



Inspiring teaching: learning lessons from Humanities

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ENTHUSIASM

- ▶ You need to be interested in your subject, such as History or Government & Politics
- ▶ You need to be able to demonstrate this interest in, and enthusiasm for, your subject, such as Geography or Economics
- ▶ You need to keep up-to-date with developments in your subject, such as Sociology or Enterprise

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

- ▶ You need to be able to get the attention of your students through the ways in which you present the material, getting them ‘on side’, such as through the use of activities and discussions, e.g. about current economic developments in the world
- ▶ Discipline is important, but the control of a class can be through how you effectively use the time in a lesson; if students are actively engaged in an Economics lesson, they are less likely to lose interest and misbehave

VARIETY OF TEACHING METHODS

- ▶ You need to use a variety of different teaching methods to keep the attention of the students, e.g. the use of practical activities in History and Geography
- ▶ There is a need to keep students busy and engaged, e.g. the use of problem solving activities in Economics
- ▶ Idea of splitting up the work into manageable or ‘bitesize’ chunks to make it accessible to students, e.g. the use of Case Studies in Business Studies
- ▶ It is not that one particular teaching method is best; what is important is the use of a variety of methods

BRING OBJECTS INTO THE CLASSROOM

- ▶ **It will help to engage the interest of the students if various objects can be brought into the classroom; this will help the subject to ‘come alive’ in the eyes of the students**
- ▶ **Examples could include a newspaper article on a current topic of debate in Economics, a model of a castle brought into a History lesson or a piece of recorded music to give a ‘flavour’ of a particular period of time**

BE ON TOP OF THE MARKING

- ▶ If you set work, it is very important that you stay on top of the marking; students do not like to wait long to discover how they have got on in a particular assignment
- ▶ However, you do not have to do all of the marking yourself; self-assessment and peer assessment can also be extremely useful
- ▶ The importance of assessment for learning is stressed in educational research

THE USE OF APPROPRIATE ACTIVITIES

- ▶ It is important to keep the teaching and learning interesting through a range of different activities which fully involve and engage the students
- ▶ Examples could include a quiz in Economics or a role play in Business Studies
- ▶ It might also be possible to make things, especially in History and Geography
- ▶ Importance of the idea of ‘Learning by Doing’; educational research stresses that students have a better understanding when they are actually doing something

DIFFERENT WAYS OF LEARNING

- ▶ **It is important to recognise that students learn in different ways; not every student in your class will learn the same way**
- ▶ **Some students respond to what is written down**
- ▶ **Other students respond to what they hear**
- ▶ **Some students learn by what they say**
- ▶ **Other students learn by what they do**

ACTIVE LEARNING

- ▶ It is important to recognise that the teacher does not always need to be doing the talking
- ▶ Students can be talking, such as in pairs or in groups
- ▶ Students could be talking to the whole class, such as when giving feedback on what has been found out as a result of a research activity
- ▶ Active, rather than passive, learning should be encouraged as much as possible in the classroom

POSSIBLE TRIPS OR VISITS

- ▶ **Participation outside of the lesson can be inspiring, helping a subject to ‘come alive’ for the students**
- ▶ **Idea of taking the subject outside of the lesson and therefore making it more relevant**
- ▶ **Going on trips or visits should be encouraged, wherever possible, such as to a factory in Business Studies, or to a mountain in Geography or to a shopping mall in Sociology**

THE ORGANISATION OF MATERIALS

- ▶ **It is important for a teacher to have their materials and resources organised**
- ▶ **A teacher continually going in and out of the classroom, e.g. to get more paper or more photocopies, will be very distracting to the students**
- ▶ **A ‘scatterbrain’ is very unlikely to be an inspiring teacher**
- ▶ **To be inspirational, a teacher needs to be ‘on top of things’**

REWARDS

- ▶ **It is important that learners should receive praise as well as criticism, where appropriate; school leavers often say that they can remember many occasions when they were told off, but relatively few occasions when they were given praise**
- ▶ **A House Points system could be used as a way of rewarding students**
- ▶ **The kind of reward given needs to be consistent with the ethos and culture of a particular school**

BRINGING THE SUBJECT TO LIFE

- ▶ **It is important to try, as much as possible, to try to bring the subject to life in the classroom**
- ▶ **You need to try to encourage the students to actually enjoy the subject**
- ▶ **Even Economics can be fun!!!**
- ▶ **Believe it or not, there are websites dedicated to Economics Jokes**

“
If all economists were laid end to end, they would never reach a conclusion.

George Bernard Shaw, Playwright

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