

Becoming a Truly Professional Teacher

There is something so satisfying about working with a true professional in any line of work. When you have a professional on the job in any area of specialization watching that person in action is like watching a work of art. They exude the knowledge, the skill, the devotion to doing a top notch job and the confidence that they are the professional who can do the job that is missing in a lesser talent.

That is the level we all want to reach in the field of teaching if that is your calling. Not only do you want to be a true professional in your area of specialization which is teaching, you want your students to notice your professionalism and recognize that it makes a big difference having a professional running the class rather than a lesser talent.

When a professional is on the case, everybody relaxes because they know the job will be done right. In the movie, Pulp Fiction, when the gangsters needed help because of a killing, they called in Mr. Wolf. And Mr. Wolf was well known for being the man that always knows what to do, who moves fast but is as courteous as he is efficient and who knows how to get the job done right. When Mr. Wolf was on the scene, the problem was as good as solved. And even though that movie was a bit grisly and profane, Mr. Wolf is a great example of true professionalism at work.

So how do you show your professionalism as you go about your craft of teaching? For one thing, you dress the part. Take pride in your wardrobe and present to yourself to your class each day in a garment that says, I came ready to teach so you should come ready to learn. That is what happens when a professional is on the premises. Everybody wants to get on board with the program.

A professional always knows what to do both long range and right now. That means you come prepared. Your lesson plans are in order, your room is prepared and your paperwork is organized so at no time do you have to pause and get yourself together when you are into the process of teaching your students. This will take some time for you to get to that level of organization when you walk in the door of your classroom the next day. But putting in that hour or two each night so you are that organized not only makes you a better teacher, it lets the students know that this is a professional operation so be ready.

Students, particularly youth and children can tell the difference between someone who knows what they are doing and someone who is floundering. As the saying goes, they can smell fear. It gives young people confidence and a sense of security that you are organized and not only know what you are going to do

each moment of the teaching day, you know what they are going to do as well. That is professionalism and it will make a world of difference in how your teaching goes.

A professional teacher also responds to interruptions and even disturbances calmly because you have seen it before and you know what to do. Of course developing a history in teaching to where you really do know what to do in each circumstance takes time. But if you are completely prepared in every other respect, interruptions won't throw you because you can address them and be right back to your lesson smoothly and calmly.

A byproduct of being consummately prepared and so well versed in what your lesson plans say and what you are teaching is that it gives you a calm confidence that frees you up to be relaxed and even humorous with your students. When your students see you smile because everything is going exactly the way you want it to go, they will respond and open up to you because they sense your confidence and they want to see where you are going to take them. And because you are relaxed and at ease, your students are at ease as well and they can ask you questions and interact with you as you teach. And that kind of interactive dialog is what makes the difference in the lives of students and makes you a true professional teacher.

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