

# In Search of Effective English Teachers: A Study on Student Teachers' Perceptions<sup>1</sup>

Lia Haryana<sup>2</sup>, Universitas Bengkulu, Kandang Limun, Bengkulu, Indonesia

Utami Widiati<sup>3</sup>, Universitas Negeri Malang, Malang, East Java, Indonesia

## Abstract

Prompted by limited investigations on perceptions about effective English teachers from Teacher Professional Education Program (TPEP) students, this study aims to elicit information regarding the most important characteristics of an effective English teacher. A total of forty TPEP students majoring in English Language Teaching (ELT) at a university in Sumatra Island, a province of Indonesia, were recruited. Data were collected by using a questionnaire adapted from Park and Lee (2006), Ramazani (2014), and Kwangsawad (2017) and then analyzed descriptively. The results showed that, in terms of pedagogical knowledge, the TPEP students perceived monitoring students' understanding during instruction and preparing the lesson well as the most important characteristics. Regarding subject-matter competence, the respondents considered mastering the teaching materials and knowing about the core and basic competences stated in the national curriculum as essential abilities that effective English teachers should have. Discussing teacher-student relationships, the most important characteristics were treating the students fairly, not discriminating against them, and encouraging them to develop self-confidence. In terms of personal qualities, the most important characteristics were being confident and having an interest in their job. The findings indicate that TPEP students have a sufficient understanding of characteristics that make English teachers effective.

## Resumen

Ante la escasez de investigaciones sobre las percepciones de los estudiantes del Programa de Formación Docente (PFD) acerca de la eficacia de los profesores de inglés, este estudio busca obtener información sobre las características más importantes de un profesor de inglés eficaz. Se reclutó a cuarenta estudiantes del PFD con especialización en Enseñanza del Idioma Inglés (ELT) en una universidad de la isla de Sumatra, provincia de Indonesia. Los datos se recopilaron mediante un cuestionario adaptado de Park y Lee (2006), Ramazani (2014) y Kwangsawad (2017), y posteriormente se analizaron de forma descriptiva. Los resultados mostraron que, en cuanto al conocimiento pedagógico, los estudiantes del PFD consideraron como características más importantes el seguimiento de la comprensión de los alumnos durante la instrucción y la buena preparación de la lección. Respecto a la competencia en la materia, los participantes consideraron el dominio de los materiales didácticos y el conocimiento de las competencias básicas y fundamentales establecidas en el currículo nacional como habilidades esenciales para un profesor de inglés eficaz. En cuanto a la relación profesor-alumno, las características más importantes fueron el trato justo a los alumnos, la no discriminación y el fomento de la autoconfianza. En cuanto a cualidades personales, las características más importantes fueron la confianza en sí mismos y el interés por su trabajo. Los resultados indican que los estudiantes del programa TPEP comprenden suficientemente las características que hacen que los profesores de inglés sean eficaces.

## Introduction

Effective teaching, which significantly contributes to students' learning, requires knowledgeable, skillful, and competent teachers. English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers should increase their efforts to facilitate English learning, particularly in countries such as Indonesia. In such a context, English is considered to be a subject and is taught only in the classroom. Indeed, most students do not often study English outside of class. According to Abd Hamid & Ayub (2004) there are only a small number of students who will study English on their own, especially in rural areas. Some studies suggest that Indonesian students in general tend to be more extrinsically rather than intrinsically motivated (Bidin et al., 2009; Zubairi & Sarudin, 2009). In this context, EFL teachers must enhance their competence to become optimally effective.

The actions of ineffective teachers have a negative impact on the work of others and have the potential to harm the reputation of the school as an institution (Jones et al., 2006). Ineffective teachers waste their students' time; they do not know much about the subjects or the way to teach the subjects well. They tend to bore their students and usually create mundane classes (Kramer & Pier, 2009). Besides that, they also cannot give them good feedback (Kodero et al., 2011). Effective teachers, on the other hand, are able to figure out what to teach and how to teach it so that their students can understand and use the new information and skills they learn (Darling-Hammond & Bransford., 2005). Effective teachers use a variety of methods to teach the subject and to help their students learn well. They are energetic and enthusiastic

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<sup>2</sup> [lia.haryana@unib.ac.id](mailto:lia.haryana@unib.ac.id), Correspondent

<sup>3</sup> [utami.widiati.fs@um.ac.id](mailto:utami.widiati.fs@um.ac.id), Correspondent

about teaching. They play fundamental roles in managing the teaching and learning process, attracting students' attention by creating enjoyable activities in the classroom, and transforming students' learning.

