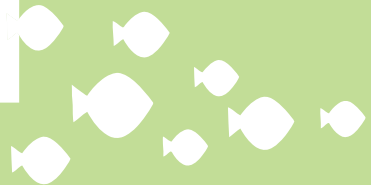
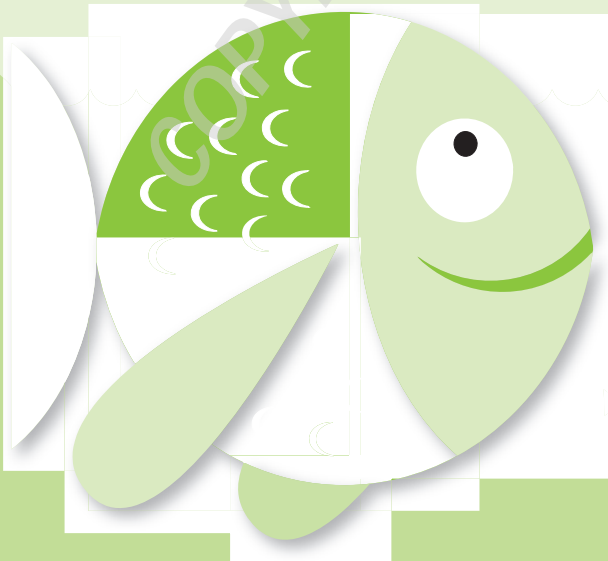




## CHAPTER 1

# Professional Development Begins with You



## 1-1 Be Guided by the Principles of Professionalism

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Great teachers are defined by the extent of their dedication to developing the attitudes, knowledge, and skills that are the hallmarks of a professional educator. As you begin to develop your career, let the following principles of professionalism guide your efforts:

- ✱ **PRINCIPLE ONE:** Commit yourself to the well-being and success of every student in your care.
  - ✦ Treat all students with dignity and respect.
  - ✦ Honor your students by having high expectations for their academic and behavioral success.
  - ✦ Maintain an organized and orderly classroom where students are kept safe from harm.
  - ✦ Promote positive behaviors that aid the development of self-efficacy.
- ✱ **PRINCIPLE TWO:** Commit yourself to maintaining rigorous standards of professional performance.
  - ✦ Accept responsibility for what happens in your classroom.
  - ✦ Conduct your professional life with impeccable integrity.
  - ✦ Initiate a teamwork approach to a successful school year with the parents and guardians of your students.
  - ✦ Recognize that the constantly changing complexity of education makes professional growth a personal responsibility.
- ✱ **PRINCIPLE THREE:** Commit yourself to delivering the most appropriate instruction for your students.
  - ✦ Differentiate instruction to meet the individual needs of all learners.
  - ✦ Help students set and achieve reasonable goals based on state standards.
  - ✦ Be aware of and incorporate educational best practices.
  - ✦ Provide written and verbal feedback designed to encourage student achievement.

## 1-2 What Is Expected of You

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Although expectations vary from school to school, here is a list of some of the expectations that other teachers, your students, your supervisors, and the parents or guardians of your students will have of you as you begin your new career. You will be expected to

- \* Design instruction that appeals to the various learning modalities of your students
- \* Use state standards to inform instruction
- \* Demonstrate knowledge of your students' development, skills, abilities, and aptitudes
- \* Help students establish and achieve learning goals
- \* Understand how students learn and use that knowledge to reach your students
- \* Differentiate instruction so that the individual needs of all learners are met
- \* Use sound judgment about which teaching practices are suitable for your students
- \* Establish a positive relationship with every student
- \* Treat all students with dignity and respect regardless of factors such as ethnicity or gender
- \* Use a variety of methods to motivate students to perform well in school both academically and behaviorally
- \* Use technology to enhance your instructional practices
- \* Establish a safe and productive classroom environment
- \* Use techniques that minimize the loss of time on task when disruptions occur
- \* Provide a risk-free and supportive learning environment
- \* Administer appropriate assessments to determine student mastery levels
- \* Assume responsibility for your own professional growth
- \* Work collaboratively with colleagues for the benefit of all staff members and students

