

To teach or not to teach?

DR Elsie Chin, a seasoned teacher, ponders on the beauty of teaching. She shares her thoughts with our readers below: -

"Before you decide to embark on this great educational mission, you need to consider carefully the responsibilities of a teacher and if you are prepared for them.

"You must want to be a teacher because you want to, not because you have to. Being a teacher means you must want to constantly upgrade your knowledge and teaching methods.

"A teacher can help build or break a person. Your students may include people whose lives may be changed because of you. Your attention or lessons may be the turning point in their lives. Also remember, a discovery no matter how big or small, counts.

"Additionally, success in students' achievements also has to be evaluated. You are responsible to your students, their parents and the management. If you have your students' best interest at heart, you'll realise that being a teacher is one of the most demanding and selfless jobs in the world.

"So, in answer to the question, "To teach or not to teach?" My answer is yes. Aside from continued employment, I know I will benefit from the opportunities of working with my colleagues as well as from the stimulating interactions with students, parents and professionals.

"Also of course, there are the countless tiny, seemingly insignificant miracles I have savoured as a teacher.

"So when people ask me if I will be moving on anytime soon, I pause for a second. My heart sinks with sadness when I think of leaving my students and colleagues. Then, in the next second, my heart sings with joy, which just shows that I am not jaded yet.

"Teaching is not just something I have grown accustomed to, it is the lifestyle that I am addicted to and the ride becomes joyous with each class.

"So, when should you begin to participate in teaching? When you know you want to.

"While jumping into the pool at the deep end is a great way to get used to the water, this may not be the best approach to developing a set of teaching skills.

"Take one step at a time. Students of different age groups have different interests and attention spans, therefore you need to adapt your teaching methods and materials accordingly. You'll learn through experience and by attending specialised courses.

"If you know in advance what you will be teaching, it is a good idea to sit in on some classes taught by experienced teachers. Observing will help you to organise your own class when your time comes."

If this sound like your calling, and you



Being a teacher means you must want to constantly upgrade your knowledge and teaching methods.

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Dr Elsie Chin is University of Cambridge International Exams DTT Master Trainer. You can catch her on NTV7's *The Breakfast Show* interview on www.cambridgeforlife.org.

For details on the DTT programme, contact Audry Reyes at CEFL head office at 03- 7883 0912.

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