

6 Be organised

Try not to fall behind on the marking or filing of students' work. Use technology to help. Scan or photograph student work, store it electronically and hyperlink the image to marks or grades (an easy way to show progress over time).

Keep an organised planner and plan ahead. Once teachers have taught a full academic year in any one school, they are better aware of the rhythms of the year – where the especially busy points are, where deadlines come, where most students are out on trips, when most GCSE or A level coursework is due etc.

Use the regular work rhythms to plan your year since most years will be the same. Plan each term within the year in the same way. Finally, plan immediate deadlines with a two-week reminder and a five-day reminder to ensure you get things done. Don't waste time planning lessons weeks ahead. If school leadership teams are asking for a term's lesson planning in advance, then what does this say about their understanding of how our students learn?

At most, we need detailed planning that reflects prior learning, the direction of learning and the focus of learning for the lesson ahead. Even then, lesson plans should be flexible working documents that respond to students' learning needs, not tablets of stone that treat learners like conveyor belt factory fodder.

Finally, organise your classroom so that it is a learner-focused and learning-focused space in which your students can feel safe, supported and engaged with learning at all times. Make displays

informative and interactive – add teacher feedback to examples of students' work on a current topic to show your classes how to improve and what “good” looks like.

Think about organising the space differently for different learning – how will the room look for group work, paired work or individual learning tasks?

Finally, look at where the issues lie – where does the poor behaviour occur, for example? – and change the classroom layout to minimise repetition of things you don't want to happen.

7 Expect the best and reflect

Create standards for your students and for yourself. From the beginning, make sure that they know what is acceptable versus what isn't. For example, remind the students how you would like work to be completed, remind them of how you expect them to behave and so on. Be clear from the outset. They will respect you for this.

Equally, have high expectations for yourself. An effective teacher reflects on their teaching in order to evolve as a teacher. Think about what went well and what you would do differently next time. There is always more to learn and know about in order to strengthen our teaching skills. Keep reflecting on your work and educating yourself on what you find are your “weaknesses” (as we all have them). The most important part is recognising our weaknesses and being able to work on them to improve our teaching skills.

<https://www.sec-ed.co.uk/best-practice/the-seven-habits-of-highly-effective-teachers/>

An effective teacher does not complain about change when school leadership introduces yet another initiative. They do not feel the need to mention how good they had it at their last school or with their last group of students compared to their current circumstances. Instead of stressing about change, embrace change with both hands and show that you are capable of hitting every curve ball that comes your way.

4 Commitment

Whether you are delivering a lesson, writing report cards or offering support to a colleague, give 100 per cent – but only of the time you are prepared to give.

You work to live you don't live to work. An effective work/life balance is important. So, do your job for the love of teaching and not because you feel obligated to do it. Do it for self-growth. Do it to inspire others. Do it so that your students will get the most out of what you are teaching them.

Give 100 per cent for yourself and for your students, parents, school and everyone who believes in you. Never give up and try your best – that's all that you can do.

However, when you are not working, do exactly the same for you, your family and friends. You are entitled to a life outside of school and it is important you make time to have one.

And to help you achieve this balance, remember that while an effective teacher is one who is creative, that doesn't mean you have to create

everything from scratch. Why reinvent the wheel? Find inspiration from as many sources as you can – whether it comes from books, your colleagues, SecEd, YouTube, Facebook, blogs, or any source you find useful.

Just remember that good resources support the individual learning needs of your students, so adapt and refine, don't just copy and use.

5 Know your students (and parents)

Get to know your students. First, know their learning strengths and celebrate them publicly as often as you can. Second, know those areas where they lack skills, knowledge or confidence, and give them the courage and resilience to grow and develop in these areas by showing your belief in their potential.

Third, find ways to connect with them. Know their interests and find ways to link these to their learning. Not only does it show your interest in them as people, it makes your teaching and their learning relevant, current and engaging for them, so they will learn better.

Finally, get to know parents and carers as well as the students. Successful learning is about partnership – partnership between school and home. If you can build a partnership with the parents and carers of your students, engage them with their child's learning, and keep them informed of the successes as well as the challenges their child faces, then yours will be a positive and productive learning partnership.

The seven habits of highly effective teachers

Steve Burnage

Many of us are aware of (even if we haven't read) Steven Covey's 1989 best-seller *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People* in which he shares insights, gained through research and observation, of "habits" that many of the world's most effective people share.

Well, this is my take, drawing on my own experience and observations of good teaching, aimed specifically at the teaching profession – seven habits of highly effective teachers.

1 Enjoy what you do

Most of us chose teaching as our career because it is immensely enjoyable and rewarding (as well as completely exhausting at times). So, why do it if you don't enjoy it? It may sound obvious, but you should only become a teacher if you actually like children, want to work with them and enjoy teaching them. Make your lessons come alive by making them as interactive and engaging as possible.

2 Make a difference

With great power, comes great responsibility. As teachers we appreciate the great responsibility that comes with our profession. We can make a positive difference to the lives of so many young people. How? Make your students feel special, safe and secure when they are in your classroom, that way they will learn better and make better progress. You can't be sure what your students went through before entering your classroom on a particular day

or what conditions they are going home to after your class – be the positive influence in their lives.

3 Be positive

Bring positive energy into the classroom every single day. Positivity is the greatest tool we teachers have in our toolkit to support the learning, progress and welfare of our charges. If we are positive about their abilities, we engender a "can-do" ethos. If we are clear in our positive direction and we teach behaviour by referring positively to the behaviour we want to see, then we will enhance learning experiences every single day.

While we might all face battles in our own personal lives, once you enter that classroom try to leave all of it behind before. No matter how you are feeling, how much (or more to the point how little) sleep you have gotten, or how frustrated you are, never let that show. Even if you are having a bad day, learn to put on a mask in front of the students and let them think of you as a superhero (it will make your day too!). Be someone who is always positive, happy and smiling.

Remember that positive energy is contagious, and it is up to you to spread it. Don't let other people's negativity bring you down.

In life, things don't always go according to plan. This is particularly true when it comes to teaching. Be flexible and go with the flow when change occurs.