

Tips for Making a Good Impression

When you, as a teacher candidate, go into the P-12 schools for practicum experiences and/or student teaching, it is important to remember that you are a guest in the school, that you are there under the auspices of and therefore as a representative of PSC, and that the professionals with whom you come into contact there are potential employers and/or professional references. You will want to make a good impression, not just the first day, but every time that you are there. Following the tips below will help you not only get into the habit of dressing and behaving like a professional educator, but also to greatly increase the chances of obtaining a teaching position following graduation.

Consider Your Appearance

Personal Hygiene

- Attend to cleanliness.
- Make sure hair and nails are tidy.
- Avoid wearing fragrances. (Keep in mind that many people are allergic or sensitive to fragrances.)

Physical Habits

- Avoid repetitive pacing, fidgeting, sniffing, etc.
- Do not chew gum.

Clothing

- Look around at how the faculty dress, and then dress just a little more formally than they do.
- Follow these general rules of thumb:
 1. No clothing that is prohibited for students
 2. No hats indoors (no baseball caps at all)
 3. No denim (jeans, skirts, shirts, jackets, etc.)
 4. No pants with jean-style cut (double stitching on the side seams, jean-type rear pockets, etc.)
 5. No sweat shirts, T-shirts, polo shirts, tank tops, or spaghetti straps
 6. No shorts, skorts, or short skirts
 7. No bare skin showing on the shoulders, belly, legs, or feet (Females, wear nylons with dresses.)
 8. No casual shoes or sandals
 9. No body-piercing jewelry (other than earrings) or tattoos showing
 10. No excessive make-up

Consider Your Use of Language

Dialect

- Use standard English dialect.
- Avoid using slang.
- Use correct grammar.
- Be aware of differences between formal and informal language.
- Avoid communicating disapproval of non-standard English dialects.

Vocabulary

- Be aware of potential differences in language proficiency among diverse student populations.
- Avoid using jargon.
- Explain important concepts and terms in more than one way.

Consider Your Presence

Timeliness and Reliability

- Handle absences & tardiness professionally. (Call before, not after.)
- Call both the teacher and the principal if you are going to be absent.

Sense of Humor

- Avoid laughing at humor that is at the expense of someone else.
- Remember that an ability to laugh at yourself when you make mistakes elicits respect.

Rapport with Others

- Show interest in others.
- Listen actively.
- Assert your needs respectfully.

Eye Contact

- Look at the students when you speak to them.
- Be aware of and sensitive to cultural differences in terms of what is considered to be appropriate eye contact.

Consider Your Influence on Students

Teaching Effectiveness

- Evaluate student learning.
- Be open to constructive criticism from the cooperating teacher.

Role Modeling

- Remember, to the students you are a professional, not a peer.
- Model good character, responsibility, integrity, and professionalism.
- Maintain healthy physical and emotional boundaries between yourself and the students.
- Maintain strict confidentiality. Do not talk to anyone other than teachers and principals about students in any way which could enable anyone to identify the students. Do not talk about your field experiences in public settings (e.g., in restaurants, stores, libraries, etc.)
- Avoid speaking negatively of the school and/or any of its policies or employees.
- Keep in mind that you are a teacher-candidate 24 hours per day. Your appearance and activities outside of the school may be observed by students, teachers, and/or administrators.