### 1-3 How to Take Charge of Your Career

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- \* Professional growth does not happen by chance. Take charge by developing a personal plan to improve your teaching skills.
- \* Although you will almost certainly be assigned an official mentor, other teachers can also serve as role models. Look to them for support, inspiration, and advice.
- \* In addition to teachers in your building, form relationships with colleagues outside your school. Professional organizations and online educational forums are good places to begin building a professional network.
- \* Set career goals for yourself, and work to achieve them.
- \* Read materials that will keep you informed about current issues, trends, and techniques.
- \* Learn what the No Child Left Behind Act requires of all teachers.
- \* Join professional organizations related to your teaching assignment. Try to attend a conference sponsored by a professional organization, too.
- \* Take advantage of professional development opportunities such as workshops, webinars, online courses, and seminars offered by your school district.
- \* Keep a professional portfolio so that you will be able to measure your own growth as a teacher as the year progresses.
- \* Try to observe other teachers as often as you can. Ask them to observe you and offer their insights about your teaching performance.
- \* Make a plan to manage your stress levels so that you can avoid burnout.
- \* Investigate the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. Many school districts now assist teachers who enroll in this program.



## 1-4 Set Professional Goals with These Easy Steps

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A goal-oriented approach to your new career will help clarify your thinking, make the challenging task of professional development manageable, and make decision making easier all year long.

- \* **STEP ONE:** Set aside time to brainstorm about what you would like to learn, the obstacles you need to overcome, and how you can improve your teaching skills this year.
- \* **STEP TWO:** Select the most important ideas in your list and express them as long-range goals you would like to achieve.
- \* **STEP THREE:** Examine your long-range plans closely to make sure that they answer these questions for successful goals:
  - ♦ Are they productive? Will they help you develop professional skills?
  - ♦ Are they specific? Do they address a definite purpose or area that you would like to improve?
  - ♦ Are they measurable? Can you measure progress so that you will know when you have achieved them?
  - ♦ Are they achievable? Can you accomplish them with consistent, focused effort?
  - ♦ Are they timely? Do they have a time frame to keep you focused?
- \* **STEP FOUR:** Create short-term goals that complement your long-range goals by deciding on the specific steps that you must take to accomplish them.
- \* **STEP FIVE:** Write out your goals in detail, making sure to set benchmarks to track your progress. Find a place to keep them where they can serve as a reminder of what you want to accomplish this year.



## 1-5 Develop a Professional Demeanor

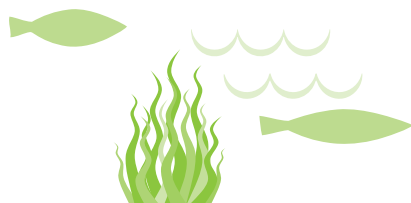
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- \* Always be on time to school, to extracurricular duties, to meetings, and to class.
- \* Dress in a professional manner. Your clothing should project the image of a dignified, capable adult.
- \* Communicate in a mature manner: speak Standard English, avoid excessive slang, proofread what you write, and never curse at school.
- \* Be knowledgeable about your school district's policies and procedures.
- \* Follow school rules, policies, and directions from supervisors. If you disagree with a rule, follow the proper channels to change it.
- \* Exhibit self-control. Learn from constructive criticism and your own mistakes.
- \* Have a thorough knowledge and understanding of the content that you teach.
- \* Actively seek to learn more about current best teaching practices in your field.
- \* Be organized and efficient about how you manage your time, workload, and classroom.
- \* Convey your pride in your profession and your interest in being the best teacher that you can be.
- \* Be appreciative of your colleagues' experience and expertise.
- \* Demonstrate that you understand and value the importance of teamwork at school.
- \* Take a mature, mutually supportive approach to your relationships with the parents or guardians of your students.
- \* Be friendly to your colleagues, community members, students, and their families.
- \* Manage your anxiety levels with sensible stress reduction techniques.
- \* Become a lifelong learner about your subject matter, students, and career.

