

Week 10: Characteristics of Effective Teachers

Chapter 11

I. Highlights

- A. Ten essentials of successful teaching: (1) open & frequent communication, (2) self-awareness, (3) a satisfying role, (4) mutual respect & acceptance, (5) team spirit & empathy, (6) flexibility, (7) willingness to share the spotlight, (8) clearly defined roles, (9) professionalism, (10) evaluation
- B. How we carry ourselves as professionals and show respect for ourselves and each other is how we show others that we're not just babysitters.
- C. Teachers & paraprofessionals need training, supervised field experience, and knowledge of child development (typical and atypical).
- D. Necessary skills: observation & documentation, communication, follow up, culturally sensitive / diversity awareness
- E. Program quality = teachers' skills + knowledge + abilities
- F. Professionals = teachers, paraprofessionals (aides), early interventionists, occupational therapists, physical therapists, speech therapists, etc.

II. Homework

- A. Read Chapter 12 for next week
- B. Internet Research Reaction Paper due next week
 - 1. Find ONE article you're interested in related to care of children with special needs (start with a Google search)
 - 2. 2-page reflection on your thoughts and feelings about the article: I agree or disagree, I like what they said in 2nd paragraph, when I was working with children I found that that didn't work, etc.

3. Print the article and read it several times. Turn it in with the reflection paper.
4. Helpful to study a special need that's actually in your classroom if you want to learn more

III. Teachers we liked when we were little

- A. Name a teacher whom you liked when you were little, especially from elementary school. List characteristics that made him/her such a great teacher.
- B. Terms we used: creative, goofy, patient, happy, protective, caring, encouraging, honest, awesome, outgoing, enthusiastic, supportive, adventurous, attentive, soft-spoken, respectful, musical, dedicated, kind, going beyond the job description to help us, got to know me as a person
- C. Think of yourself as a teacher. Do those terms apply to you?
- D. If a teacher can leave this impression on us that we remember him/her this many years later, feel how powerful that is. This is the kind of teacher we want to be for our kids.
- E. When you have a great teaching experience/example that touches your heart, record it and consciously/intentionally learn from that to become a better teacher. (Also true if you observe something bad that you don't want to copy.)

IV. Questions on the board (*answer on the paper to turn in for participation points*)

- A. Today could have been better if...
- B. What I like about inclusion is...
- C. What I don't like about inclusion is...
- D. Communication is tough with...
- E. What I like most about my job is...
- F. I have known kids with the following challenges...
- G. My co-worker always...

V. Handout: Ten Essentials of Successful Teaching

A. Open & frequent communication

1. The ability and opportunity to communicate thoughts, concerns, and feelings to others
2. Can be verbal or nonverbal, written or spoken
3. Links us to parents and other staff
4. Three basic reasons for communication = share information, contribute new ideas, solve problems
5. Important to listen without judgement. Don't always talk!

B. Self-awareness

1. What are my strengths and weaknesses and how do they complement or conflict with others in my workplace?
2. As part of a staff, do I prefer to follow or lead? to plan or carry out plans developed by a coworker?
3. In what teaching situations do I feel uncomfortable and why?
4. What have I done lately to learn more about myself? Self-awareness helps us learn. We learn to become better teachers.
5. Take time every day to assess myself. What went well? What can I learn to do better in the future?

C. A satisfying role

1. Each staff member is appreciated for the special something he or she brings to the group.
2. Is there a place in my school (or team) that is uniquely mine?
3. How can my special talents and experiences contribute to the success of this program? How am I special?

D. Mutual respect and acceptance

1. Appreciating and accepting the individuality of other team members is important to the success of any program. This knowledge is the basis for resolving differences by setting a climate of trust and a positive atmosphere.
2. Teachers should ask themselves: What do I have in common with my coworkers, and what unique qualities do they bring to this school at this time? What do I expect from my coworkers: emotional support? Intellectual stimulation? candid feedback?
3. We expect coworkers to be positive, respect my ideas, cultural respect, cooperation, open communication

E. Team spirit and empathy

1. A sense of team spirit only happens by conscious effort. Each staff member must be committed to the day to day and long-term goals of the program.
2. This means being empathic to the moods, feelings and needs of coworkers; being tactful in disagreements, or being positive in suggesting change.
3. Teachers should ask: How can I relate to and be supportive of my coworkers? Have I ever been in their shoes?
4. How can we expect kids to learn empathy if we don't model it?

F. Flexibility

1. Flexibility involves a willingness to offer and accept negotiation and compromise in order to preserve the effectiveness of the whole staff's efforts.
2. Do I demonstrate a willingness to change with the changing needs of my coworkers, or do I adhere rigidly to present plans or attitudes?
3. Am I open to new ideas proposed by others? Am I sufficiently prepared to handle changes within the classroom setting? How can I get better at this?
4. Example: Be willing to help in another room if needed on occasion

5. Frequent conflict: the seasoned teacher wants nothing to change, the new person coming into the room wants to change everything at once based on what she learned in school. Both need flexibility, respect, and compromise because both have wisdom to offer.

