Tips for Being Confident in the Classroom

• Act like you’re confident
  o Fake it ‘til you make it!

• Think of positive, purposeful reasons for why you’re teaching
  o Regularly revisit why you teach to renew or strengthen your confidence
  o Understand your role as the educator

• Do your research
  o Look through the literature and learn about effective teaching skills and strategies
  o Recall which former educators had an impact on you, and why that was? (Use both the positive and negative memories to guide your instruction in the classroom)

• Plan everything
  o Create specific instructional objectives using a variety of methods

• Don’t overwhelm students with details. Keep their educational level in mind
  o Less is better, focus on what you want them to retain long-term
  o “Education is what remains when one has forgotten everything he has learned in school.” – Albert Einstein
  o Engage students—involves them in the lesson and use active learning strategies often

• Don’t be overly perfectionist. Be dynamic and flexible because the classroom is highly unpredictable
  o Don’t talk down to students
  o Sometimes it’s necessary to just stay a few steps ahead of your students. “Appear to have known all your life what you learned earlier that day.”
  o If you are asked a question to which you do not know the answer, admit it. Say ’good question’, write it down and come back with the answer next time.
  o Don't be afraid to admit you don't know something. Use that moment to your advantage and create a learning experience for your students
• Look to veteran teachers
  o They make excellent mentors because they have been through the fire and seen it all. They can share both successes and failures. A mentor can build confidence through encouragement over a long period of time.

• Ask for feedback from faculty and students
  o Have students list the 3 things they liked and the 3 things they disliked about the class so far

• Be knowledgeable and enthusiastic about the content in your course. Confidence also comes from feeling secure with teaching the material.
  o “Probably no one thing is more important in education than a teacher’s enthusiasm and energy.”
  o Practice teaching!

• Listen to what your students say about your teaching and their learning
  o Learn what they know and build upon what they need to know
  o They can recommend changes, you decide if/how to implement them

• Recognize which traits good teachers have in common:
  1. Speak actively—don’t be afraid to be dramatic
  2. Teach actively—ask questions, encourage student participation
  3. Care actively—commend students for their academic growth and achievement

References