



Developing your skills



Making a Great First Impression!

First impressions can be quite important. If you can achieve a good first impression, this will create a positive image in the minds of the new students you meet. These notes include some points about improving first impressions.

MAKING A GREAT FIRST IMPRESSION!

It takes just a quick glance, maybe three seconds, for someone to evaluate you when you meet for the first time. Making a great first impression is particularly important for adult learners returning to education, as they may be slightly concerned about what to expect. These first impression can be nearly impossible to reverse or undo, making those first encounters extremely important, for they set the tone for the all the relationship that follows.

Be on Time

The student you are meeting for the first time is not interested in your "good excuse" for running late. Plan to arrive a few minutes early. Arriving early is much better than arriving late and is the first step in creating a great first impression.

Be Yourself, Be at Ease

If you are feeling uncomfortable and on edge, this can make the student ill at ease and that's a sure way to create the wrong impression. If you are calm and confident, the student will feel more at ease, and you have a solid foundation for making that first impression a good one.

Present Yourself Appropriately

Of course physical appearance matters. The person you are meeting for the first time does not know you and your appearance is usually the first clue he or she has to go on.

But it certainly does not mean you need to look like a model to create a strong and positive first impression. The key to a good impression is to present yourself appropriately.

A Winning Smile!

There's nothing like a smile to create a good first impression. A warm and confident smile will put both you and the student at ease. So smiling is a winner when it comes to great first impressions. But don't go overboard with this - people who take this too far can seem insincere.

Be Open and Confident

When it comes to making the first impression, body language as well as appearance speaks much louder than words. Use your body language to project appropriate confidence and self-assurance. Stand tall, smile, make eye contact, greet with a firm handshake. All of this will help you project confidence and encourage both you and the student feel better at ease.

Small Talk Goes a Long Way

Conversations are based on verbal give and take. Take a few minutes to learn something about the student you're meeting for the first time. This can be a great way to start the conversation and to keep it flowing.

Be Positive

Your attitude shows through in everything you do. Project a positive attitude, even in the face of criticism or in the case of nervousness. Strive to learn from your meeting and to contribute appropriately, maintaining an upbeat manner and a smile.

Be Courteous and Attentive

It goes without saying that good manners and polite, attentive and courteous behaviour



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help make a good first impression. In fact, anything less can ruin the one chance you have at making that first impression. So be on your best behaviour!

Make people feel understood

Spend less time trying to make students understand what you want, and more time making them feel understood. In an ideal world people might make decisions, commitments, and judgments based on logic and sound reasoning. But in this world people act in response to their preferences, feelings, and social influences they're not even aware of. If students trust you and feel that you care about them, they are much more likely to cooperate with you.

Find common ground

Show students how their needs, values, and dreams can be delivered by your organisation. To do so, you have to understand their values and concerns. See things from their point of view. Be sympathetic with their feelings. Then show them how cooperating with you can help them achieve what they want.

Listen

Listening is the best way to make people feel understood and, at the same time, to find common ground. Ask open-ended questions, the kind that invite people's careful consideration and honesty. Try to understand what people mean, without getting hung up on the literal meaning of their words. And acknowledge their thoughts and feelings (which isn't the same thing as agreeing with them).

Don't argue

Arguments make people stake out positions and defend them. And the more you try to prove them wrong, the harder they will resist you. Students may feel overwhelmed and stop arguing with you. But that doesn't mean you've won them over. Most of the time, when you win an argument, you lose an ally.

Care about the student

If you are concerned about the students you're trying to win over, if you value their needs and dreams, they'll know it. And they'll reciprocate. They'll communicate more freely, speaking their mind more openly and listening more attentively. They'll give you the benefit of the doubt. And they'll want to cooperate.

Help students believe change is possible

Students often know, although they won't often admit, that they need to change. They feel a vague uneasiness, sensing that things didn't pan out the way they wanted. But they persist in doing what they've always done, thinking they're doing the best they can. Show them a better way, but more importantly, convince them that it's possible. Don't just give them a solution. Offer them hope.

FURTHER INFORMATION

- [Learn Direct](#)
- [Mind Tools](#)
- [Tools for Communication](#)
- [Conversation as communication](#)