Given the significance of teacher roles in the teaching and learning process, teachers must possess specific competences which cover a set of skills, abilities, and knowledge. Competences are much broader than skills. Competences can be defined as the knowledge and behaviors that lead someone to be successful in a certain job (McClelland, 1998); they might include such abilities as analytical thinking, problem-solving, and negotiating. Conversely, skills are specific to tasks and specific learned abilities that someone requires to acquire a job successfully, for example, foreign language proficiency, coding, and computer programming. English language teachers must possess certain competences that distinguish them from ineffective teachers (Dincer et al., 2013).

### **Review of the Literature**

The competences of effective EFL teachers have been the subject of several studies done in many parts of the world. In Iran, for instance, Dincer et al. (2013) identified four criteria of effective English language teachers: socio-affective abilities, pedagogical expertise, subject-matter knowledge, and personality characteristics. Dincer et al.'s findings showed that English language teachers should have a balanced combination of these four criteria to achieve successful language teaching. Ramazani (2014) examined the alignments in teachers' and students' beliefs about and the characteristics of an effective English teacher in the Iranian environment. The data indicated that there were wide gaps between teachers and students' beliefs about what makes an effective English teacher. English proficiency was seen as most important by teachers, whereas students viewed pedagogical knowledge as a critical quality of an effective teacher. The students viewed pedagogical knowledge as important since they wanted their teachers to effectively transmit their subject-matter knowledge.

In terms of pedagogical knowledge, Ramazani (2014) showed that the traits described by high-achieving students and low-achieving students were significantly different. Low achievers considered incorporating students' learning styles as one of the most important aspects of pedagogical knowledge, whereas high-achieving students thought preparing the lesson well was the most important aspect. However, teachers thought preparing lessons well and providing interesting materials were the most important characteristics of effective teachers. In terms of socio-affective skills, arousing students' motivation was the most significant factor for teachers, while listening to students' opinions was the most significant factor for students. Based on the explanation made above, there were three areas of characteristics of effective teachers that are examined in Ramazani's (2014) study: English competence, pedagogical expertise, and socio-affective skills. It may be argued that Ramazani's findings are in line with those of Dincer et al. (2013). However, teachers and students had different points of view based on the results of Ramazani's study. This difference may have occurred because teachers and students had different experiences related to the teaching and learning process. For example, the teachers may have experienced the teaching process directly; they may have observed their colleagues' classes, or sometimes they might have taught in teams. Teachers often collaborate in the teaching and learning process. In contrast, the students just observed and experienced how their teachers taught in their classrooms; the students got input only from the teachers. The differences between students' and teachers' experiences may cause a variation in their perceptions about effective English teaching.

Other studies conducted by Park and Lee (2006) and Wichadee (2010) in the Korean context identified the following teaching characteristics: English proficiency, educational understanding, socio-affective knowledge, and organizational and communication abilities. English proficiency relates to the teacher's knowledge of English, for instance linguistic proficiency. Educational understanding means the teacher needs to know about learning theories and teaching practices, whereas socio-affective knowledge is relevant to the relationship of teachers and students including motivating students, sparing time for students who need help, being enthusiastic for teaching, and having positive attitudes toward students. Organizational and communication abilities pertain to well organized communication.