G. Willingness to share the spotlight

1. We must be willing to admit that other teachers are just as dedicated to children and deserving of their affections as we are.
2. We need to be willing to share the credit as well as the responsibility.
3. We should ask: How do I feel when another teacher is praised by a parent or preferred by a child? Am I quick to acknowledge my coworkers' achievements?
4. It can be hard not to feel jealous when another teacher gets a present, a compliment, a raise, etc. and I don't.

H. Clearly defined roles

1. It is essential to understand your role and what others' jobs entail. This helps to insure smooth functioning of the program, a sense of well-being, and serves as a guard against legal and ethical problems.
2. Do I know the extent of the responsibilities for this particular teaching assignment? If I work on a team, do I fulfill my responsibilities as a team member, or do I allow others to take over some of my least liked responsibilities?
3. Job description should come from the director and should be specific. Include diapering and cleaning up potty accidents, so no one can say, "I don't do diapers."

I. Professionalism

1. Professional attitudes and behavior are a critical part of the teaching effort.

2. Personal grievances must be kept out of the classroom and the teachers' lounge. There is no place for petty gossip or ill will or cliques.
3. Do I behave in a professional manner? Can I keep confidences? Do I confront those with whom I have differences in an attempt to work them out?
4. Professionalism = appropriate language, dressing well, greeting parents in a friendly way, absolutely no gossip, no personal drama at school, and respecting myself

J. Evaluation

1. Ongoing evaluation is essential.
2. Being judged by your peers is part of the privilege in claiming membership in the teaching profession.
3. Evaluations should provide a clear picture that confirms strengths and pinpoints potential areas for growth.
4. When assessing others, do I evaluate them fairly and share my observations with them in a supportive way?
5. Do I accept evaluation as an essential part of teaching? Am I responsive to the thoughts and opinions of others?
6. Should get an evaluation every year from director. Doesn't guarantee a raise. Director can ask you to set goals for yourself for the coming year. Director may observe you teaching.
7. Teacher gets a copy of the evaluation, office keeps a copy in the teacher's file.

VI. Teachers and paraprofessionals

- A. Children with special needs: "If we are to achieve a richer culture, we must weave one in which each diverse human gift will find a fitting place." --Margaret Mead

- B. How we carry ourselves as professionals, how we show respect for our profession and each other and ourselves, is what communicates that we are more than babysitters!
- C. What kind of preparation do teachers/paraprofessionals need to successfully work in an inclusive setting?
1. Training, knowledge
 2. Supervised experience to practice applying that knowledge
 3. Knowledge of typical development and special needs, developmentally appropriate practice
- D. What skills would you need to have?
1. Observation and documentation
 2. Communication (to convince director and families to pursue diagnosis)
 3. Follow up, pay attention to detail, persistence. Can invite parents to come see for themselves if they're in denial about what you're saying.
- E. What kind of support would you need from other professionals?
1. Director and coworkers confirm your observations
 2. Specialists, therapists, etc.
 3. Everyone needs to be on the same page! Usually is classroom teacher's responsibility to keep this line of communication open.
- F. What knowledge do you think a teacher must have? How about an assistant teacher?
1. Teacher = hopefully beyond 12 units, ideally a degree, knowledge of developmentally appropriate curriculum and typical development, how to handle harder situations with children or parents, how to build a supportive environment and routine, knowledgeable about the special needs being served in that classroom, be the contact person for the families (communicate regularly, confidently, openly, two-way)

2. Assistant = hopefully core 12 units at least, knowledge of how to handle individual situations with children in the moment, health and safety, how to communicate with everyone, record observations and share that information with the lead teacher
3. Often the assistant is the one who spends the most time with the child with special needs under the supervision of the lead teacher

G. Key Points: Role of Teachers

1. Critical element in ECE
2. Need for quality in inclusive environments (above and beyond the basic requirements of child care, strive to do a better job than regular programs)
3. Program quality = teachers' skills + knowledge (education) + abilities (able to apply the knowledge they've learned / studied)

VII. Who are the professionals?

A. Teachers

1. Program planning and development (sometimes each teacher, sometimes as a committee in a larger school)
2. Curriculum (lesson plans, developmentally appropriate for the age and stage of the children we're serving)
3. Parent relationships (primarily the lead teacher's responsibility, easier said than done, may have to be careful to have equal relationship with mom and dad in case of divorce, remember divorce rate is higher in families with special needs)
4. Teamwork (with other teachers and assistants, with director, is teacher's responsibility to inform director so director isn't surprised when a parent comes in angry)

5. Communication (research shows miscommunication is #1 reason people lose jobs, get divorced, lose friends, etc. This is a big deal! Inform parents about everything, respecting confidentiality, be available but okay to say "I need to take care of the children right now, but leave me a note and I'll call you on my break." Talk respectfully.)
6. Community relationships (introduce parents to each other to form school sense of community, plus connect to things outside the school for field trips, plus local resources to connect parents with, help children feel they belong here)

