

# 10 commandments for new teachers

From the power of Google to ditching the monotone, secondary teacher **Lulu Kuper** shares her proven tips on how NQTs can get the best from their students

For some new teachers it's bewildering as to what it takes to be an effective teacher. To teach so that students actually learn in your class you need to know the secret procedures and routines that will make you efficient in the classroom. I can almost guarantee that if you have them in place your lessons will run smoothly.

It is no exaggeration to say [teaching](#) can be one of the most rewarding careers. If you save one kid, it feels as if you've saved the entire world. Every teacher has the capacity to make the world a better place and give someone the ambition to become somebody. Yet if you're new to the profession, before you can do this you need to master the old fashioned craft of how to teach... with a modern twist.

Many passionate graduate teachers encounter a hard to crack merciless class and feel they have been eaten for breakfast. You can find these teachers slumped in the staffroom often in tears. This guide is for anyone, new or experienced teachers, who want to know the secrets of the classroom.

## **1. The secret to learning anything is enjoyment**

As Albert Einstein said: "That is the way to learn the most, that when you are doing something with such enjoyment that you don't notice that the time passes." Sadly if you have ever followed a student around for the day in school you will realise for young people it's incredibly dull and boring. At a time of life that you are quite literally full of life.

Using a bit of imagination – cellotape, cereal boxes, water, sticks, paper and each other can transform your lessons. Enjoyment and learning can be hard to get right, but if you can do this your students will appreciate you.

## **2. Be confident**

It sounds simple, but make sure your delivery of information is clear and you maintain a presence by moving around the classroom. Make eye contact and meaningful hand gestures. Your voice needs to be confident, loud and clear.

Some teachers are not aware that sometimes students don't hear what they say or the sound of their voice is boring and monotone. You can show enthusiasm, passion and subject interest by the tone of your voice. Use appropriate language, not too hard or too easy. Don't try to show off what big words you know in an attempt to build their language. They need to understand what you are saying and your language needs to vary according to age group.

## **3. Make your lessons objective based**

All lessons should be focused around achievable objectives. Plan your lesson with an end in mind and be clear to yourself what the students will be learning. This way you will ensure more is accomplished.

Set these clear measurable objectives and demonstrate that by the end of the period students have met them. Use SMART objectives: specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-based. I'd also recommend [Blooms Taxonomy](#) for deep critical thinking.

#### **4. Emphasise key points when you're teaching large classes of students**

Make this fun and interesting by playing games such as bingo, jeopardy and taboo. Using key words or ideas you want students to remember can really enhance learning. It's very important to include all students and this can be done by using mini whiteboards, strategies such as 'think, pair, share' [http://www.eazhull.org.uk/nlc/think,\\_pair,\\_share.htm](http://www.eazhull.org.uk/nlc/think,_pair,_share.htm) and group work where each member is assigned a task.

#### **5. Teach students to organise information and content**

Often students are put off reading lots of heavy text, so always use graphics. Venn diagrams are effective methods to grasp concepts and break down text for students. They also help students to compare and contrast information. Mind maps are useful ways of breaking down information, using visuals and linking ideas together. Use analogies to help students understand topics and relate them to other areas of their life.

#### **6. Stop and check understanding**

Every 10 minutes you need to stop and work out what the students know. This can be done in simple ways such as a show of hands. If a student doesn't know the answer, ask someone else the question then go back to the same student and ask them the same question again until they give you the right answer. Proven research shows that this makes the whole class learn. Everyone listens, hears and learns with this method.

#### **7. Maximise your teaching time**

It so easy to waste time in lessons and not accomplish what you want. Use time limits, say things such as: "Ok, you have 10 minutes to do the activity". This will push students into action. Put a timer in your classroom and let it ring when the time is over. Even better, have a student keep the time. Make it clear and include a timed agenda of how many minutes you are going to be spending on each part of the lesson. This ensures that your lesson moves swiftly and at a good pace.

#### **8. Have clear procedure for classroom behaviour**

In my experience, the number one problem teachers complain about is poor behaviour in class. The easiest way to deal with classroom behaviour is to have procedures: how you want your students to enter and exit the classroom, how to indicate they need help, want go to the toilet, where to sit and so on.

You need to give students expectations and clear procedures for classroom behavior. For example, when entering the classroom you can teach them to come in quietly, sit down and do the activity set on the board. This sounds old fashioned, but procedures are very effective. You need to rehearse these with the class. Your students will prefer knowing what to do in your lesson.

It works best if you start in the first week of school. That way students know what you expect of them and you can accomplish more in your lessons.

#### **9. Google it**

It is so important to use your time wisely. Sign up to websites that share teaching resources for free (such as the Guardian [Teacher Network](http://teachers.theguardian.com/resources.aspx) <http://teachers.theguardian.com/resources.aspx>) and you will find there are a plethora of excellent high quality PowerPoint presentations, worksheets and ideas on the internet.

## **10. Keep ahead of your game**

The biggest shift in education had been from teacher-centered education to student learning. In short, less of you lecturing and wittering on at the front of the class. Instead, the more students work out the answer themselves the more learning happens. It stands to reason you need to be always developing yourself professionally.

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