Similar conclusions were reached by Dincer et al. (2013) and Ramazani (2014) in their studies of the Iranian setting. They both demonstrated the significance of socio-affective skills, pedagogical expertise, and subject-matter knowledge in the teaching profession. One feature that contrasts in these two EFL research contexts, the Iranian context by Dincer et al. (2013) and Ramazani Lee (2006) and the Korean context by Park and Lee (2006) and Wichadee (2010) is that personality characteristics are more important in the Iranian setting, while organization and communication abilities are more important in the Korean context. In the Iranian context, Dincer et al. (2013) highlighted that teachers are supposed to have some essential

personal characteristics to teach effectively and to be successful in their profession. In the Korean, as Park and Lee (2006) found, students defined effective teachers as those with good preparation and effective communication. These students seemed to believe that teachers who were well-prepared for class and who used both verbal and non-verbal communication strategies could help them understand the lesson more easily. This is confirmed by Priadi's study (2020) suggesting that in interactive communications between teachers and students, teachers function not only as a communicator, but also as a motivator to increase students' interest in the subject matter. Another study was conducted in Thailand by Kwangsawad (2017), who gathered data on how school stakeholders including students, EFL pre-service teachers, and school administrators, perceived the characteristics of effective EFL teachers in their respective schools. It was discovered through student responses that effective EFL teachers possessed these characteristics: mastering the four English skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing), grammar and vocabulary; showing a positive teacher-student relationship; and having the character qualities of kindness, friendliness, seriousness, a sense of humor, and liveliness. According to the EFL pre-service teachers, the top three categories of successful EFL teachers' qualities were identified as: having professional attributes of EFL instructors, mastering pedagogical approaches of EFL teachers, and reflecting characteristics of effective EFL teachers. For school administrators, the three most important categories of effective teachers included professional traits, interpersonal abilities, and instructional approaches. In short, the research results imply the significance of EFL teachers' professional attributes and EFL teachers' pedagogical approaches as also expected by the students, EFL pre-service teachers, and the school administrators in the study.

According to the findings of previous research done in Iran, South Korea, and Thailand, successful teacher characteristics should be introduced into the curriculum of pre-service teacher education in order to familiarize the pre-service teachers with these critical characteristics as early as possible and better prepare them (e.g., Hismanoglu, 2019; Kwangsawad, 2017). For the Indonesian context, besides those critical characteristics, the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture (2013) also requires that four specific areas be added in pre-service teacher education programs: additional courses, field experience, opportunities for experimentation and ideas for professional development. First, additional courses should be incorporated to ensure that pre-service teachers master the four language skills and language components such as linguistics, sociolinguistics, and discourse analysis. Second, enhancing field experience should be done to improve pre-service teachers' interpersonal skills and adaptability skills in the workplace. Third, pre-service teachers should have opportunities to experiment with various innovative strategies, connect their teaching to their students' understanding, and participate in class meetings and discussions to reflect on their changing beliefs and practices about teaching and learning. Last, pre-service teachers should have opportunities for professional development to keep up with the current issues in educational theories and successful teaching practices. In a related situation, Park and Lee (2006) proposed that college courses for prospective/pre-service teachers focus more on second language acquisition theories, teaching methods, and assessment rather than on linguistics and English literature. The rationale is straightforward: the purpose of pre-service teacher education is not to develop experts in theoretical linguistics and literary criticism, but to develop TEFL professionals.

Much previous research has focused on investigating the perceptions of university students, EFL teachers, EFL pre-service teachers, and school administrators. However, the perceptions of students of *Pendidikan Profesi Guru* (Teacher Professional Education Program – TPEP) have not been adequately explored. The TPEP program is still new in the Indonesian context (Hayati et al., 2018). After four years of undergraduate study in the teacher education program, pre-service teachers join the TPEP Program, a one-year program to be certified teachers (Widiati & Hayati, 2015). The Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture (2013) defines the TPEP program as an educational program designed to prepare graduates of any bachelor's degree program, teaching- or non-teaching-related, to become teachers with the necessary teaching competences legitimized through the Ministry-issued teaching certificate upon completing the program.

Student teachers in the TPEP program were chosen as the subjects of this study for four reasons: First, TPEP students are trained to be professional teachers in Indonesia. They use collaborative work and reflective practice to learn in and from classroom environment (Pyhältö et al., 2015; Soini et al., 2016). Second, TPEP students complete many teaching practica. In the process of a teaching practicum, they often receive many suggestions from senior teachers who guide/help them in the teaching practicum period. Third, TPEP students are also provided with many learning materials related to the teaching and learning process. Finally, they are trained by senior lecturers and teacher trainers, so they get deep knowledge from trusted resources. Based on these reasons, some reflections from TPEP students can be used as a guidance

in designing the TPEP program curriculum. As such, the purpose of this study is to ascertain TPEP students' perceptions of effective English teachers. The research addresses the following two research questions:

1. What effective EFL teachers' characteristics do TPEP students consider most important?
2. What are the essential competences that EFL teachers should master according to TPEP students?