B. Paraprofessionals

1. Paraprofessional = all those who provide assistance with early education programs
2. Teacher's aide, early intervention assistant, para-educator, special education program aide, instructional or therapist assistant, one-to-one assistant for a child
3. California Community Personnel Preparation Project (CEITAN/WestEd) has collaborated with the SDE and DDS to develop competencies for paraprofessionals and to work closely with community colleges, ECE Departments, to develop certificated program to prepare EIP
 - a) WestEd is the big government-sponsored umbrella program that includes CARES Plus, PITC, etc.
 - b) We can earn a certificate to work with children with special needs in inclusive settings

C. Other professionals

1. EI = Early Interventionist = serves as a model for paraprofessionals
2. OT = occupational therapist (works on fine motor, hand-eye coordination, self-help skills)

3. PT = physical therapist (works on gross motor skills, physical abilities, range of motion, working on muscles and joints and bones)
4. SP = speech therapist (works on mouth/tongue/lip exercises, making sounds properly, putting words together properly, etc.)

D. Training paraprofessionals in child care, the emphasis is on:

1. Theories of learning in typical child development
2. Instructional methods (ways of teaching, where to place your body when interacting with the child, etc.)
3. Curricula
4. Behavior management (help them learn to handle their excess energy, problem-solving using words, etc.)
5. Practicum experience (aka “student teaching” or “field experience” under a master teacher to learn to apply what they have learned in class, turn theory into actual practical experience)

E. Effectiveness of the paraprofessional depends on:

1. How well the teacher/director prepares for and develops a working relationship with the paraprofessional
2. Depends on the communication of expectations, desires and needs between the early interventionist and the paraprofessional
3. Early interventionist maybe the one with more knowledge/education who’s setting the goals and giving suggestions to modify the environment to support the child’s development, would supervise the paraprofessional (assistant) who’s there all day every day with the child

F. Knowledge and training needed

1. Diversity: ethnic, racial, linguistic, and cultural diversity of the community, realizing every child comes from a family who has their own traditions, beliefs, and life ways

2. Opportunities: for children, families, and teachers to learn from each other (we learn about their culture, they learn about ours)
3. Culturally sensitive: a challenge comes in creating the environment and learning experiences that are culturally sensitive to all children in the classroom (including different holidays, foods, prayer times, learn about the children's home cultures and provide care that's as compatible with that home culture as possible instead of automatically giving them my home culture. Identify my own culture, then go beyond your culture to meet the family's cultural norms. NEVER shame or belittle a child for their ways of doing things being different, such as eating with their hands instead of a fork.)
4. Adaptations: making adaptations to accommodate needs of the range of children (this is the main point of our final project in this class)
5. Managing challenging behaviors: changing environment, teacher/child/parent relationships and skills, notice patterns if behavior changes with the time of day or day of the week or where they are in the room or how loud the environment is (teacher's body position matters, can empower the quiet child to speak up if you stand behind him/or her quietly)
6. Coordinated teaching (communicating with coworkers, maybe through a written schedule)
7. Knowledge about specific disabilities
8. On-the-job experience with children with disabilities (the practicum/field experience class can help with this, or asking to observe and learn from the therapists and special education teachers when they come work with the child)

G. Early Interventionist Assistant Competencies

1. Family support and family-professional partnership (really supporting both sides)
2. Child development: typical and atypical (any deviation from typical development is atypical)
3. Evaluation and assessment
4. IFSP/IEP
5. Intervention strategies (usually spelled out with goals in IEP/IFSP)
6. Health, safety, and nutrition
7. Professional, legal and ethical practices (inform yourself about this, and ask director when you have questions)

VIII. Developmental principles and practices

A. Developmental sequences

1. Interrelationships among developmental areas (physical, cognitive, social-emotional, etc. depend on each other. example: won't learn if tummy is empty)
2. Know that a period of rapid development often is followed by an unsettled period known as "disequilibrium"
3. Need to know when things like "perspective taking" happen (age 3+, so telling a 2-year-old not to kick because it hurts is useless because it doesn't hurt the child who is kicking)
4. Understand ages and stages of development so you know what milestones follow what

- ### B. Sometimes undesirable behaviors are learned because of teacher's well-intended efforts (transactional nature of teacher-child interaction: when the child misbehaves and you pay attention to the misbehavior, you reward the

misbehavior by providing attention. Instead, “catch them being good.”
Constantly correcting them is belittling them. Let them sort it out themselves.
Reinforce the positive instead.)

C. New learning comes about because of the responses of another (contingent stimulation). Example: peek-a-boo or toss the toy, teacher’s reaction to the child’s activity and learning will encourage love of learning or discourage the child

D. Teachable moments: use of incidental teaching which provides the best possible use for teachable moments (observe from the edges, see when a child is interested in something and then step in to build on it with them)

IX. Each college has “certificates” for completing certain courses before finishing the whole associate’s degree. They’re like milestones along the way.