

## ROLES OF A TEACHER IN THE CLASSROOM

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### ABSTRACT

Teachers play vital roles in the lives of the students in their classrooms. Teachers are best known for the role of educating the students that are placed in their care. Beyond that, teachers serve many other roles in the classroom. Teachers set the tone of their classrooms, build a warm environment, mentor and nurture students, become role models, and listen and look for signs of trouble.

**Keywords:** mentor, classroom, approach, curriculum, facilitator, tutor, credential, prompter, assessor.

### INTRODUCTION

Teachers perform different roles when making decisions about the planning and teaching of lessons. It is often helpful to use metaphors to describe what teachers do. For example, some teachers say that they are like actors because they feel they are always on stage. Others see themselves as orchestral conductors because they direct conversations and set the tone and pace of the class.

The most common role a teacher plays in the classroom is to teach knowledge to children. Teachers are given a curriculum they must follow that meets state guidelines. This curriculum is followed by the teacher so that throughout the year, all pertinent knowledge is dispensed to the students. Teachers teach in many ways including lectures, small group activities and hands-on learning activities.

Teachers also play an important role in the classroom when it comes to the environment. Students often mimic a teacher's actions. If the teacher prepares a warm, happy environment, students are more likely to be happy. An environment set by the teacher can be either positive or negative. If students sense the teacher is angry, students may react negatively to that and therefore learning can be impaired. Teachers are responsible for the social behavior in their classrooms. This behavior is primarily a reflection of the teacher's actions and the environment she sets.

The role of the classroom teacher is to manage the classroom in a manner that meets the individual needs of each student in the class. This includes promoting learning and supplementing activities, coordinating and collaborating with support staff, using a variety of teaching approaches, and adapting instruction to include all students. The classroom teacher is in charge of each student's overall academic program.

An interactive teacher is by definition one that is fully aware of the group dynamics of a classroom. As Dörnyei and Murphey explained, the success of classroom learning is very much dependent on how students relate to each other, what the classroom environment is, how effectively students cooperate and communicate with each other, and what roles the teacher and learners play [1].

“Brown, H. Douglas mentions that teachers can play many roles in the course of teaching and this might facilitate the learning. Their ability to carry these out effectively will depend on a large extent on the rapport they establish with their students, and on their own level of knowledge and skills [2]”.

According to Harmer, J., the term ‘facilitator’ is used by many authors to describe a particular kind of teacher, one who is democratic (where the teacher shares some of the leadership with the students) rather than autocratic (where the teacher is in control of everything that goes on in the classroom), and one who fosters learner autonomy (where students not only learn on their own, but also take responsibility for that learning) through the use of group work and pair work and by acting as more of a resource than a transmitter of knowledge. Harmer, J. also states that ‘it makes more sense to describe different teacher roles in more detail and say what they are useful for, rather than make value judgments about their effectiveness in terms of their ‘facilitator’ credentials’ [3]. Some of the most common teachers’ roles are the following:

**Controller:** The teacher is in complete charge of the class, what students do, what they say and how they say it. The teacher assumes this role when new language is being introduced and accurate reproduction and drilling techniques are needed.

**Prompter:** The teacher encourages students to participate and makes suggestions about how students may proceed in an activity. The teacher should be helping students only when necessary.

**Resource:** The teacher is a kind of walking resource centre (monitor) ready to offer help if needed or providing students with whatever language they lack when performing communicative activities. The teacher must make her/himself available so that students can consult her/him when (and only when) they wish.

**Assessor:** The teacher assumes this role to see how well students are performing or how well they performed. Feedback and correction is organized and carried out.

**Organizer:** Perhaps the most difficult and important role the teacher has to play. The success of many activities depends on good organization and on the students knowing exactly what they are to do. Giving instructions is vital in this role as well as setting up activities.

**Participant:** This role improves the atmosphere in the class when the teacher takes part in an activity. However, the teacher takes a risk of dominating the activity when performing it.

**Tutor:** the teacher acts as a coach when students are involved in project work or self-study. The teacher provides advice and guidance and helps students clarify ideas and limit tasks. As we move further into the new millennium, it becomes clear that the 21st Century classroom needs are very different from the ones in the 20th Century. In the 21st Century classroom, teachers are facilitators of student learning and creators of productive classroom environments in which students can develop the skills they will need in the workplace. The

focus of the 21st Century classroom is on students experiencing the environment they will enter as 21st Century workers. The collaborative project-based curriculum used in this classroom develops higher order thinking skills, effective communication skills, and knowledge of technology that students will need in the 21st Century workplace. The interdisciplinary nature of the 21st Century classroom sets it apart from the 20th Century classroom. Lectures on a single subject at a time where the norm in the past and today collaboration is the thread for all students learning.

Students always need teachers, both inside and outside of the classroom. Arguably, this is true today more than ever before, as school violence, drug abuse and other dangers have been becoming more and more common. Teachers need to take their role as both a resource for students and as a guide through the difficulties of life seriously, and should make a huge effort to foster healthy relationships with their students.

Times have changed, the new role of the teacher in the 21st Century classroom requires changes in teachers' knowledge and classroom behaviors. If students are to be productive members of the 21st Century workplace, they must move beyond the skills of the 20th Century and master those of the 21st Century. Teachers are entrusted with mastering these skills as well and with modeling these skills in the classroom. The characteristics of the 21st Century classroom will be very different from those in the classrooms of the past because the focus is on producing students who are highly productive, effective communicators, inventive thinkers, and masters of technology.

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