

# **RESEARCH ARTICLE**

# Characteristics and Factors of a Good and Effective English Language Teacher

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# ABSTRACT

This study is carried out to show and shed light on the characteristics and factors that any good English Language teacher should have. Indeed, having these characteristics and factors help in mastering the class and thus, lead to good results. For this purpose, a questionnaire for Jazan University English teachers was used for data collection. The Statistical Package for Social Science Program (SPSS) was used for data analysis. The results and findings of the questionnaire revealed some general and personal characteristics. For example, teacher-student good relationships, teacher's physical appearance, educational and pedagogical competence, classroom and time management, dealing with the problems inside the classroom, teaching methods and plans diversity, language proficiency, and moral characteristics such as justice and equality among students. Some recommendations were given by the researchers such as: the above mentioned characteristics and others are too important to be obtained by English Language teachers as an essential part in learning process so as to give the required results and outcomes.

# **KEYWORDS**

Physical appearance, pedagogical competence, Characteristics, proficiency, outcomes, backbone, fundamental, performance, favoritism, prejudice, ruminate, provoking, achievement, commitment

# **ARTICLE INFORMATION**

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#### Introduction

As teachers play an important role in the learning process as one of the factors that influence students achievement in general, no doubt, being a qualified and skilled teacher is generally essential. This indeed will affect the students performance and lead to a better results and good outcomes. So, having good learning results demands having good, qualified and skilled teachers.

To be a qualified and skilled teacher, there are special characteristics and factors that any teacher needs to have and obtain. Highquality teachers are regarded as the backbone of the development of high-quality education. Good, skilled and qualified teachers are essential for educational systems in general and for enhancing the quality of learning in specific. Thus, good students' results that are put, can be achieved.

Research supports this notion that a good teacher and whatever he/she does in the classroom plays a vital role in provoking effective and efficient learning on the part of the students (Markley, 2004). Good results depend on good teachers. Teachers also have a fundamental role in their learners' academic achievement and their quality can highly influence student outcomes (Campbell, Kyriakides, Muijsc & Robinsona, 2004; Lasley II, Siedentop & Yinger, 2006; Rockoff, 2004). That is to say, qualified and skilled teachers have their role to play in learning process as well as students. No one can ignore the role that English language teachers play with their students inside or outside classrooms. Their commitment to the class as well as providing them with the opportunity

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to be successful and satisfied with their language learning program (Horwitz, 1988). No doubt, efforts that teachers exert with their students inside or outside classrooms are noticeable and appreciated by both students and the boards.

Indeed, having all the above mentioned characteristics and factors helps the teacher to manage his/her classroom, give feedback to students, handle students' behaviors and make good decisions. Thus, the objectives that are put can be well achieved and the results would be acceptable.

### Methodology

Regarding the method used in this research paper for data collection, a questionnaire for English language teachers is used. It consisted of 12 items which were designed in away that covers a large area about the characteristics and factors needed to be found in a good and effective teacher. To prove that there are certain characteristics, which can't be ignored, are necessary to be obtained by English language teachers. Points with five alternative options: strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree and strongly disagree which represent respondents' opinions.

#### Statement of the problem

No doubt, the learning process generally is based on reaching to good results and outcomes. Indeed, one of the most important factors for achieving this is the teacher, students and administration. The focus here will be mainly about the English teacher. So, having some characteristics and factors is some thing needed to be described as a good and effective teacher. There is a noticeable role that a good and effective teacher plays in learning process compared with a weak, hesitant and ineffective one.

#### **Objectives of the study**

1. To prove that a good and effective teacher affects students' performance and helps a lot in achieving good results and outcomes.

2. To determine special characteristics and factors that should be obtained by teachers to be good and effective.

3. To show that these characteristics include two aspects: a general (cognitive) aspect and a specific (personal) aspect.

#### Questions of the study

1. Does a good and effective teacher affects students' performance and helps a lot in achieving good results and outcomes?

- 2. What are the special characteristics and factors that should be obtained by teachers to be good and effective?
- 3. What aspects do these characteristics include?

#### Hypotheses of the study

1. A good and effective teacher affects students' performance and helps a lot in achieving good results and outcomes.

2. There are special characteristics and factors that should be obtained by teachers to be good and effective.

3. There are two aspects of the characteristics of a good teacher: a general (cognitive) aspect and a specific (personal) aspect.

