

# STUDENT FOCUS

## VOICE MEMBER INSIGHTS

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Whether you are planning on working in a nursery, school, college or university, overseeing a large group of children or students may be a daunting thought. To help you to get a head start in your first year as an education professional, we surveyed Voice members to find out what advice they'd like to bestow on you, the next generation of educators.

**O**ur members expressed a lot of interesting points, such as interacting with colleagues and making sure to develop relationships to ensure that you're in a positive working environment.

### 'Colleagues can be an inestimable blessing'

'Remember that, important though it is, teaching is not the whole of your life and that what Denis Healey called a "hinterland" is of vital importance.

'Colleagues can be an inestimable blessing – do what you can to nurture good relationships with your colleagues.'

**Jon, teacher**

### 'Be happy and positive'

'Assessment is just as important as lesson planning and teaching (without it, Ofsted will fail the school, even if all kids are making amazing progress, because there is no evidence that progress is being made) so make sure that assessment is always part of what you do.

'Submit reports and assessment grades by the given deadline.

'Be happy and positive, even when you don't feel like it – negative attitudes rub off all too easily on your colleagues and students. By doing this you will become a well-rounded educator and find that your options for the future will open up tremendously.'

**Alistair, support staff**



### 'You do not need to follow the crowd to fit in – let them follow you'

'Be sure you enjoy being with children as it's a privilege and at times a difficult job. Have realistic expectations of children's individual stages of development.

'Know your own limitations and ask for support when you need it. Developing good reflective practice is key and self-reflection is vital.

'Know what good standards in practice are and demonstrate them. You do not need to follow the crowd to fit in – let them follow you.'

**Susan, early years practitioner**

Other members said that you should focus on maintaining a good work-life balance and ensure that, over time, you develop your own teaching style as well as an understanding of your learners and their individual needs.

### 'Know the individual needs of your learners'

'Be organised so that you don't need to take work home with you.

'Know the individual needs of your learners whilst maintaining a professional distance.

'Ask for help and don't try to do everything alone.

'[Remember] the importance of reviewing schemes of learning and not being afraid of changing things that do not work (just because someone has done the same thing for years does not mean that you have to).'

**Sharon, SENCo**

### 'Being a good teacher takes time'

'Ask lots of questions.

'Don't assume that everybody you observe is a good teacher.

'Decide your work time limits and then don't go over them. There will always be more work to do, however many hours you work.

'It is NOT OK to work all weekend.

'You can't be good at everything in the first year. Being a good teacher takes time.'

**Rebekah, teacher**

### 'Don't expect it to be easy'

'Education is a vocation and it takes a long time to really gain the underpinning skills and knowledge you need. Don't expect it to be easy or that you'll be perfect from the start.

'You will make mistakes – so long as you learn from these and don't "beat yourself up" over them, you'll become an excellent teacher.'

**Ann, support staff**

### 'Inspire the children'

'Inspire the children; show passion and don't be put off by paperwork, and be selective!

'If I wish I knew something before entering education, it would be how much I would enjoy it – 46 years in the job and still enjoying it!'

**Paul, lecturer**