Building Better Teachers:

Using Role-play to Create Content Experts

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What are the **most important qualities** of a good instructor?

What my students said:

"Mastery of content material."

"Approachable and relatable."

"Speaks clearly and has good handwriting."

"Provides good examples and applications."

"Responds to student questions."

"Presents the material at a good pace."

My students:

- ❖ Serve as calculus tutors in CalcLab for two hours a week.
- ❖ Have excelled in their calculus classes.
- ❖ Are in the content expert role for the first time.

Student answers, revisited:

"Mastery of content material."

"Approachable and relatable."

"Speaks clearly and has good handwriting."

"Provides good examples and applications."

"Responds to student questions."

"Presents the material at a good pace."

Three main ideas:

- ❖ Content knowledge
- ❖ Warmth
- ❖ Presentation skills

Which is the most important?

How can I effectively teach my students skills in all three categories?

Also, how can I challenge their perspective on the qualities most important to being a good instructor?

Practice through **role-play**.

Role-play Goals:

❖ Give students hands-on practice in a controlled, safe, and welcoming environment.

❖ Allow students to reflect on effective teaching strategies, and to receive helpful feedback on their teaching.

Volunteers role-play as Teacher and Student solving a problem.

The Audience observes.

The First Scenario:

❖ The teacher used the direct teaching method.

❖ The student didn't speak until almost the end of the scenario!

❖ The audience thought this was a successful student-teacher interaction.
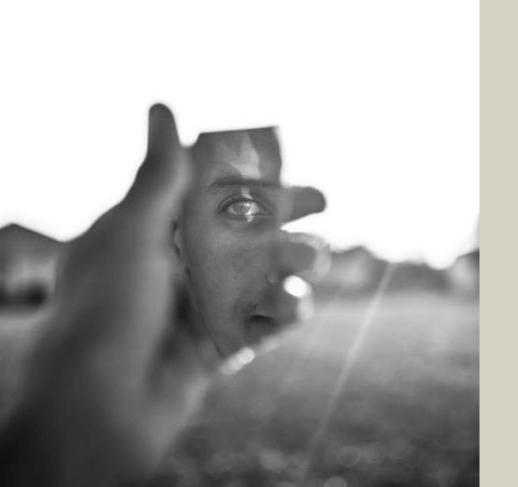
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Challenging their perspective:

"How do you know if the student learned anything?"

Later Scenarios:

❖ The student took on a much more active role in the scenario.

❖ The teacher asked effective questions that assessed student understanding.

❖ Practiced not only content mastery and presentation skills, but also warmth.

Observing these changes throughout the semester also served as a **barometer** for my own teaching.

Reflection Through Role-Play:

❖ I was able to measure and observe the impact of my teaching.
❖ I found myself being more mindful.
❖ I paid more attention to how I modeled behaviors.

Role-play was more than just an effective method for teaching my students.

It also helped me become a better teacher myself.

Thanks for listening!