#### Significant of the study

Generally, the teacher is the backbone of the learning process. He/she affects strongly on the students' performance and lead to good results and better outcomes especially when he/she is good and effective. So, to be good and effective teacher, there are special characteristics and factors need to be obtained by him/her. This research paper will shed light on some of these characteristics and factors to show how important are they in the learning process.

#### **Definition of term**

#### A teacher

A teacher is a person who helps others to acquire knowledge, competences or values. Teacher is a designation for the office, position, and profession for someone who devotes himself in the field of education through patterned educational interaction, formal and systematic. A teacher is one of the main educational pillars besides students and college. He/ She represents the link

which without him/her educational process can't be completed and results won't be achieved. UU No. 16 Year 2005 on Teachers and Lecturers (Article 1) states that: "The teacher is a professional education with the primary task of educating, teaching, guiding, directing, train, assess and evaluate learners in formal education, in primary education and secondary education". So, to reach the targeted goals and achieve the desired results and outcomes, much care should be given to teachers.

#### Literature review

In this part of the paper, the researchers review some of the characteristics and qualities of a good and effective teacher as mentioned in other previous research papers. Once having certain characteristics and qualities that help a teacher to be effective towards his/her students is an important, lots of papers, researches, forums and seminars are made focusing on this issue.

Regarding this issue "the characteristics of a good and effective English Language teacher, Brosh (1996) states some of them as: having knowledge and command of the target language; being able to organize, explain, and clarify, as well as to arouse and sustain interest and motivation among students; being fair to students by showing neither favoritism nor prejudice; and being available to students. Thus, the above mentioned characteristics are needed to be found in any teacher to help him/her giving the best for students. In other words, we can say that the role of the teacher is not only to teach or to be just in classroom. His/ her role goes beyond this. He/ She is supposed to be available anywhere and anytime inside or outside classroom. Being a good teacher doesn't only mean to know how to teach, but also to be closer to students giving them instructions and guidance wherever they need. It is widely agreed that the norm characteristics of an effective and good teacher can be helpful in enhancing students performance and leading to good results. On the contrary, loss of them leads to bad results. Thus, many scholars have paid these characteristics and factors much attention and consideration. Here are some definite standards as cited by (Sullivan, 2004): broad general knowledge, content knowledge, knowledge of how children develop/ learn, respect for student diversity, critical thinking and performance skills, positive environment, collaborative relationships, effective communication, variety of assessment strategies, professional development and professional ethics. According to him, different knowledge of content, development and respect beside good environment, good relationship and effective communication with students in addition to good assessment strategies and professional ethics.

To answer the question: what are the main characteristics and qualities that help an English Language teacher to be effective has been a subject of concern to many scholars in this field. Indeed, that's because of the importance of this issue in learning process. In 1957, secondary-school principals in New York were asked to nominate effective teachers of academic subjects. Their answer was as follows: subject-matter mastery, motivation, dedication, co-operation, sense of humour, creativity, efficiency, control, discipline, standards, promptness with reports, methods and generosity with personal time for students (Calabria, 1960). Effectiveness in teaching was reported to be directly related to mastery of subject matter in the selected teaching field. In general, a good and effective teacher should master everything that may help students and enhance them towards achieving good results.

As for Li Fang'an and Chen Xiangming (2016) their theoretical study focused on college teachers and they came to a conclusion that a good teacher should always exhibits moral and artistic excellence, prioritize morality, and uphold fairness and justice. Teachers- no matter where they are- should have moral qualities such as: fairness, honesty, justice and dedication. Teachers of course, dedicate their time and efforts for the sake of their students to achieve better results. Nowadays, people think that traditional culture affects the good teacher's standard. Regarding to a study made by Liu Wan and Junquan (2018) about the evaluation standard of a good teacher, they captured the teacher's character, knowledge and behavior. Teacher's knowledge needs personal characteristics and specific behavior to be fruitful and gives the needed results. A teacher's strong character affects positively in learning process. But having strong character doesn't mean to be rude in away that may harm students.

lots of previous research papers have talked about the qualities of a good and effective language teacher. Pettis (1997) identified three main characteristics for a professionally competent teacher. According to her, an effective teacher must firstly be principled and knowledgeable in addition to being skillful. Secondly, professional needs and interests of an effective language teacher must change over time and develop during his/her teaching. Thirdly, a teacher must be personally committed to his/her professional development. She thinks that these three points are helpful in achieving the needed results. She thinks that, in addition to being principled, knowledgeable and skillful, he/she must always develop some professional needs and interests.