## **Materials and Methods**

### ***Design***

This study employed a survey design to capture answers from the research questions. According to Brown (2001), language surveys are any research that uses oral interviews or written questionnaires to elicit data about the characteristics and perspectives of informants about the nature of language or language learning. In addition, according to Dörnyei (2003), surveys provide very efficient means for researchers to gather a good deal of information in a short time with little cost. As such, surveys are a particularly effective way to discover more about the participants' background, habits, and preferences, information which the researchers can then use in curriculum development. Additionally, Latief (2012) notes that survey research is often used to characterize the views, behaviors, interests, and perspectives of respondents who are relevant to the study. These characteristics of a survey design are aligned with the purposes of finding answers to the two research questions.

### ***Participants***

Forty TPEP students from a state university on Sumatra Island, Indonesia, enrolled in the academic years 2017/2018 and 2018/2019 were involved. The participants were selected based on their accessibility and ease of availability (Given, 2008). In other words, individuals who were the most ready, willing, and able to participate in the study were the ones who were selected to participate. More specifically, the participants consisted of 29 females and 11 males, with an age range of 23-24 years. Before collecting data from the participants, the researchers asked for permission from the head of the TPEP program to involve the TPEP students in this research. After getting approval from the head of the TPEP program, the researchers sent information about the research objective to the participants and asked for their agreement to participate in this study.

### ***Data collection procedure***

The main instrument was a questionnaire adapted from Park and Lee (2006) and Kwangsawad (2017). There were 40 items covering the four attributes of effective teachers, ten items for each attribute: pedagogical competence, professional competence or English proficiency, social competence or socio-affective knowledge, and personal competence. Three open-ended questionnaire items were also added to elicit additional relevant information from the participants. To ensure the validity of the questionnaire, an ELT expert who had long been involved in English pre-service teacher education at a state university on Jawa Island, Indonesia validated the instrument. The validator was asked to check whether the questionnaire could describe the topic, whether the questionnaire fit with the variables, whether the questionnaire was framed in a clear and straightforward order to avoid misunderstanding among the respondents, and finally, whether the questionnaire has an adequate number of items. Based on the validator's feedback, the instrument was revised to create the final version. The revised questionnaire (see Appendix 1) was then distributed online to the research subjects via *Google Forms*. Step-by-step instructions were provided to enable the subjects to respond to the questionnaire using a four-point Likert scale ranging from 1 to 4, with 1 meaning "Not very important," 2 meaning "Slightly important," 3 meaning "Important," and 4 meaning "Very important." The validated questionnaire was distributed to 47 accessible TPEP students; however, only 40 TPEP students completed the questionnaire.

### ***Data analysis***

Participant responses to the questionnaire were summarized and then analyzed descriptively, including the measurement of central tendencies (Dörnyei, 2003). After the participants completed the online questionnaire and the data from the questionnaire were collected, mean scores were calculated. After getting the mean scores, categorization was made based on the level of quality of effectiveness as presented in Table 1.

Mean Score Range	Category
1 - 1.75	Very Low
1.76 - 2.5	Low
2.6 - 3.35	High
3.36 - 4	Very High

Table 1: Categories of mean score

## Results and Discussion

### ***The characteristics of effective EFL teachers ranked high by the TPEP students***

This research was based on two research questions. The first research question relates to the characteristics of effective teachers seen as most important by TPEP students. The participants' responses are presented in Table 2. The data for all the 40 items can be seen in Appendix 2.

