



What Makes an Effective Student Teacher?

Pam Stephens

It's not unrealistic to say that most student teachers aspire to become the best and most effective teachers that they can be. But what does it mean to be the best and most effective? Not long ago the Public Education Foundation polled parents to determine what the parental idea of "effective teacher" means. Four characteristics emerged that can become milestones for measuring teacher effectiveness.

These characteristics are:

1. Knowledge of subject area;
2. Sound teaching and communication skills;
3. A passion for teaching; and
4. A love of children.

With this framework of effectiveness, the challenge becomes how to evaluate whether you—as a teacher candidate—have reached proficiency in the categories. One way is to list criteria that define each characteristic, place the criteria in a checklist format, and then take a critical look at the classroom environment that you have created or are creating.

The following is a suggested checklist based upon the four characteristics. Perhaps your cooperating teacher or university supervisor can add more criteria for you to contemplate in your quest to become the best and most effective art teacher that you can be.

Knowledge of Subject Area

- Do students look at and discuss their own artwork and the artwork of others (including master works of art) in substantial and meaningful ways?
- Are you comfortable with guiding art questioning all the while knowing that there are multiple right answers in art?

What can you do to improve your teaching skills?

Communication Skills

- Have you stated learning objectives and assessment procedures in a clear way?
- Do you vary lesson delivery to keep students on their toes?
- Do you check for understanding and then re-teach in different ways?
- Is there an advance level of proficiency in art that is expressed and expected of everyone?

Passion for Teaching

- Are students on task and engaged? Are they active participants that rise above cookie-cutter lessons or worksheets that keep them quiet and in their seats?

- Are you interactive with students, walking around the room, sharing ideas, and making comments?
- Are your lessons connected to real-life situations? Will today's learning make a difference in your students when they are adults?

Love of Children

- Are students free to explore? Are they free to question?
- Is there an environment of mutual respect between and among students as well as between you and the students?
- Is your classroom free of sarcasm or other hurtful actions? ☹️

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WEB LINKS

www.givekidsgoodschools.com/characteristics.html

www.pefchattanooga.org/www/docs/5.359.html