The characteristics of an effective English Language teacher, according to Park & Lee (2006), consist of three different categories, namely: subject matter knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, and socio-affective skills. According to them, any English teacher who demonstrates these qualities and characteristics will be more effective to his/her students and will be a good supporter towards achieving the needed results. In addition to these three categories, the attributes of effective language teacher can also be categorized in four main features (Dincer, Goksu, Takkac, & Yazici, 2013), namely socio-affective skills, pedagogical knowledge, subject-matter knowledge and personality characteristics. Here, another characteristic regarding personality is appeared. No doubt, a teacher's personality do matter a lot. To many researchers, there is no education process with a weak or hesitant teacher. As for

socio-affective, it refers to having good relationships with students, being enthusiastic to them, being positive and creative. Also, bringing free-stress classroom by bringing new strategies and giving more rooms for students to express themselves. As for pedagogical knowledge, teachers must have the ability for organizing and explaining the course and in the same time guiding students with informative feedback. To be able to explain the course well, a good and effective teacher should always makes a fantastic atmosphere to do that. Regarding the third one, subject-matter knowledge, it is about having the knowledge that allows the teacher to master the subject he/she teaches. To me, pedagogical knowledge and subject-matter knowledge, complete each other. In other words, no use of having the knowledge without knowing how to use it. As for the forth one 'personal characteristics' the English teacher needs to have good and effective linguistics, positive and communicative personality. Of course, this can be done inside or outside classroom.

After studying Iranian teachers' and students' perceptions of a good language teacher, Babaei Shishvan and Sadeghi (2009) have shown that being patient, caring, smart, creative, and having positive attitudes towards learners are the characteristics favored by both groups. According to this, we can generally say that when there is a good and effective teacher, there will be less complaints. And as long as there are no many complaints, the learning process will go smoothly. Again, having these personal characteristics can help a lot in developing learning process which leads to good and accepted results.

In an investigation which was done in Oman by Mahrooqi et al. (2015), teachers and students think the following: an effective English teacher is prepared for the class, speaks audibly and clearly, explains lessons clearly and confidently, has effective classroom management techniques, is enthusiastic about teaching, treats students fairly, has positive attitudes towards students, and can raise students' interest in English lessons. Good preparation is the key to success. It gives the teacher the confidence to master the knowledge, manage the class, instruct and guide his/ her students, to give them fair opportunities... etc.

To Miller (<u>1987</u>), the characteristics of an effective language teacher are: affective characteristics, classroom management skills, and academic knowledge. For Miller, a good and effective teacher should be highly knowledgeable of the course he/ she teaches and skilled in managing his/ her classroom.

Feldman (1976) and from college students' point of view about the characteristics and factors of a good and effective teacher he mentions some points. According to this, a good and effective teacher should: stimulate interest of the learners; be clear and understandable; be knowledgeable in subject matter; be prepared and organized for the course and be enthusiastic about the subject matter and teaching. Besides, Friendliness, helpfulness, and openness to others' opinions were preferred traits for students especially when they freely described their ideal or best teacher. A good and effective teacher should always be a cause of interest, desire and motivation. Students often want and wait for the best of their teachers. So, when a teacher obtains and gains these characteristics and factors, they will be eager to learn much from him/her.

In a research that was done and conducted for Vietnamese students by Nghia (2015), has explored the qualities of English teachers. The study showed that English competence, teaching methods, and socio-affective factors were among the most important qualities of English teacher. Worth mentioning, diversification the teaching methods makes a wonderful atmosphere and changes students mode in classroom. Of course, English language is a course which concerns with both a foreign language and culture. So that, delivering the materials needed some competencies. Thus, good English teachers have to be able to handle this complex nature of the subject matter, the teaching content, teaching approach and how a teacher personality affects the learning process (Lee, 2010). otherwise, negative effect on the learning process may take place.