No	Highly ranked characteristics	No.	SUM	Mean
1.	Mastering the teaching materials	40	153	3.82
2.	Developing strong English reading skills	40	153	3.82
3.	Monitoring students' understanding during instruction	40	152	3.80
4.	Preparing the lesson well	40	152	3.80
5.	Treating students fairly and not discriminating between them	40	152	3.80
6.	Knowing about <i>Kompetensi Inti, KI</i> (Core Competences) & <i>Kompetensi Dasar, KD</i> (Basic Competences)	40	151	3.77
7.	Having good pronunciation skills	40	151	3.77
8.	Providing activities that interest students in learning English	40	150	3.75
9.	Being confident	40	150	3.75
10.	Having an interest in his/her job and feeling responsible for teaching	40	150	3.75
11.	Creating lesson plans that align with the goals of the basic education curriculum	40	149	3.72
12.	Having a loud and clear voice	40	148	3.70
13.	Providing appropriate feedback to students	40	146	3.65
14.	Encouraging students to cultivate self-confidence	40	145	3.62

Table 2: TPEP students' perceptions of the effective teachers' characteristics

Table 2 shows that there were fourteen characteristics of effective teachers which received high mean importance scores from the TPEP students. The highest mean score was 3.82 which was found for two characteristics: mastering the teaching materials and developing strong English reading skills. The lowest mean score was 3.62 for the ability to offer students encouragement in cultivating self-confidence.

Besides close-ended questions in the survey, three open-ended questions were also provided to explore the TPEP students' thoughts about important characteristics of effective teachers in ELT classes. Responses to these questions revealed ten common characteristics respondents believed effective teachers should possess and which were not included with the previous characteristics based on the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture (2013).

- A sense of humor
- Intelligence
- Discipline
- Positive thinking
- Emotional support
- Learning as a lifelong commitment
- Communication skills
- Open-mindedness
- Physical and mental soundness
- Role modeling for students

The ten common characteristics reflect patterns of high occurrences as mentioned by the TPEP students. However, when the responses were observed further, five characteristics of effective teachers were described in a relatively detailed and in-depth way, two of which were beyond the ten common characteristics; they were being creative and having confidence. The following excerpts show some of the respondents' views related to the additional characteristics of effective teachers as identified in this study.

Having a good sense of humor

Excerpt 1:

*In order to gain students' attention, an excellent English teacher must be humorist. (P2)*

Such a response implies that the respondents felt that having a good sense of humor was one of the characteristics that a teacher ought to have. Perhaps this is because through humor teachers can attract the students' attention and create a comfortable classroom environment. Good teachers may try to make the learning process enjoyable using humor to break the ice in difficult situations that means bringing a sense of humor into the classroom and laughing together with the class. Therefore, the students probably feel less anxious in their classroom.

According to Azizinezhad and Hashemi (2011), humor helps to keep students interested and motivated. When used in language courses, humor and amusement may assist students who are less social to engage with groups and to experience the class as a member of the social circle as well as to participate in other school activities without being humiliated or insecure. According to Provine (2001), embracing humor to engage students who are scared or anxious about trying to express themselves in foreign language class activities appears as an excellent method to get them interested in the activities. Having a sense of humor can also increase motivation and learning (Aylor & Oppliger, 2003; Frymier & Weser, 2001). The teachers who have a sense of humor can encourage students to be more motivated in learning.

Additionally, the sense of humor serves the students as a coping technique. Individuals who are able to see the humorous side of issues are better at dealing with stress (Booth-Butterfield et al., 2010; Miczo, 2004; Nezelek & Derks, 2001; Wanzer et al., 2005). For instance, Booth-Butterfield et al. (2010) found that the higher the general predisposition to communicate humor, the stronger the sense that students can cope with stressful circumstances. So, it can be said that when the teachers have a sense of humor, they help the students cope with stressful situations.

To sum up, humor seems to serve a variety of functions such as attracting students' attention, breaking the ice under challenging situations, increasing motivation, and helping individuals cope with stress.

Being disciplined

Another characteristic is being disciplined. Most respondents perceived discipline as one of the characteristics of effective teachers.

Excerpt 2:

*Discipline is the most important thing the teacher must-have. It is the key for the teacher to teach their students to care more about their friends and the environment. So that the students could be people who always do something on the right track and time. If the teacher is disciplined, it will produce students with good habits. (P5)*

Disciplined teachers are usually responsible for every action that they do. For example, they finish activities that they have started. Respondents in this study believed that disciplined teachers could help students to become more responsible and better students (Johnson & Riley, 2016).

