

## **Confidence, humility, gratitude and vulnerability are my superpowers**

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When I first started my professional internship as a trainee teacher, I would never have imagined how meaningful this experience would become, even though I had been told it was going to be. The moment I set foot in the classroom, I realized not only the beauty of the teaching, but also that facing new experiences should not be frightening. Instead, they should be opportunities to embrace the learning process, which never truly ends. Through this journey, I have learned that confidence, humility, gratitude and vulnerability should not be seen as weaknesses at all, but as essential strengths that build our teacher persona. These qualities not only shape my teaching identity but also remind me that effective education is built on human connection

At the beginning of my practicum, I frequently doubted my own abilities. I have always been the kind of person who feels less capable than I am. Being in front of thirty students, teaching across five different levels seemed overwhelming at first. Despite how much you prepare or study, nothing compares to being exposed wearing the teacher's shoes and carrying all the responsibilities it entails. There were moments (more than I would have wished for) that I felt completely lost and unsure about what or how I was managing my role. "*Was I on the right path?*", repeatedly echoed in my mind. However, these moments taught me the importance of humility, understanding that not knowing everything is part of the process, and that growth only happens when we accept our limitations and still do not give up in the attempt.

Luckily, I have been fortunate to be surrounded by supportive professors who have believed in me even when I struggled to believe in myself. They have taught me the value of feedback and how to receive it with gratitude rather than pride. Every piece of advice, even if difficult to hear, is a chance to improve. I will never forget the one which has helped me the most:

*“Connect with your students by being yourself.”* It might sound simple, but its impact is profound. It allowed me to teach with confidence, not by pretending to be perfect, but by trusting my own authenticity.

I have also realized that vulnerability is one of the teacher’s greatest strengths. Showing my true self, my mistakes, emotions, that I am as human as my students, has helped me create genuine bonds with them. Methodologies and teaching techniques are crucial, but they will never work without a significant connection between the teacher and their students. When learners feel that you care about them, they are more willing to participate, listen, and learn. My students have shown me that kindness and empathy can inspire them more deeply than any school subject ever could. Hearing them saying that they have learned English thanks to my classes has been the most rewarding part of this experience, and perhaps the main reason I am still willing to continue this journey.

Looking back at my first day, I feel proud of how much I have grown. I have learned to turn insecurity into determination, and fear into motivation. Confidence has helped me face challenges, humility and gratitude have reminded me that I am always learning, and vulnerability has allowed me to connect deeply with others. These four traits — my “superpowers” — will continue guiding me in this lifelong journey of teaching and learning.