

## Narrative

What does it mean when an individual says they are a professional? Is it the description of one's career or is it the way one behaves? Students must understand what it means to be professional and what business and industry expects. Being professional is important regardless of one's chosen profession. Through this session you will learn techniques to teach professionalism to your students through the use of various ideas and activities that will be shared. The various aspects of professionalism (attire, image, attitude, etc.) will be discussed.

## pro · fes · sion · al · ism

1. the skill, good judgment, and polite behavior that is expected from a person who is trained to do a job well
2. the conduct, aims, or qualities that characterize or mark a profession or a professional person (*see professional*)

Source: [www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/](http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/)

## What are the various aspects of professionalism?

Professionalism means different things to various individuals. The topic of professionalism includes, but is not limited to the following areas:

- |                           |                       |  |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|--|
| ✓ Attendance              | ✓ Being productive    | ✓ Good communication skills (oral and written) |
| ✓ Appearance and grooming | ✓ Being a team player | ✓ Cooperative attitude                         |
| ✓ Positive attitude       | ✓ Being organized     | ✓ Honor your commitments                       |
| ✓ Honesty                 |                       |  |

## "I'm a professional" – What does this mean?

Being a professional has different meanings to different people. A few ideals people have in mind when they say they are "professional" are as follows:

- I am well-groomed and dress well
- I am competent at the tasks that I perform
- I have a specialized knowledge
- I am accountable
- I monitor my own self improvement

## What do others say about professionalism?

*"The professional has learned that success, like happiness, comes as a by-product of work. The professional concentrates on the work and allows rewards to come or not come, whatever they like."*

-Steven Pressfield, Author, *The War of Art: Break Through the Blocks & Win Your Inner Creative Battles*

“Being a professional is doing the things you love to do, on the days you don’t feel like doing them.”  
-Julius Irving, NBA Champion

“Today I shall behave as if this is the day I will be remembered.”  
- Dr. Seuss, Famous American children’s books author

## National Standards for Business Education

Business educators understand the importance of teaching professionalism. This topic is included in detail as a part of the *National Standards for Business Education*. The competencies listed below should be covered when teaching professionalism as indicated in the national standards.

**Content Area:** Communication

### Section II - Interpersonal Skills

**Achievement Standard:** Apply interpersonal skills in personal and professional environments to communicate effectively.

#### A. Professionalism and Business Etiquette

##### Level 1 Performance Expectations

- List characteristics inherent in a positive attitude
- Differentiate between positive and negative communication styles
- Demonstrate positive nonverbal communication
- Use courtesy and tact when communicating with others
- Demonstrate appropriate etiquette and manners in specific situations
- Discuss personal hygiene and grooming
- Develop sensitivity to and awareness of diversity
- Demonstrate respect for authority
- Respect the rights and feelings of others
- Work cooperatively with peers and authority figures

## Lesson Plans

Lesson plans can address any key area of professionalism:

- |             |                 |                   |
|-------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| ✓ Ethics    | ✓ Communication | ✓ Time Management |
| ✓ Integrity | ✓ Appearance    | ✓ Much, much more |

- **Professionalism in the Workplace (Telecommunications & Networking)**. Texas Education Agency.

<http://goo.gl/gTfljY> (PDF)

- **Professionalism in the Workplace (Communications)**. Texas Education Agency.

<http://goo.gl/CWnXIY> (PDF)

- **Appearance Lesson Plan (Volume 2. Module 4)**. Georgia Department of Technical and Adult Education.

<http://goo.gl/laQJH9> (Direct link to a Doc file)

## Video resources

There is a wide variety of videos available on the Internet that cover the topic of professionalism. When searching for videos on YouTube, you may some search terms to being with include:

- professionalism
- professionalism in the workplace
- professionalism in the workplace funny
- work ethics

## Other Lesson Ideas

- Guest speakers from human resource profession
  - Invite professionals from business and industry to speak to your classes
  - Discuss your initiatives and key topics with such guest speakers prior to their presentation
- Classroom “Business Enterprise”
  - Turn your classroom into a simulate business with the teacher as the supervisor and the students who are employees who receive “evaluations from human resource personnel”
- Professionalism Infographics
  - Have students use and create infographics centered around professionalism topics

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### Sources

National Business Education Association. *National Standards for Business Education* (4th ed.). Reston, VA

Silverthorn, Michelle. (2016). *Stop Complaining About Millennials*. Retrieved on 2/23/2016 from [www.2civility.org/stop-complaining-about-millennials/](http://www.2civility.org/stop-complaining-about-millennials/)

United States Department of Labor

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