
Characteristics of the professional profile of a modern pre-service English language teacher

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Annotation *This article analyzes the distinctive characteristics of the professional profile of a modern pre-service English language teacher. Based on current scientific sources and contemporary educational approaches, it is argued that 21st-century English language teachers must acquire competencies such as linguistic knowledge, research skills, intercultural awareness, and reflective practice. Furthermore, the professional profile of future teachers should encompass not only pedagogical knowledge but also personal qualities such as digital literacy, creativity, communication skills, and adaptability.*

Keywords *Pre-service English language teacher, English language teaching, professional competence, teacher training, pedagogical skills, digital literacy*

Особенности профессионального профиля современного будущего учителя английского языка

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Аннотация *В статье анализируются отличительные особенности профессионального профиля современного будущего учителя английского языка. Опираясь на актуальные научные источники и современные образовательные подходы, утверждается, что учителя английского языка XXI века должны обладать такими компетенциями, как лингвистические знания, исследовательские навыки, межкультурная осведомлённость и рефлексивная практика. Кроме того, профессиональный профиль будущих учителей должен включать не только педагогические знания, но и такие личные качества, как цифровая грамотность, креативность, коммуникативные навыки и адаптивность.*

Ключевые слова *Будущий учитель английского языка, преподавание английского языка, профессиональная компетентность, подготовка учителей, педагогические навыки, цифровая грамотность*

Zamonaviy bo'lajak ingliz tili o'qituvchisining profesiogrammasiga xos xususiyatlar

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Annotatsiya *Ushbu maqolada zamonaviy bo'lajak ingliz tili o'qituvchisi profesiogrammasiga xos xususiyatlar tahlil qilinadi. Amaldagi ilmiy manbalar va zamonaviy yondashuvlarga*

tayangan holda, 21-asr ingliz tili o'qituvchilari tilga oid bilimlar, tadqiqot olib borish ko'nikmalari, madaniyatlararo xabardorlik va reflektiv amaliyot kabi kompetensiyalarni egallashlari lozim. Shuningdek, bo'lajak o'qituvchilarning kasbiy profili nafaqat pedagogik bilimlar, balki raqamli savodxonlik, ijodkorlik, kommunikativ ko'nikmalar va moslashuvchanlik kabi shaxsiy fazilatlarini egallashlari lozim.

Kalit so'zlar *Bo'lajak ingliz tili o'qituvchisi, ingliz tilini o'qitish, kasbiy kompetensiya, o'qituvchilarni tayyorlash, pedagogik ko'nikmalar, raqamli savodxonlik*

Introduction

The profile of a modern English language teacher is no longer confined to linguistic expertise alone. Globalization, rapid technological advancement, and the dynamic needs of 21st-century learners have reshaped the expectations placed on educators, particularly those entering the profession. Today's English language teachers must operate within increasingly diverse classrooms, navigate intercultural communication challenges, and leverage digital tools to enhance language acquisition. As such, the role of the pre-service English teacher has evolved into that of a reflective practitioner, digital navigator, cultural mediator, and lifelong learner (Richards, 2011; Dudeney, Hockly & Pegrum, 2014).

In this evolving educational landscape, teacher education programs must prioritize the development of broad and interconnected competencies. These include not only strong subject knowledge and methodological expertise but also skills in educational research, adaptability, emotional intelligence, and intercultural sensitivity (European Commission, 2013; Freeman, 2016). Pre-service teachers are expected to respond to individual learner differences, foster inclusive learning environments, and critically engage with their own teaching practices through reflective inquiry.

Moreover, educational reforms and global standards increasingly emphasize

competencies such as digital literacy, collaboration, problem-solving, and creativity skills that are vital for teachers to thrive in contemporary classrooms. The integration of these competencies into teacher education curricula helps ensure that future educators are not only capable of teaching effectively but also of shaping education in response to changing societal and technological trends. This article explores the core characteristics that constitute the profile of a modern pre-service English language teacher, emphasizing the interplay between academic knowledge, pedagogical competence, personal traits, and broader social and digital literacies.

Core Characteristics of the Professional Profile of pre-service English Teacher

A pre-service teacher is an individual who is in the process of acquiring the foundational competencies required for a successful and sustainable teaching career. This stage involves more than just completing academic coursework – it is a formative period during which future educators are expected to actively and continuously develop their professional knowledge, practical skills, and reflective abilities. Through participation in university-based instruction, teaching practicums, and ongoing self-assessment, pre-service teachers begin to shape their professional identity and prepare for the realities of classroom life.

