to also.
- I will teach because it is challenging.
- I will teach because I have found the act of teaching pleasurable.

- I will teach because I can exercise individuality and creativity.
- I will teach to make use of my abilities.
- I will teach to be around people.
- I will teach because teaching provides a secure, satisfying lifestyle.

WHY WE NEED TO KNOW MORE THAN THE SUBJECT MATTER WE WILL TEACH

In order to be a good teacher, we need to know our subject matter and a lot more. Below is a statement made by a teacher-leader that makes this clear.

WHY WE MUST LEARN HOW TO TEACH

Leila Christenbury, president of the National Council of Teachers of English, recounts why learning to teach is so important. When she entered teaching she had solid preparation in her subject field with both a bachelor's and master's degree in English but no professional preparation. She notes:

I knew all about literature and literary theory; ... I know literary history ... But that simply wasn't enough. What didn't I know? I knew nothing how people learn, especially people unlike myself, who were not motivated . I was not prepared to teach anyone who wasn't pretty much like me, I didn't how to run a class discussion or how to set up a small group. I had never created a test of any kind or considered how to grade and evaluate. Until I began teaching, I thought these things just happen in short, I didn't pedagogy. I was a good student who was expected to make automatic transfer to being an effective And that didn't happen for many years ... The study of pedagogy is indispensable to teacher Success ...The act of teaching, the consideration of teaching - and thus the consideration of learning is utterly at Center Stage ...

What we learn in pedagogy is that teaching is a complex enterprise requiring an instructor's knowledge, perception of student needs, and real willingness to adjust and adopt ... to the only thing that ultimately matters: student learning ...

Clearly the schoolchildren of America deserve knowledgeable teachers who are experts in their fields, who know what they are teaching. America's school-children also deserve knowledgeable teachers who know how to teach, how to reach each and every one of them, how to make learning effective, individual, and long lasting. (Christenbury. 2002).

Christenbury, L. (2002, June 18). Op-ed piece distributed to newspapers around the country.

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Chapter 1: Factors That Influence How We Teach

Personal Characteristics

- How Gender Influences Our Teaching
- How Age and Experience Influence Our Teaching
- How Personality Affects Our Teaching
- How Our Beliefs Affect Our Teaching

Experience and Preparation in Education

- How the Way We Were Taught Affects Our Teaching
- How the Way We Prefer To Learn Affects Our Teaching
- How the Way We Prefer To Teach Influences Our Teaching
- How Our Knowledge of Subject Matter Affects Our Teaching
- How Our Teaching Preparation Influences Our Teaching

Context

- How Student Differences Affect Our Teaching
- How Class and Classroom Size Affect Our Teaching
- How Availability of Material and Equipment Affect Our Teaching
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A Practical Approach to Effective Teaching

What should a beginning teacher know and be able to do?

What should an experienced teacher know and be able to do?

The decision about what content to include in The Act of Teaching was based on the answers to these questions. In developing this practical guide to effective teaching, the authors were guided by work done at the Educational Testing Service (ETS) to determine what a competent beginning teacher should know; and work done by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards to determine what an experienced teacher should know.

In addition to discussing key topics such as diversity, planning for instruction, instructional methods and strategies, assessment, and reflection, the text covers:

- factors that influence why we teach as we do (Ch.1)
- schools of thought that illustrate how different types of learning occur (Ch.4)
- how teachers can find out more about their students and better motivate them to learn (Ch.5)
- the need to utilize instructional variation (Ch.7 & 8)
- multiple methods for evaluating students' learning and using assessment information (Ch.9)
- multiple definitions of good or quality teachers (Ch.10 & 11)
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- strategies to organize and manage today's complex classroom settings (Ch. 12)
- strategies for preventing discipline problems in today's diverse classrooms (Ch.12)
- challenges teachers face and how to resolve them (Ch. 13)

THANK YOU FOR READING!

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