



# Teacher Responsibility

## Accepting Responsibility

When you offer your services as a teacher, especially when you charge for those services, you must accept numerous responsibilities to your students. Some of those responsibilities include:

- to truth
- to share
- to challenge
- to offer alternatives
- to promote optimism
- to encourage success
- to treat all students equally

## Responsibility to Truth

We live now in a world where propaganda and fake news dominates. It can often be difficult to identify truth. That makes the responsibility to find truth and to speak truth important for everyone everywhere but especially important to teachers. As a teacher you have a special responsibility to sift through available information to find the truth even when it's well hidden. You must do what you can to use that truth to counter disinformation and misconceptions. When you see misinformation you cannot ignore it. You must instead use the truth to correct the misinformation. It isn't not enough to speak the truth. It's equally important to oppose the untruth.

We should each adopt the Principle of Ethical Responsibility.

***“If you fail to act against a wrong you share responsibility for the consequences of the wrong”.***

## Responsibility to Safety

### Plan

When you plan your class you should plan to provide a safe environment for your students. Consider all the dangers and risk factors. Be prepared for the worst. Have a plan for what you will do if there is an accident.

### Provide

Be prepared. Provide whatever first aid equipment might be needed if an accident happens.



# Teacher Responsibility

## Protect

You can't perfectly protect your students from all dangers but you can, and must, do what you can to protect them. As the teacher you have a responsibility to guard your class.

## Explain

Warn your students where needed. If there are any dangers to watch for you should carefully and clearly explain them

## Maintain Credibility

If you want your students to listen to your warnings you must be sure those warnings are legitimate. This returns to the Responsibility to Truth. Tell the truth. Do not exaggerate. Two examples of untrue but common safety warnings likely to cancel credibility are:

- You can get lead poisoning by handling lead.
- You cannot use an extension cord on a kiln.

## Liability

You also have a responsibility to protect yourself from liability issues. Having all students sign a liability release is a good start but you will be much better protected if you have a safety handout to give each student.

## Responsibility to Share

All human society was built on sharing knowledge. Each generation acquired new knowledge to add to what was provided to them by generations before them. A teacher's first responsibility is to share. To share knowledge. To add to that collection of knowledge. To share what they know and have learned from their experience.

*When we all share we all gain.*

## Knowledge

The responsibility to share knowledge applies especially to those expecting to be paid for teaching. If you present yourself as a teacher you should be prepared to share your knowledge. All of it. Not just part and not only a few selected bits. All of it. I've met instructors that openly admitted they only share some of their knowledge but keep some back. Is that acceptable? Should such people be teaching? I believe if you are unwilling to share your knowledge you should not be presenting yourself as a teacher.

*Knowledge shared is knowledge saved.*



# Teacher Responsibility

## Share Tests

Share test results. If you did experiments to test different variables and you teach the conclusions from those tests you should be willing to share the test process as well as the results.

## Responsibility to Provide

You have a responsibility to provide what you promised and to provide what students could reasonably expect will be provided.

### Classroom

Where you teach can be as important as how you teach. Be sure the classroom is suitable for your class, large enough to comfortably accommodate your class and has the equipment needed for the class.

### Tools

The instructor should supply everything needed. Unless it is for an advanced level class for students that already have their own tools, students should not be expected to buy tools to take a class.

### Materials

Any materials or supplies needed to complete the class should be provided by the instructor and included in class fees. A class is not a place to sell stuff.

### Fees

Class fees should be clearly stated in advance with no surprise extra costs during the class.

### Lessons

Your time should be spent teaching – not selling stuff and not reviewing your biography.

### Answers

If your class schedule doesn't allow enough time to answer questions, provide a handout or be available in some other way to answer them.

### Assist

You should be prepared to help any students with any difficulties they have.



# Teacher Responsibility

## Responsibility to Challenge

It's not enough to just provide instructions. A teacher has a responsibility to challenge and motivate their students.

### Challenge

Challenge your students by providing lessons in small steps with incrementally increasing difficulty.

### Motivate

It's not good enough to show students how to do something, you should motivate them to want to do it. Provide steady encouragement and be liberal with praise.

### Promote Optimism

Encourage students to believe they can succeed.

### Goals

Offer obtainable goals that students can realistically be expected to achieve.

### Deliver success

Structure your lessons to provide a series of small wins to help build confidence. Confidence creates competence.

### Teach failure acceptance

Teach your students that failure is an important part of learning.

## Responsibility to Fairness

Be fair to your students. Treat each equally. Try to give each student equal time and attention. You will always have favorites but try to avoid showing it.

### Create participation

Get everyone involved – especially any shy or reticent students that need extra encouragement.

### Accommodate student differences

Each individual learns in different ways. You should have enough different teaching techniques in your teaching tool box to help students that learn in unconventional ways. A good teacher has a big tool box.



## Problem Students

It is unfair to other students if you allow some students to disrupt the class and monopolize your time. You should have a plan in place to deal with problem students. Be patient. When you get frustrated or irritated, don't let it show.

## Responsibility to Improve

A teacher committed to helping their students improve but should also commit to improving their own personal skills, knowledge and ability. They should be educational leaders. Innovators. Explorers. Are you part of the pack or blazing the trail? What are you doing to improve?

## Classes

Do you take advanced level classes to upgrade yourself?

## Experiments

Do you do tests and experiments to push the boundaries and try new things?

## Reading

Do you routinely read articles and tutorial on the subjects you teach?

## Experience

Do you have 20 years experience or 2 years experience repeated 10 times?

## Responsibility to Teach

The most important responsibility a teacher has is the responsibility to teach. When they join your class your students expect you to teach them. You're there to provide instructions - not to be selling product, promoting services or retelling all your successes and achievements. You're there to teach. Focus on that.

## Alternatives

You have a responsibility to provide alternatives to everything

- **Different methods.** Wherever possible offer different ways to do things. Introduce your students to all the alternatives and not just your personal favorites.
- **Different tools.** Let students try out different tools. Let them choose their own favorites.
- **Different materials.** Demonstrate different materials. Not everyone has access to all the first choice of materials and might need to use something different.



# Teacher Responsibility

## Encourage feedback

Having your students provide a teacher evaluation has a double benefit.

- It gives students a chance to offer suggestions for improvement and to voice any concerns or displeasure.
- The teacher gets feedback on how well they are doing and ideas for improvement.

## Answer questions

Any teacher can answer a student's question. A good teacher will provide answers to questions the student didn't know they should ask. A great teacher will show students where to find answers to all their questions. That's called the "Socratic" approach to teaching.

## Jargon

Sometimes trade jargon is essential to be sure everyone understands what is being discussed but more often it's just mental sloth. If you need to use technical terms, you should be sure the people you're talking to understand the meaning of the terms you use.

## Information Overload

It's important when you're teaching to avoid pushing out more information than is need or wanted. If you overload with too much information your students you lose their attention. Provide only what is wanted and what is needed. The key term there is "needed". Avoid giving them more than they need or want.

## Meet the need

Beginners wanting to produce art with glass and wanting to understand how glass responds to heat do not need a PhD level explanation of glass chemistry and physics. They need only to understand why not all glass will fuse together and how different times and temperature produce different effects.