According to (Dincer, Ali, Aysegul & Mine, 2013) there are four main competencies of an effective English language teacher, socioaffective skills, pedagogical knowledge, subject matter knowledge and personal qualities. Without these four competences, there will be a great defect which may lead to bad and unsatisfied outcomes. As for socio-affective skill, this includes teachers' ability to build and maintain good relationships with students. Also, they should always care for students' needs about English, motivate them in learning, build enthusiasm in teaching English. In other words, having good relationships and being closer to students is so demanded for the benefit of all. Regarding pedagogical knowledge, that related to how a good teacher guides his/her students with informational feedback, has the ability to organize and explain the course, uses various approaches in language teaching, integrating technology and managing an effective classroom. Students everywhere generally take their teachers as heroes and models to be followed. And this trust requires much knowledge as well as much efforts from teachers. Then, the subject matter knowledge covers teacher's competence among others in English, integrating lesson with students' backgrounds. Here, the impression which the students take about a teacher is too important. So, when they put in their minds that the teacher has the needed knowledge about the course he/ she teaches them, learning process will be easier. Finally, personal qualities of an English teacher concerns about teacher's sense of humor, enthusiasm and creativity, tolerance, patience, kindness, being optimism and positive about students and their ideas. A beloved teacher is demandable, especially when teaching a challenging language like English. So, a sense of humor, enthusiasm, tolerance and forgiveness, kindness and transgression and patience are all needed.

## Methodology

#### Instrument and Participants

Male and female English language teachers at Jazan University with very long years of experiences have participated in this questionnaire. The questionnaire was made and prepared to meet the questions of the study and to prove its validity and reliability.

#### Participants

A number of participants have completed the questionnaire, which was distributed online through academic mailing lists and social media. The questionnaire aimed "**Characteristics and Factors of a Good and Effective English Language Teacher.**" The participants included English Language Lecturers, Assistant and Associate professors from Jazan University. They have been working there for a very long time with much experiences. They were asked to answer according to the 5- point Likert scale as provided in the questionnaire. The majority of respondents about (95%) have agreed on giving Strongly Agree and Agree as responses.

#### **Tables Analysis**

Random samples of the responses are taken and analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Science Program (SPSS). After their responses being analyzed, the results of the data are shown as follows:

The majority of participants in the three tables- regarding the first and second columns (Strongly Agree and Agree) - have the same high responses. Thus, the three tables here are made and organized to lay light about them in specific.

# Table 1: A good and effective teacher affects students' performance and helps a lot in achieving good results and outcomes.

No	. Statement (short form)	Mean	Agree/Strongly Agree
1	Teacher's proficiency helps in achieving good results	4.82	96%
2	Regular assessment enhances students' level	4.75	94%
3	After-class tutoring leads to better outcomes	4.70	92%
4	Being up-to-date in tech and cultured is important	4.56	88%

As it shown here clearly in table 1, item 1 (Teachers' proficiency helps in achieving good results) has scored the highest average with a mean of 4.82. While item 4 (Being up-to-date in tech and cultured is important) was the lowest average in the table with a mean of 4.56.

#### Table 2: To determine special characteristics and factors that should be obtained by teachers to be good and effective.

No	. Statement (short form)	Mean	Agree/ Strongly Agree
5	Managing crowded classes effectively is a key factor	4.43	85%
6	Good teachers are fair, responsible, patient, and punctual	4.87	98%
7	Appearance and sense of humor are factors of a good teacher	4.18	76%
8	Teachers should use different methods of teaching	4.83	96%

As for table 2, the second item (Good teachers are fair, responsible, patient, and punctual) has scored the highest average with a mean of 4.87. Whereas, the third item (Appearance and sense of humor are factors of a good teacher) has scored the lowest average with a mean of 4.18.

# Table 3: To show that these characteristics include two aspects: a general (cognitive) aspect and a specific (personal) aspect.

No.	Statement (short form)	Mean	% Agree/Strongly Agree
9	Educational and pedagogical competence is essential	4.85	97%

No	Statement (short form)	Mean	% Agree/Strongly Agree
10	Moral and ethical character affects learning	4.80	95%
11	Flexibility and openness to criticism define a good teacher	4.72	93%
12	A good teacher maintains a positive classroom atmosphere	4.90	99%

Regarding table 3, the fourth item in the table (A good teacher maintains a positive classroom atmosphere) has scored the highest average and it has a mean of 4.90. The lowest average is scored by item 3 (Flexibility and openness to criticism define a good teacher) which has a mean of 4.72.

