

## Professional competence 1

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Here is a selection of top tips to help teachers of English develop their professional competence. They cover issues of professional conduct, strategies for dealing with students and their language production, the importance of meaningful communication and the example the teacher sets. This is the first of two such articles.

### Professional conduct

- Be prompt and punctual because promptness and punctuality lead to systematic work.
- You are bound by the virtue of your professional growth to change and modify your approach to fit the ever-changing factors in the fields of learning and teaching. Therefore, seek the best ways to improve and brush up your English.
- Evaluate your teaching tactics occasionally through self-criticism, which is highly constructive and leads to perfection.

### Classroom management

- Create a relaxed atmosphere in the classroom to achieve full student participation.
- Discipline and firmness are of paramount importance especially when students practise group work. The friendly relationship between you and the class has its vital impact on the students' attitude towards learning the language.

### Teacher's approach

- Be creative because much of the teacher's success depends upon his/her imaginative power, originality and creativity. Teaching is more an art than a science.
- Be an example of a good planner and organizer. By doing so, you encourage your students to develop their planning and organizational abilities.
- Preparing the lessons regularly and adequately makes you surefooted in the classroom. It sets your mind at ease and makes you realize the main aim of the lesson. Do not over-plan. Make your lesson plan brief, informative, clear and purposeful. Include various activities to suit the individual differences in the classroom.

- Be active. An active teacher means an active lesson. Avoid being indifferent because this creates a sort of boredom in the classroom.
- Make your lesson enjoyable because the ability to enjoy is the key to effective learning. Remember that what one learns through enjoyment, one never forgets and its effect on the memory never fades. Lack of interest means lack of response.

### **Language production**

- Involve your students in authentic communication situations, which encourage a continuous flow of speech. In fact, the acquisition of the language depends on practising it naturally.
- Give your students every possible chance to use the language. Talk as little as possible to give the students the opportunity to interact. Do not over teach. Make the lesson student centred, not teacher centred.
- Teach the language in appropriate social contexts. Relate the world to a sentence, the sentence to a situation and the situation to real life.
- Use the teaching media properly to make the lesson more attractive and perceptive. They save time and effort.
- Use effective means to eradicate errors. Always look at what they have achieved rather than at what they have failed to achieve.
- Be accurate in evaluating your students' achievement. The marks given should be in conformity with the real standard of the class.

### **Professional competence 2**

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Here is a selection of top tips to help teachers of English develop their professional competence. They cover issues of professional conduct, strategies for dealing with students and their language production, the importance of meaningful communication and the example set by the teacher. This is the second of two such articles.

### **Professional conduct**

- Do not lose your temper. To be patient and tolerant means you are able to solve your problems.
- Visit the classes of your colleagues and respond to your inspectors' guidance and advice for developing your professional competence.

### **Classroom management**

- Concentrate on the low achievers in your classroom. They are always in need of your help and encouragement
- Be an observer, a guide and a participant when students practise group activities. Do not be indifferent as this makes the class noisy and spoils the aim of the activity.
- When students practise activities, appoint group leaders to keep order and direct the work.

### **Teacher's approach**

- Tests reveal certain points of weakness. Therefore, it is your duty to analyze the test findings in order to prepare the required remedial work and exercises for uprooting such weakness.
- Move from the known to unknown gradually and logically, because such a procedure is important from a psychological point of view.
- Begin the lesson by warming the class up for a short time. Some revision questions or warm up activities create a positive atmosphere for tackling the new lesson.
- Transfer the process of learning from being 'Skill-getting' to 'Skill-using' in order to achieve the desired goals
- Avoid errors in pronunciation. If you feel any doubt, consult a good pronunciation dictionary. If students repeat a mispronounced word, it will be fixed in their minds. Moreover, it will be difficult to correct in the future.

### **Language production**

- Written work is considered an active production of the language. Therefore, it should be an application of what you have already dealt with orally in the classroom.
- Always present the new material in meaningful situations with skills integration. Linguistics considers the exchange to be the unit of speech.
- Train your students to speak the language with reasonable fluency. Frequent exposure to authentic recorded materials improves their oral performance.
- Give the right intonation due attention. The students must know the proper fall and rise in speech because the wrong intonation may change the function of the utterance.
- An increased number of assignments is highly desirable and the more the better. Remember to check the assignments regularly and give the necessary appreciative comments. The homework assignments should be as short as possible without anything tricky or puzzling.

- When you communicate with your students, do not insist on getting full answers. Short answers are accepted in natural communication.
- Let your students have various realizations of each function because this helps them to express themselves in different ways. Moreover, this develops their communicative competence and their self-confidence.
- Do not interrupt your student to correct mistakes while she/he is speaking because it perplexes her/him and makes her/him withdraw from the scene. Remember that fluency comes before accuracy.

### **Ideas from other teachers**

*Susan Manser, U.K.*

I have two small suggestions to add to the Professional Competence article.

- Should the occasion arise when you don't know or are not certain of the answer to a question or grammar point, admit that you don't know, but will find out or check the answer. Don't forget!
- Show respect for your students by dressing in a clean, tidy manner.