

How to be a Brilliant Trainee Teacher

Trevor Wright



I would like to thank my colleagues in the Institute of Education at the University of Worcester for their many expert suggestions and contributions to the preparation of this book.

With thanks also to Shaun Hughes for the illustrations and to Wendy Logan for the index.

Preface

This cheerful and accessible book is packed with direct and straightforward advice drawn from the author's extensive and successful personal experience as teacher-trainer, teacher and examiner.

It sets out clear and practical guidelines to support your training and enhance your teaching, moving you directly towards a real understanding of how and why pupils learn and of how you can enhance your own progress. It also offers reassurance and support with the difficulties which you might encounter through your training as a teacher.

Why won't Year 8 actually do anything? Why do we have to read all this theory? I know my pace and timing need improvement, but what do I actually do about it? Why haven't I moved forward at all in the last four weeks? It does this by: outlining strategies for organisation; exploring issues of personal development; demystifying areas often seen as difficult or complex; providing achievable and practical solutions; directly addressing anxieties.

Although a practical book, at its heart lie essential principles about good teaching and learning. It is anecdotal and readable, and may be dipped into for innovative lesson ideas or read from cover-to-cover as a short, enjoyable course which discovers exciting teaching principles in successful, practical experience.

Preface

The book is ideal for secondary trainee teachers, but the underlying principles about what makes a brilliant trainee teacher are applicable to primary trainees too.

Trevor Wright, University of Worcester, has been a successful teacher for about thirty years, and a trainer of teachers for about ten years.

Ofsted inspectors describe his school teaching as 'uncommon, exemplary, extraordinarily effective'. His postgraduate teacher-trainees consistently evaluate their training as 'superb' and 'inspirational'. His experiences as both teacher and teacher-trainer allow him to bridge the gap between principle and practice on a day-to-day basis.

Contents

Chapter 1: Questions at an interview

- Because I love my subject
- Because I want to do something socially valuable
- Because I like children
- Because it's creative
- Gathering information
- Be realistic: the personal view
- Reading and researching
- Visiting a school
- Observing lessons – not just in your own subject
- Pupil shadowing
- Teacher shadowing
- Meetings with teachers
- Beware of staff rooms!
- Choosing a course
- If you are about to take a degree
- If you are a graduate
- On the Job?

Chapter 2: Key journeys

- From you to them
- From activities to objectives
- From extrinsic to intrinsic
- From lessons to work schemes
- From getting by to getting organised

Contents

Chapter 3: Being a teacher

- When I was at school ...
- Observing teachers – the importance of comparison
- Jenny – a teacher's day
- I'm a professional ...
- They present themselves appropriately
- They work to deadlines
- They learn and use the school's systems
- They make themselves available
- They make appropriate relationships with pupils
- They make appropriate relationships with colleagues
- They carry out their responsibilities
- But I want to be myself ...

Chapter 4: Being a trainee

- Pressure points – Don't panic!
- Be kind to yourself
- Set yourself realistic targets
- Observation
- Discussion
- Lesson planning
- Observation again
- Discussion again
- Peer support
- Taking control
- You and your mentor
- Working collaboratively
- Integration

Contents

Chapter 4: Being a trainee

- You have to move beyond pragmatism
- All that theory
- Vygotsky
- Bruner
- Constructivism
- Assimilating, storing and accessing information
- Danger signs
- Failure to prepare and plan to deadlines so that plans can be seen by mentors
- Tendency to be unavailable for informal discussions
- Tendency to resist advice or react defensively to it
- Effort disproportionate to results: excessive time spent on planning, or very little
- Continued dependence on peers or mentors for lesson ideas
- Collecting evidence
- Reflective writing

Chapter 5: Planning

- Planning backwards
- Keep it simple
- Objectives - Catch and Carry
- Think of this as 0-60
- Small is beautiful
- Some myths about objectives
- Planning is imaginative!

Contents

Chapter 6: Managing learning, managing classrooms

- Get the level right
- The shape of the lesson: transitions and the lesson story
- The lesson beginning: the tumbleweed experience
- It's easy to do: consider this checklist for your first three minutes
- Task setting: always QDO
- QDO stands for Questions, Deadline and Outcome
- Talking to the class: using questions
- Valuing and validating pupil responses
- Don't YAVA
- Managing speaking and listening
- Group discussion
- Are you thinking about the formation of the group?
- Are you helping with the internal working of the group?
- Are they preparing for the discussion?
- Are you structuring the discussion?
- Do you QDO?
- Are you monitoring the groups?
- Stirring the tea
- Listening
- Motivating pupils: joint ownership
- Quietness is golden

Chapter 7: Reflection and evaluation

- What evaluation isn't
- Evaluation and assessment
- Parenthesis: some other reasons for assessment
- What evaluation is
- Three levels of evaluation

Contents

- The middle level: evaluating activities
- From poor to brilliant
- How does activity-level evaluation happen?
- Permanent evaluation
- The plenary for end-of-lesson evaluation

Chapter 8: Being brilliant

- Inclusion and differentiation
- Teacher language
- Rotation
- Multiple access: inclusion, not segregation
- Choice
- More inclusion: challenging the very able
- Differentiation: from C to A
- Meta-learning
- Inclusion and differentiation: a recap
- In the early stages of your training
- In the later stages of your training
- Assessment for Learning
- Assessment for Learning: a recap
- In the early stages of your training
- In the later stages of your training

Contents

Chapter 9: Finishing and starting

- Career entry
- The induction period
- Choosing a school
- Selling yourself
- The power of specificity

Suggested reading

1. Black, P. and Wiliam, D.: Inside the Black Box (Nelson)
2. Bruner, J: Towards a Theory of Instruction (Norton)
3. Capel, S. Leask, M. and Turner, T.: Learning to Teach in the Secondary School (Routledge)
4. Clarke, S.: Formative Assessment in the Secondary Classroom (Hodder)
5. Ginnis, P.: The Teacher's Toolkit (Crown House)
6. Kyriacou, C.: Essential Teaching Skills (Thornes)
7. Vygotsky, L.S.: Thought and Language (Cambridge)
8. Wragg, E.: Classroom Management (Routledge)
9. Wragg, E.: Classroom Teaching Skills (Routledge)

THANK YOU FOR READING!

Also by Trevor Wright:

How to be a Brilliant English Teacher