Being creative

The respondents also expressed that effective teachers should be creative. Through creativity, teachers can more easily overcome problems in the teaching and learning process. For example, creative teachers can easily decide what they should do when some instructional strategies have been used in a different context or they can adapt to new teaching and learning environments.

Excerpt 3:

*The teacher should have good creativity in teaching English because it will make students feel enthusiastic in the teaching and learning process. By giving students more different activities, then they will not feel bored. (P10)*

Such responses appear to be consistent with previous research by Gao and Qian (2025), indicating that creative teachers are often associated with imaginative, flexible, and innovative instructional practices that support student engagement and learning. Being creative means trying new activities, for instance, changing traditional activities to be more modern, like using some applications available on a computer or mobile phone to support the teaching and learning process. Besides, the teachers should also try to change monotonous activities to be more varied so that students do not get bored quickly. Creativity is an important aspect for the success of EFL students. The importance of creativity as a characteristic of effective teachers

is in line with the idea of Lightbown and Spada (2006), who stated that language is a sign of creativity. Therefore, foreign language acquisition can be achieved by having a conducive learning environment and creative teaching and learning process. Additionally, creativity is related to human psychological elements such as motivation. The importance of creativity in motivating students to learn is stated in Robinson (1999), which mentions that to enhance EFL learners' acquisition of language abilities in the classroom, their teachers should teach creatively to motivate them to engage in the learning process.

Cremin (2015) describes the opportunity for creativity in English teachers as active engagement, freedom of choice and the use of knowledge and skills to reflect on the learning experience. The foreign language classroom has been described as "a nest of creativity" where learners can have a joyful and rewarding experience through engaging, creative activities that motivate them to take risks in using the new language (Piasecka, 2017).

#### Having sense of lifelong learning

Lifelong learning was chosen as another characteristic of effective teachers.

Excerpt 4:

*Be a life-long learner. An effective teacher must learn anything related to their academic field or even learn anything more than just expertise in their field. (P14)*

Having a sense of lifelong learning refers to the teachers' desire and commitment to continue learning throughout their life. This leads them to be willing to accept suggestions or comments from others. The importance of lifelong learning as a characteristic of effective teachers is supported by Woonsun (2013), who stated that lifelong learning positively affects self-fulfillment and upgrades teaching skills. Lifelong learning for teachers has been coined, and attempts have been made to provide for teachers' ongoing personal and professional development throughout their careers (Sugrue & Thuama, 1997). Teachers are responsible for equipping the students with skills to help them be lifelong learners, for example, by doing the following activities. First, the teachers should teach the students to be active investigators, which means the students need to initiate questions or hypotheses about a particular topic, or to use a variety of methods to locate, collect, sort, and record information. Second, as also suggested by Angwaomaodoko (2024), the teachers should help the students be critical thinkers and train them to use variety of strategies to analyze and synthesize information. Third, the teachers should train the students to be effective communicators, so they can demonstrate and express their feelings, thoughts, and ideas concerning a topic (Dias-Oliveira et al., 2024). These three activities can best be developed to help students become lifelong learners.

#### Having confidence

Having confidence is another important characteristic of effective teachers.

Excerpt 5:

*The main characteristic is confidence. The English teacher can speak English confidently when teaching the students. So it can motivate the students to speak English. (P15)*

The teachers should be able to explain themes confidently to the students. This can be important since teachers are considered to be role models for the students. They are hoped to help students master both the cognitive and affective aspects in language learning. Based on the respondents' answers, it can be concluded that the students have previous knowledge about the concept of an effective teacher. This result is in line with the regulation of the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture (2013), in which there is a statement that PPG students (TPEP students) are those who have talents and passion for becoming effective teachers and have mastered the teacher competences.

#### ***The most essential teacher competences perceived by the TPEP students***

The second research question deals with the teachers' competences that should be mastered first by English teachers. These characteristics were categorized into four teacher's competences based on regulation Number 16 taken from the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture (2013): pedagogical competence, social competence, professional competence, and personal competence. Detailed information of these four teachers' competences can be seen in Figure 1.