According to Kh. Al-Seghayer (2017), to be effective in the contemporary context of

English language teaching, a teacher must demonstrate a set of interrelated professional qualities. First, cognitive knowledge is essential, encompassing an understanding of how students learn languages, how to apply learning theories, and how to plan and implement instruction strategically. Second, content knowledge – deep familiarity with the structure, usage, and cultural nuances of the English language – is necessary for designing meaningful learning experiences and responding accurately to students' questions and errors. Third, high levels of English language proficiency allow teachers to serve as accurate and fluent models of communication, which is vital for building learner confidence and immersion. In addition to these academic and linguistic skills, a teacher's personal characteristics play a critical role; traits such as empathy, patience, creativity, and adaptability help foster a positive learning atmosphere and promote student engagement. Lastly, social and pedagogical competencies such as classroom management, teamwork, communication with stakeholders, and cultural awareness equip teachers to navigate the complex social dynamics of schools and to create inclusive, equitable learning environments. Together, these components form the cornerstone of a well-rounded professional profile, enabling pre-service teachers to transition effectively into their roles as capable, reflective, and responsive educators.

One of the most critical elements of a pre-service English teacher's professional profile is linguistic competence, which serves as the foundation for effective classroom communication and language instruction. Linguistic competence includes not only grammatical accuracy but also pragmatic awareness, discourse strategies, and phonological control. According to Richards and Farrell (2005), pre-service teachers must achieve a high level of proficiency in the target language to act as models for their students and to facilitate authentic communication in

the classroom. This competence must also be adaptable to the diverse linguistic levels of learners, requiring teachers to scaffold input appropriately and respond flexibly to student needs. Moreover, the growing emphasis on communicative language teaching and task-based learning makes it imperative for pre-service teachers to internalize the use of English as a real-life tool for interaction rather than as a system of rules. Consequently, their professional training must integrate ample opportunities for authentic language use, including speaking, writing, and listening in academic and practical contexts.

In addition to linguistic expertise, pedagogical competence forms a vital component of the pre-service teacher's professional profile. Pedagogical competence refers to the ability to design, implement, and evaluate instructional practices that promote meaningful and effective language learning. As Shulman (1987) emphasizes through the concept of pedagogical content knowledge, effective teachers must not only know the subject matter but also understand how to represent it in ways that are comprehensible and engaging for learners. This includes selecting appropriate materials, differentiating instruction based on student needs, and applying a range of teaching methods such as inductive grammar instruction, communicative activities, and formative assessment. Pre-service teachers are expected to learn how to establish clear learning objectives, sequence content logically, and assess learning outcomes critically. Furthermore, as education systems increasingly prioritize learner-centered approaches, teachers must also develop the capacity to foster student autonomy, inquiry, and collaboration within the classroom environment.

Equally important to pedagogical knowledge is the cultivation of reflective practice, which allows pre-service teachers to critically evaluate their own teaching and adapt accordingly. Reflective practitioners are those who continuously analyze their classroom

decisions, question their assumptions, and seek evidence-based improvements in their practice. Dewey (1933) argued that reflection is a hallmark of professional maturity, and this perspective has been echoed in the teacher education literature by scholars such as Schön (1983), who introduced the concept of the “reflective practitioner.” For pre-service English teachers, engaging in reflective writing, peer feedback, lesson observations, and teaching journals are all key tools for developing this competence. Reflection is not only a method of improving practice but also a way of building resilience, professional confidence, and ethical awareness. It helps teachers align their instructional choices with their values and goals, ensuring that their work remains responsive to each learner needs and evolving educational demands.

Another defining characteristic of a modern pre-service English teacher is intercultural competence, especially in light of the global nature of the English language. As English serves as a lingua franca across diverse sociolinguistic settings, pre-service teachers must be prepared to navigate and teach in multicultural and multilingual classrooms. Byram (1997) highlights that intercultural communicative competence involves more than knowledge of other cultures – it requires attitudes of openness, critical cultural awareness, and skills of interpreting and relating across cultural boundaries. For English teachers, this means embedding cultural content into language instruction, avoiding stereotypes, and facilitating respectful intercultural dialogue among students. Teacher education programs, therefore, must expose pre-service teachers to a wide range of global English, critical pedagogy, and cultural case studies, thereby preparing them to educate learners who may come from different linguistic, religious, ethnic, or national backgrounds.

In the context of digital transformation, digital literacy has emerged as a core element of the professional profile of a pre-service

English teacher. The integration of digital tools into language education is no longer optional; it is a necessity for effective teaching and learning in the 21st century. Digital literacy includes not only the ability to use educational technologies (e.g., learning management systems, digital storytelling tools, AI-assisted platforms) but also an understanding of how to select, adapt, and evaluate these tools to enhance learner engagement and outcomes (Blake, 2013). Moreover, as pre-service teachers begin their careers in a world shaped by blended, online, and hybrid learning environments, they must develop competencies in digital pedagogy, data-informed instruction, and cybersecurity awareness. Teacher training institutions should prioritize training in instructional design using technology, fostering not only technical skills but also ethical and critical perspectives on technology use in education.

