

# GROWING AS A TEACHER

## An effective teacher

One of the first days, Francisco asked us to write down individually the characteristics of the best teacher ever. Then, in groups, we share our ideas for a few minutes and select the most important ones, which we wrote down on sticky notes that later displayed on the board.

- Most of them were related to emotions, empathy, ability to engage and inspire.
- We talked about achieving authority from respect.
- The need of having good communication skills.
- Being well organized; being a good manager and leader.
- Be positive and having good sense of humour.
- Flexibility and creativity.
- Being passionate about the subject and their job.
- Being patient and getting good rapport with the students.
- Being fair and able to admit it when making a mistake: be human.
- Being available and reliable and don't give up on the students.

Being a good teacher is not a piece of cake! A committed teacher, just trying to achieve all those things might become a wiser person...



We spoke with the heart at the thought of our best teacher ever, searching in our memories. Later, the teacher told us about **The European framework for CLIL Teacher Education**, which defines the indicators to become a good bilingual teacher. Along the course we frequently

were told about consistency and how to become an **effective teacher**, following certain routines and methodology very useful indeed, but I feel that what a child will always remember are those things that really touched him/her. Teachers are not perfect, but if they care about their students, they will be able to make a little difference in their lives.

Kathy Reina, a teacher at Chichester University, was the perfect example of a warm, enthusiastic and engaging teacher and we all enjoy her classes and learnt a lot. Here is her last present for us all.

**KATHY'S TEACHING TIPS:**

**"IT IS THE SUPREME ART OF THE TEACHER TO AWAKEN JOY IN CREATIVE EXPRESSION AND KNOWLEDGE"**

- 1) Make the first few moments of your first lesson count. Get the children interested in the topic, be creative, use personalisation, involve them in guessing etc. SMILE!
- 2) Allow yourself to make mistakes. Children are forgiving and there is always tomorrow! It is us who expect ourselves to be perfect, not children.
- 3) Be joyful! (even if you don't feel joyful!) If you look like you are enjoying yourself and you are enthusiastic they will enjoy your lessons.
- 4) Do not start speaking to the children until you have got eye contact and they are all listening. Be consistent with this. Don't be afraid of silence.
- 5) Plan your instructions for activities meticulously and don't forget to plan how to check understanding.
- 6) Plan where the chairs and desks are going to go before the lesson. When the children walk in there should be a calm atmosphere.
- 7) Sweep the room with your eyes as you teach. Include everyone with your eyes and watch against your eyes falling on the 'dominant' child.
- 8) Use your voice to manage a class. Drop your voice to get a child's attention. Try not to shout.
- 9) Remember that behind every 'challenging' child there is almost certainly a challenging problem that they are facing. Do not take it personally if they try to push the boundaries.

**BE YOURSELF! THIS IS THE GIFT YOU CAN GIVE YOUR CLASS.**

**REMEMBER WE ARE NOT HEART SURGEONS! IF WE MAKE A MISTAKE NO ONE IS GOING TO DIE, BUT IF WE GET IT RIGHT A CHILD MAY GO ON TO LIVE A FULLER, HAPPIER LIFE.**

**SO RELAX.....ENJOY....SMILE!**

### Some more great tips for teachers

- From the beginning **foster a good rapport** with your student; both content and knowledge will come easier.
- Take care of **non verbal communication**.
- **Talk less, let students do more**. Learning by construction rather than learning by instruction. If the teacher lectures the students, they will probably switch off after 10 minutes. Be a facilitator instead lecturing them.
- **Invite pupils to become involved**, to be co-designer of activities – smiling, questioning and nodding.
- **Be open to students'** ideas and appreciate them.
- **Check the feelings** of students about specific tasks.
- Develop **habits** and dispositions.
- **Praise** bodily and verbally and be specific while doing it.
- **Make good use of questioning**.
- Give **thinking time** for reflection. Encourage **reflection** and meta-cognition.
- **Leave silence time** between contents. Allow time to digest. If the pace is too fast, it could be difficult to grasp things!
- Encourage **creativity**.
- Try the **Pygmalion effect** - higher expectations lead to an increase in performance.
- **Challenge** your students! Join the "you can do" culture.
- **Differentiate outcomes** to encourage sense of success.
- Address **mistakes** as an important **part of the learning** process.
- Be **creative** and **enjoy** the lessons! Get out of the comfort zone; use stories and metaphors; create a state of curiosity, break the rules, open up your mind!
- While introducing improvements, **try just few things at a time**, it will work better!