#### **Results and discussion**

The results of the study show that there are some characteristics and gualities that any good and effective teacher should have. According to (Markely, 2004) these characteristics and qualities have great influence on students learning outcomes and language proficiency levels. One of the most important qualities a good teacher should have is the mastery of the target language. If the teacher fully masters the target language, he/she will be able to deliver good lessons and improve his/her students' learning skills. Of course, beside being able to master the target language, other skills regarding personality are also needed. Personality skills such as: being confident, honest, flexible, social, funny and firm. The results also reveal that Qualified teachers adjust their teaching methods and styles to satisfy and meet the learners needs and preferences. This is a very effective technique for mixability classes. No single student feels left out or is being unfairly treated. Moreover, the results show that good teachers provide appropriate and timely feedback. Constructive feedback instils confidence in the students and helps them improve and grow. Giving the right and continuous feedback is the best standard to reveal whether students are progressing or no. The results also show that good teachers have full command of their classes. Classroom management- which is regarded as a characteristic that a good and effective teacher needs to obtain- is a crucial factor of successful learning environments. Classroom management includes: time management, choosing the best method of teaching, keeping the students awake and engaged and giving the suitable instructions. Moreover, the results reveal that good teachers are skilful and principled. (Pettis 1997) claims that a principled and knowledgeable teacher plays a great role in improving student language proficiency level which indeed leads to better results and outcomes. If there is no discipline, there is no learning. The skilful teacher knows best what to teach and how to teach it. He/ She knows better his/ her students' weaknesses and strengths. The results also reveal that rules and instructions are too important in learning process. Rules and instructions are put to be followed and applied. That can include some commitments such as: punctuality commitment, clothes commitment, timetables commitment, flexibility commitment and staying away from problems.

## Conclusion

No one can deny that teachers are the most important pillar in teaching and the learning process in general. Teachers are responsible for the implementations of all the policies and plans that take place inside the classroom. English teachers in particular, need to have special characteristics and qualities to be good and effective. Indeed, it is important for students to learn English properly. Learning English language helps students to communicate effectively in different situations and helps them to open doors for future. Besides, it helps them in their daily life communications.

The role of an English teacher goes beyond the transmission of knowledge and content. It involves the formation of characters, and building lifelong learning habits. This paper emphasizes that English teachers should be patient, responsible and punctual. Moreover, effective English teachers need to know how to deal with and manage crowded classes. Additionally, being flexible and accepting criticism is essential for developing and maintaining the characteristics of an effective English teacher.

Good teachers also create a suitable classroom environment that encourages questions, critical thinking, and mutual respect. They set high expectations while providing the necessary support to help students achieve them. In addition, a good teacher is reflective—regularly evaluating their techniques and searching feedback to improve their practice.

English teachers need to have effective organizational skills, classroom management techniques, and the ability to use technology meaningfully have become indispensable in the modern classroom. Ultimately, the most influential teachers are those who not only teach but also inspire students to believe in themselves and struggle for excellence and perfection.

As Stronge (2018) emphasizes, teaching is as much about relationships as it is about instructions. The characteristics and qualities of good and effective teachers are rooted in a balance between professional expertise and human connection. These characteristics and qualities form the foundation of trans-formative education that leaves a lasting impact on students' academic journeys and personal growth.

### Teachers' Questionnaire:

#### Dear colleagues,

You are kindly requested to spare some of your valuable time to respond to this questionnaire titled "Characteristics and Factors of a Good and Effective English Language Teacher". Indeed, your opinions and recommendations as experienced English teachers are needed to enhance the results of this research paper. So, kindly, take a few minutes to complete it. Five options are given in this questionnaire: strongly agree (SA), agree (A), neutral (N), disagree (DA and strongly disagree (SD).

Your participation is highly appreciated in advance.

Best regards.

- 1. Teacher's proficiency and mastery of the language helps in achieving good results.
- 2. Assessing students' work regularly enhances students' level.
- 3. Teaching after-class tutoring develops students and leads to better outcomes.
- 4. Being up-to-date in technology and highly cultured is needed for a good and effective teacher.
- 5. Managing crowded classes with different levels of students is a factor of a good and effective teacher.
- 6. A good and effective teacher should be fair, responsible, patient and punctual.
- 7. Having a good appearance and a sense of humor are factors of a good and effective teacher.
- 8. A good and effective teacher should always have different methods of teaching.
- 9. Teacher's educational and pedagogical competence is essential.
- 10. Teacher's moral and ethical character makes a difference in learning process.
- 11. Being flexible and open to criticism is a real sign of a good and effective teacher.
- 12. A good and effective teacher always maintains a good classroom's atmosphere.

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