Finally, the professional profile of a pre-service English teacher would be incomplete without acknowledging the significance of soft skills and personal attributes. These include communication skills, emotional intelligence, adaptability, time management, and the ability to collaborate with colleagues and parents. As Day (2004) notes, teaching is inherently relational and emotional work that requires strong interpersonal and intrapersonal awareness. Effective communication with diverse stakeholders, from learners and colleagues to administrators and families, is crucial for building trust and creating a positive school climate. Likewise, adaptability the capacity to respond constructively to unexpected classroom challenges, curriculum changes, or student needs is increasingly valued in teacher performance assessments. Soft skills are often developed through extracurricular activities, group projects, and mentoring relationships during teacher education, highlighting the importance of a holistic and experiential approach to teacher preparation.

Hence, these core characteristics such as linguistic proficiency, pedagogical knowledge, reflective practice, intercultural awareness, digital literacy, and soft skills form the backbone of a robust professional profile for the modern pre-service English teacher. Each of these areas reinforces and complements the others: pedagogical knowledge is enriched by reflective practice; digital literacy enhances language instruction; intercultural competence deepens learner engagement; and soft skills sustain all areas of professional interaction. As education continues to evolve in response to global, technological, and social changes, the demands on future English teachers will grow accordingly. Thus, it is imperative that teacher education programs take a comprehensive and forward-looking approach to developing these competencies, ensuring that pre-service teachers are not only well-prepared for their first classroom but are also positioned for long-term growth and leadership in the profession.

Beyond technical and pedagogical expertise, personal attributes are pivotal in shaping effective teachers. These qualities directly influence classroom dynamics, student motivation, and overall learning outcomes (Day, 2004). Several studies have highlighted the key traits future English language teachers should develop. According to J. Rice (2003), and further supported by the research of A. Wayne and P. Youngs, essential factors that define teacher quality include teaching experience, academic degrees, type of certification, coursework completed during teacher preparation programs, and standardized language proficiency test scores. These elements are foundational to ensuring both content mastery and teaching effectiveness. In addition, a comprehensive study conducted by scholars from the University of Memphis such as S. Thompson, J. Greer, and B. Greer identified twelve personal characteristics crucial for pre-service teachers:

1. **Fairness** – maintaining equal treatment of all students and ensuring transparency in assessment.

2. **Positive Attitude** – demonstrating belief in every student's potential and encouraging them with confidence.
3. **Preparedness** – thoroughly planning lessons and maintaining organization and structure.
4. **Personal Touch** – building meaningful relationships with students, calling them by name, and showing empathy.
5. **Sense of Humor** – fostering a friendly and enjoyable classroom atmosphere.
6. **Creativity** – designing innovative and memorable learning experiences.
7. **Willingness to Admit Mistakes** – modeling sincerity and humility by acknowledging one's own errors.
8. **Forgiveness** – allowing students to recover from mistakes and providing fresh starts.
9. **Respect** – honoring students' dignity and being attentive to their perspectives.
10. **High Expectations** – motivating students to reach their highest potential.
11. **Compassion** – showing kindness and responding sensitively to students' emotional needs.
12. **Sense of Belonging** – creating a classroom climate where students feel safe, valued, and included.

These characteristics form the core of a teacher's daily interactions and are foundational for creating an inclusive and supportive learning environment. The development of these qualities during pre-service training is vital, not only for student achievement but also for sustaining teacher well-being and resilience in diverse educational contexts.

Ultimately, the goal of cultivating professional and pedagogical qualities in pre-service teachers revolves around several key areas. Teacher education programs must prioritize holistic preparation that considers the subject matter, the nature of pedagogical activities, learners' developmental stages, and individual capabilities. Furthermore, it is essential that pre-service

teachers develop an awareness of the complexities, challenges, and responsibilities of the teaching profession. This includes fostering self-initiative and personal engagement in solving educational problems and adapting to dynamic classroom realities.

Conclusion

The professional profile of a modern pre-service English language teacher is complex, dynamic, and multidimensional. In addition to mastering linguistic and pedagogical knowledge, future teachers must develop

research capabilities, intercultural sensitivity, technological fluency, and personal resilience. These competencies are not isolated; rather, they interact and reinforce one another to form a coherent, responsive, and future-ready teacher identity. As the demands of English language teaching continue to evolve, teacher education programs must respond with innovative curricula that cultivate these essential attributes, ensuring that new teachers are well-prepared to educate, inspire, and lead in diverse educational settings.

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