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Putting the Human Centre Stage

Teacher Presence, Rapport and a Positive Classroom Community

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22nd June 2019
Pavilion ELT Live, Ort House, Camden

1



"I know I cannot teach anyone anything. I can only provide an environment in which he can learn."

Rogers, C (1965)

2

What's it all about?



- Why did you become a teacher?
- What do you think the top three reasons are why people go into teaching?
- What is education for?
- Discuss any particularly memorable teachers you had at school
- How will your students remember *you* in 20 years' time?

Activity: Coin Snatch



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3

Why did you become a teacher?



- inspired by my own teachers at school
- having long holidays
- wanting to make a difference
- love of my subject
- variety. Every day is different
- enjoy working with children and young people
- great experience in my own education
- poor experience in my own education
- to have fun
- to avoid having to use childcare if starting/having a family
- limited career options after graduating
- family members work in education
- other

A survey of 858 teachers carried out by The Association of Teachers and Lecturers (2015)



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4

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5

Classroom as Community



- students talking about teachers
- teachers talking about themselves
- teachers talking about past, memorable teachers

“Making one’s classroom a learning community is one of the most important things a teacher can do, even more important perhaps than the practices used in the more formal aspects of instruction. The classroom learning community influences student engagement and achievement, and it determines how a teacher’s class will evolve from a collection of individuals into a cohesive group characterised by high expectations, caring relationships and productive inquiry.”

Arends, *Learning to Teach*, 2015: 137



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6

Classroom as Community



↓

Students talking about teachers

friendly funny fair strict enthusiastic respectful
 talks to us like adults polite

“What the teacher is like really does make a difference”


“The single biggest factor affecting children's feelings about subjects was whether they *liked* the teacher who taught them”

A survey of 704 secondary school students carried out by The University of East Anglia (2003)

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7

Classroom as Community



↓

Teachers talking about themselves


maternal fun enthusiastic approachable warm
 dynamic easy-going humorous

“I’m much more confident when I teach. When I’m not, I’m quiet and shy”

“I think if my students like me and enjoy my classes, they’re more likely to work harder and be more motivated”

“I am who I am in any life situation. That is it. I am one person. There is only one and that is me”

A survey of teachers from 18 countries carried out by M Almond (2010 to present)

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8

Classroom as Community



Teachers talking about themselves

+

- kindness
- concern/interest in learners as people
- knowledge of subject/competence
- patience
- commitment/passion/engagement
- respect and mutual trust
- openness – allowing space to learn
- sense of humour
- clarity/consistency/systematic approach
- demanding /challenging
- supportive
- sincere/honest/fairness

-

- cold, aloof, distant, unfriendly
- angry, impatient
- bully, spiteful, vindictive, corporal punishment
- condescending, despising, humiliating
- sarcastic, insulting
- unhappy/not enjoying job/life
- unfair, biased
- not creative, uninspiring, boring
- unprepared
- atmosphere of distrust
- sloppily-dressed, dowdy
- voice: loud, sharp, aggressive, weak, gruff, reedy, not clear...etc.

Putting the Human Centre Stage (Almond, 2019)

Presence



Rodenburg's 'Second Circle' in *Presence* (2009)

- relaxed
- passionate energy and enthusiasm
- assertive and aware
- verbal and non-verbal congruence
- 'in the moment' → spontaneous → observe/listen and respond/react → *connects to others*

Presence



Presence → Status



Activity: Take a Seat

Johnstone, K (1985), *Impro*

Presence



Presence → Interaction

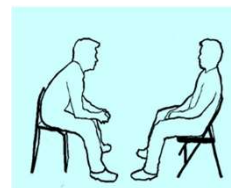
Round 1: teacher high, student low

Round 2: teacher low, student high

Round 3: teacher high, student high


Round 4: teacher low, student low

Round 5: teacher middle, student middle




Activity: Face in Action

Presence



Presence → Listening




Active Listening

- backchannel
- summarise
- paraphrase
- ask questions
- suspend judgement/criticism ⇒ empathy

Faulty Listening Behaviours

- pseudo
- selective
- defensive
- ambushing
- insulated
- insensitive
- narcissistic

Activity: Fingers and Thumbs

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13

Teaching English



Putting the Human Centre Stage

Practical theatre techniques to develop teacher presence, rapport and a positive classroom community



 Mark Almond

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Exit, pursued by a bear ...

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14