

EVERYTHING EFL



PODCAST



THE BRUTAL TRUTH: THINGS WE HAVE TO ACCEPT AS TEACHERS

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EVERYTHING EFL PODCAST



THIS SESSION:



- A FEW BRUTAL TRUTHS
- SOME SKEPTICAL FACES
- TIPS AND ADVICE
- REFLECTION QUESTIONS
- PODCAST AND SOCIAL MEDIA PLUG



RAISE YOUR HANDS IF....



- I sometimes feel burnt out
- I sometimes feel overwhelmed
- I have high expectations of myself
- I deliver too much content, trying to complete the demands of the syllabus
- I feel pressure to help my students succeed
- I've gone home before, thinking about a particular class or student



RAISE YOUR HANDS IF....



- I spend a lot of /too much time planning
- I try to plan and deliver perfect or outstanding lessons
- Some of my students are not motivated
- Some of my students fear speaking
- Some of my students have unrealistic expectations of their progress
- Some of my students have been neurodivergent and I don't feel equipped to support them



RAISE YOUR HANDS IF...



- I have a love of English
- I have a love of teaching
- Sometimes the reality of the job makes me forget those 2 things



BRUTAL TRUTH #1



YOU'RE NOT A PERFECT TEACHER!

Things to consider when planning a lesson:

- engaging lessons
- relatable content
- mixed abilities and differentiation
- possible neurodivergence
- behaviour or attitude problems
- what vocab to pre-teach
- anticipate any language, comprehension or pronunciation issues
- timing
- scaffolding
- staging
- extra materials - copy, cut, staple
- finding the time to plan and planning itself
- building trust, confidence and community
- inclusivity



ADVICE #1



STOP TRYING!

Pressure = unreasonable and unrealistic

TRUST IN YOUR SKILLS = A GOOD, QUALITY LESSON



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BRUTAL TRUTH #2

YOU WON'T REACH EVERY STUDENT





ADVICE #2



Building trust and community = time

Syllabus content VS mindset content

AS LONG AS YOU'RE TRYING, THAT'S ENOUGH
YOU'RE ENOUGH!



BRUTAL TRUTH #3



LEARNING IS A PROCESS AND TAKES TIME

- Reflect
- Process
- Repeat
- Review
- See/hear the language in context



ADVICE #3



Quality or quantity?

WHAT'S BETTER?

TEACHING A FEW THINGS WELL OR STUDENT COGNITIVE
OVERLOAD?



BRUTAL TRUTH #4



YOU'LL INEVITABLY SPEND TOO MUCH TIME PLANNING



ADVICE #4



Use that dead time in class :

- a bit of marking
- sketching out plans for next week/ next lesson
- anything else?

IF YOU WANT TO DELIVER THE MYTHICAL 'PERFECT'
LESSON, ACCEPT THE FACT IT 'LL TAKE YOU AGES.

IS IT WORTH IT?



BRUTAL TRUTH #5



SOME STUDENTS JUST AREN'T INTO IT

ALREADY HOOKED ON ENGLISH =
INCIDENTAL



ADVICE #5



Peer recommendations:

- what have they been watching/reading/playing/listening to?
- goal-setting

YOU CAN'T FORCE IT - ALL YOU CAN DO IS TRY
THAT'S ENOUGH!



BRUTAL TRUTH #6



Grammar is boring

Grammar rules don't work

- safe
- expected



ADVICE #6



NARROW YOUR FOCUS

Use common or institutionalized phrases

- have you seen my ----?
- I've never ----- before.
- It's the ----- ----- I've ever -----

BE SELECTIVE ABOUT THE RULES YOU TEACH AND GIVE
THEM NATURAL LANGUAGE



BRUTAL TRUTH #7



SOME STUDENTS CAN'T, WON'T OR DONT SPEAK

YOUR JOB = COMFORT, SAFETY

Mistakes = natural part of learning process



ADVICE #7



Where is this reluctance coming from?

Use your language learning experience

BUILD YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR STUDENTS!



BRUTAL TRUTH #8



THERE'S NO ONE-SIZE-FITS-ALL LESSON PLAN OR
METHODOLOGY

- struggle
- boring
- not relatable
- hate the skill



ADVICE #8



BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS = KNOW YOUR STUDENTS

MORE WILLING TO DO THE BORING STUFF

MAKE EVERYTHING RELEVANT AND RELATABLE



REFLECTION QUESTIONS:



- PLANNING AND PRESSURE
- RELATIONSHIPS AND COMMUNITY
- DELIVERING CONTENT
- STUDENT INTEREST AND ENGAGEMENT
- STUDENT CONFIDENCE
- THE 'G' WORD

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ASK YOURSELF:



PLANNING AND PRESSURE:

- How long do I spend planning? Too long? Can I cut down?
- What's the worst thing that will happen if I do plan less?
- Do I trust my skills enough to see what will happen?

- How much pressure am I putting on myself? Too much?
- Are my expectations of myself realistic? Is it stressing me out? If so, what's the next step?



ASK YOURSELF:



RELATIONSHIPS AND COMMUNITY:

- Do I have a good relationship with my students? Could it be better?
- Is time one of the reasons I haven't spent enough time on it?
How can I make time in class?
- Can I make class tasks more personalized so students can relate more?
- Can your students share something of themselves and how



ASK YOURSELF:



CONTENT:

- Are you having a hard time doing everything on the syllabus?
- Do you feel you're delivering quantity over quality? Is it stressing you out? Is it stressing your students out?
- Is there anything you can sacrifice to ease your students' cognitive load?



ASK YOURSELF:



STUDENT INTEREST AND ENGAGEMENT:

- Which students don't have an interest? Why not?
- Which ones do? Can you pair them up?
- Could you ask the disinterested students if they have a favourite song, for example and would they like to talk about it in class before us all listening to it?
- Could you give the less engaged students little challenges to achieve every week?



ASK YOURSELF:



STUDENT CONFIDENCE;

- Are some students reluctant to speak?
- Can you find out why?
- How can you build trust with them?
- How can you build their confidence?
- Who can they work with?
- Do you do any mindset, mindfulness or confidence-building in class? How could you incorporate that into your



ASK YOURSELF:



THE 'G' WORD:

- How do your students react when you do grammar?
- Would you like to change the way you approach grammar yourself?
- Are you interested in the lexical approach? Would you like to know more?



USEFUL REFERENCES;



Short talk at ELTed, Dublin, 2022 - Lexicalize your Grammar;

Narrow your focus

<https://www.instagram.com/p/CjcuK0FpYUT/>

Everything EFL Podcast:

www.anchor.f//everything-efl