## 1-6 Master These Important Workplace Skills

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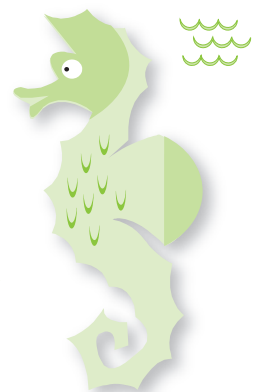
- \* Use school resources wisely. For example, you should turn off lights, keep track of textbooks, use the heating and air conditioning systems efficiently, and save paper.
- \* Share the photocopier courteously. Don't make others wait while you copy hundreds of handouts.
- \* Clean up after yourself.
- \* If you borrow something from another teacher, return it promptly and in good condition.
- \* Cultivate good telephone and e-mail manners.
- \* Develop exemplary time management skills. Use a planning calendar and a list of prioritized chores on a daily basis.
- \* Learn to use educational software and technological resources efficiently.
- \* Create a well-organized work space. Be sure to leave your desk clean at the end of the day.
- \* Be meticulous about keeping paperwork organized and up to date.
- \* Keep a file of ideas for lessons, activities, and other strategies that you would like to try.
- \* Arrive at school a little early, and leave a little late.
- \* Look ahead! Plan your lessons and activities far enough in advance that you don't have to scramble to carry them out.
- \* Learn to manage stress and the pressures of each day.
- \* Be flexible when your plans don't work out or when interruptions disrupt a lesson.
- \* Learn the art of taking control of your time. Volunteer for activities you can manage well, and politely decline those that you can't.
- \* Resist the urge to complain. Remaining cheerful under stress is an invaluable workplace skill.



## 1-7 Manage Your Time Wisely with These Strategies

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- \* Create an electronic “To-Do List” template that shows routine chores. Print it, and use it to prioritize and schedule your work.
- \* Create routines to make your workdays predictable and manageable.
- \* Ask your colleagues for suggestions when you create lesson plans. They may have plans, worksheets, activities, or other ideas to share with you.
- \* Research on the Internet for lesson ideas, worksheets, and other helpful time-savers.
- \* Do a task right the first time so that you don’t have to redo it.
- \* If you can, share a time-consuming task with colleagues; you will save time, learn from their experience, and have fun, too.
- \* Write down things you will need to remember.
- \* Plan how you will use your planning time at school. If you don’t plan, those brief moments will slip away.
- \* Avoid the impulse to aimlessly chat with colleagues instead of working productively in your spare time at school.
- \* Break a large task into smaller, manageable ones.
- \* Learn to schedule your most challenging work at the times of day when your energy is high.
- \* Use small blocks of time. You can accomplish a lot in just a few minutes.
- \* If you don’t understand something, ask.  
If you need help, ask.
- \* Keep your work area uncluttered and organized so that you don’t have to search for misplaced items.
- \* Don’t overextend yourself.
- \* No matter how busy you are, take a moment to enjoy your students.

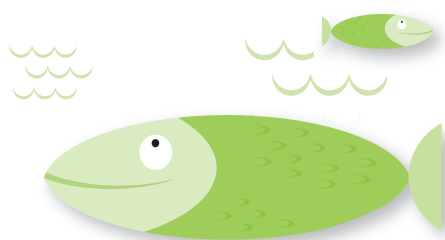




## 1-8 How to Use Best Practices in Your Classroom

As a new teacher, you have probably heard the term *best practices* many times in your education courses, but you may not be sure what it means or what constitutes educational best practices. While there is no clear-cut definition of the term as it relates to education, most educators would agree that best practices are the actions that teachers can take to ensure that their instruction is effective, appropriate, and productive. Following is a list of some of the classroom-tested activities that qualify as educational best practices:

- \* Cooperative learning
- \* Portfolio assessments
- \* Alternative assessments
- \* Rubrics
- \* Tiered instruction
- \* Scaffolding instruction
- \* Anchoring activities
- \* Graphic organizers
- \* Essential questions
- \* Project-based learning
- \* Student-directed learning
- \* Workshop approaches to reading and writing
- \* Interdisciplinary instruction
- \* Inquiry-based instruction
- \* Authentic experiences
- \* Data-driven instruction
- \* Integrated technology
- \* Standards-based curriculums
- \* Benchmark testing
- \* Capitalizing on background knowledge
- \* Differentiated instruction
- \* Recognizing learning styles
- \* Recognizing multiple intelligences
- \* Teacher as coach and facilitator
- \* Student research



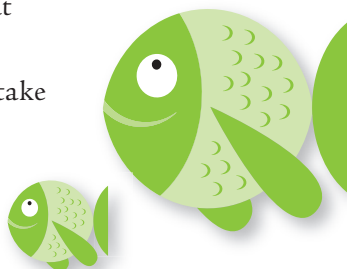
## 1-9 Strategies to Help You Prepare for Evaluations

