

Tips for Making a Good Impression

When you, as a teacher candidate, go into the schools for practicum experiences and/or student teaching, it is important to remember (1) you are a guest in the school, (2) you are there as a representative of Peru State, and (3) the professionals with whom you come in contact are potential employers and professional references. You will want to make a good impression, not just the first day but every time you are there. Following the tips below will not only help you get into the habit of dressing and behaving like a professional educator, but also 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 clean.
- Limit the use of perfumes and colognes. 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

- Notice how the faculty dress and then dress just a little more formally than they do.
- Follow these general rules.
 1. No clothing that is prohibited for their students
 2. No hats indoors
 3. No denim (jeans, skirts, shirts, jackets, etc.) or pants with jean-style cut (double stitching on side seams, jean-type rear pockets)
 4. No sweat shirts, T-shirts, tank tops, or spaghetti straps
 5. No shorts, skorts, short skirts, sagging pants, athletic wear
 6. No bare skin showing on the shoulders, stomach, or legs
 7. No casual shoes or flip flops
 8. No pierced jewelry other than a limited number of earrings; no tattoos showing
 9. No excessive makeup

Consider Your Use of Language

- Use professional language (oral and written) at all times in and outside of school.
- Avoid using slang, jargon, and sarcasm.
- Use correct grammar.
- Be aware of differences between formal and informal language in all oral and written communications.
- Show respect for communication differences.

Consider Your Presence

Timeliness and Reliability

- Handle absences professionally; call before, not after; call the principal and the teacher
- Avoid being tardy. If you have to be tardy, call as soon as possible.

Sense of Humor

- Avoid laughing at humor that is at the expense of someone else along with humor that is inappropriate in a school setting.
- Retain the ability to laugh at yourself if you make mistakes.

Rapport with Others

- Show interest in others; listen actively.
- Assert your needs respectfully; show appreciation for the help of others.

Eye Contact

- Look at the students, faculty, administration, and staff when you speak to them.
- Be aware of and sensitive to cultural differences in terms of what is considered appropriate eye contact.
- Do not look at your cell phone or computer screen when you should be watching students or teachers.

Consider Your Influence on Others

Teaching Effectiveness

- Plan with standards and student outcomes in mind.
- Assess/analyze student learning and reflect on your teaching practices/interactions.
- Be open to constructive criticism from the cooperating teacher.

Role Modeling

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