- \* Obtain copies of your district's evaluation forms so that you can become thoroughly familiar with the process and the expectations that observers will have for your performance.
- \* Talk with your peers, your mentor, and your supervisors to ask for advice that will ensure a successful observation and evaluation.
- \* On the day of the evaluation, be prepared.
  - ✦ Use excellent lesson plans that showcase your teaching skills.
  - ✦ Provide a place for the evaluator to sit as well as copies of all handouts.
  - ✦ Prepare students for the visit, and make sure your room is tidy.
- \* Don't wait until an administrator is in your room to be observed. Ask several colleagues to observe you at various times and offer feedback on your performance.
- \* In addition to arranging for collegial observations, make a point of periodically observing other teachers.
- \* Learn to use "snapshots" to evaluate your own expertise, prepare for formal evaluations, and grow professionally. Here's how:
  - ✦ Focus on just a few minutes of class time. During this time, unobtrusively audiotape or videotape yourself.
  - ✦ As you review the tape, evaluate specific behaviors. For example, a snapshot can be particularly useful for judging how you handle off-task behavior or give directions.
  - ✦ Keep a record of your insights, and use them to create the small improvements that will result in a formal observation that showcases your strengths.



## 1-10 Learn to Weather Career Ups and Downs

- \* Take a sensible approach to your new profession. When you are having a bad day, remember that other teachers have experienced similar problems and may be able to offer help.
- \* Adopt a problem-solving approach when difficulties arise. When you do, you will be working toward a solution instead of just being miserable.
- \* Use the problems that you experience as opportunities to learn and become a better teacher. Don't dwell on your mistakes. Learn from them instead.
- \* Refuse to take it personally when a student or difficult colleague is rude, stressed out, or uncooperative.
- \* Plan some time to relax. Learn to schedule small moments to pause and recharge throughout your day.
- \* Keep problems small. Solve them as quickly and efficiently as possible to keep them from adding to your stress.
- \* Keep things in perspective by asking, "Will this matter a year from now?"
- \* Do routine tasks as efficiently as possible to avoid falling behind in your responsibilities.
- \* Learn to anticipate and appreciate the small successes that constitute a teacher's day. Celebrate with your students as often as you can.
- \* Even the very best teachers can't reach every child every day. Be realistic about what you can and can't accomplish.
- \* Take it one day at a time.
- \* Reward yourself occasionally when you have accomplished a difficult task at school.
- \* Leave your problems at school, but take your successes home.



## 1-11 How to Build Your Confidence

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- \* Have a thorough knowledge of the content that you are required to teach. Look ahead, and become familiar with the entire scope of your course.
- \* Create a course overview so that you know when you are supposed to cover various topics and are able to plan with assurance.
- \* Prepare your lessons as far in advance as you can. Even if you have to change plans or adjust due dates, you will still feel in control of your lesson preparation.
- \* Develop a sense of humor about your mistakes.
- \* Dress the part. Invest in comfortable professional clothes so that you do not have to worry about your appearance at school.
- \* Pack a kit for school emergencies. Stock it with personal items such as breath mints, pain relievers, and Band-Aids.
- \* Leave your desk and classroom neat at the end of the day. If you do, you will feel much better when you start the next day.
- \* If other teachers tell you off-putting or negative things about your students, ignore as much as you can. Ask them to tell you positive things instead.
- \* Anticipate and prepare for the stressful times in the school year: the beginning of the term, major holidays, exciting school events, standardized tests, and the end of the year.
- \* Learn your students' names as quickly as you can.
- \* Create an opening-of-class routine so that your students settle down quickly each day.
- \* Always have a backup plan.
- \* Remind yourself of other times when you have been successful and draw on those experiences.



## 1-12 Reflection: The Key to Becoming a Successful Educator

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Even though teachers often informally mull over their successes and failures, wise teachers have learned that a systematic approach to reflection can play a key role in helping them grow professionally. To use reflection as a strategy for professional growth, try these suggestions:

- \* Make self-reflection a daily habit. For veteran teachers, setting aside time to consider the effectiveness of their teaching practices is an almost constant process.
- \* In order to reflect on your teaching practices in a beneficial way, you should formalize the system that you use for reflection.
  - ♦ Set aside time each day for reflection. Some teachers prefer to talk with colleagues; others find self-reflection helpful; and still others find that a combination of the two works best.
  - ♦ If you find that jotting notes is too time-consuming or cumbersome, consider using a small digital recorder to document your reflections.
  - ♦ If you save your reflections over a period of time, you will be able to see growth as well as refer to earlier insights and ideas.
    - As you try new activities or learn new skills, evaluate them as honestly as you can. Ask yourself questions such as these:
    - How can I improve the way I manage my disciplinary and academic responsibilities?
    - What lessons did I learn today?
    - What successes did I have today, and how did I achieve them?