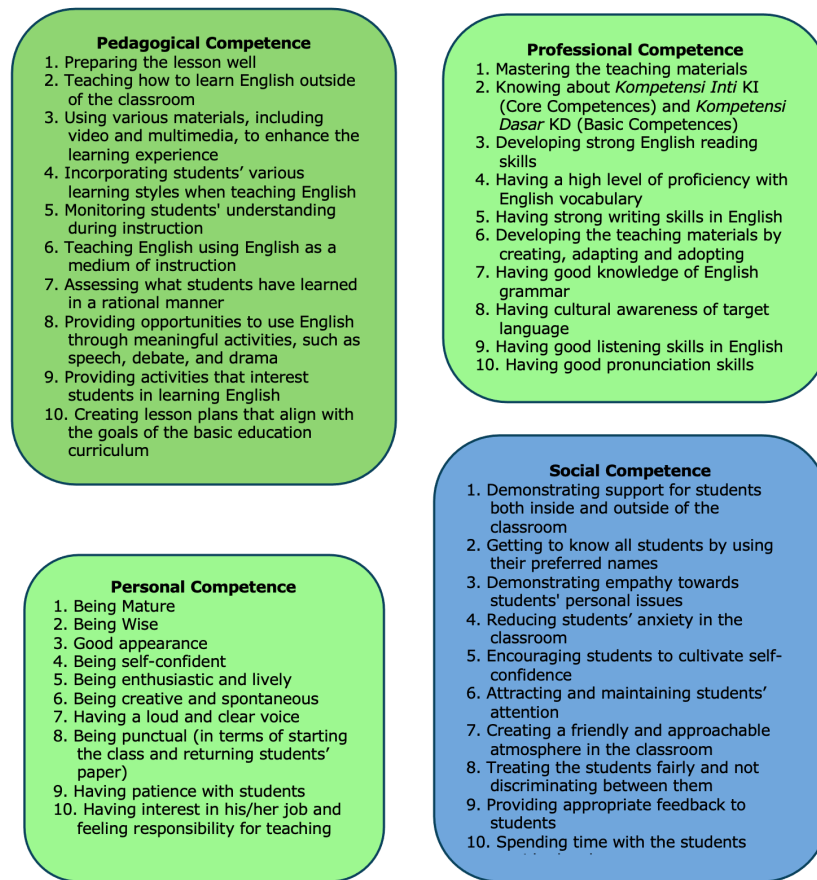


Figure 1: The four teaching competences, as categorized by the Ministry of Education and Culture (2013).

As discussed at the beginning of this paper, three previous studies, Park and Lee (2006), Wichadee (2010), and Ramazani (2014), presented three categories of effective teachers: subject matter knowledge or English proficiency, pedagogical knowledge, and socio-affective competence. The 14 characteristics of effective teachers found in the current study are in line with the findings of those three previous studies. The previous researchers examined the characteristics of effective teachers from the view of teachers and students. However, the current study examined the views of TPEP students. A summary of results from those previous studies can be seen in Table 3.

The Three Categories	Definition	Examples
Subject Matter Knowledge/ English Proficiency	What language teachers know about their academic field (knowledge of English), such as understanding the four language skills and language components and also a variety of sources of language knowledge which focus on English as the object of studies.	Linguistics, Second Language Acquisition, Sociolinguistics, and Discourse Analysis.
Pedagogical Knowledge	Language teachers' knowledge of how to teach their students, what approaches, or method to be used during the teaching and learning process in order to attract students' attention so that they will be active learners. Moreover, teachers are supposed to deliver the content to learners in the most appropriate, effective, organized, and tailored way (Park & Oliver, 20087).	Prepare the lesson well, use various materials including video, audio, and multimedia, maintain good classroom atmosphere.

Socio-Affective Competence	An ability to interact with their students in communicative and effective ways. Such competence includes maintaining a positive relationship with students, being helpful to students in and outside the classroom, developing students' self-confidence in learning English, and reducing students' anxiety in English class; teachers are thus expected to have organization and communication skills in the form of language teachers' skills in preparing their teaching lessons, designing lesson plans, using easy language to help students understand the materials, reflecting good communication skills, and providing students with opportunities to use English through meaningful tasks and activities.	Be helpful to students in and outside the classroom, listen to students' opinions, be friendly to students, and have a good sense of humor.
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Table 3: The three categories of teachers' characteristics based on Park and Lee (2006), Wichadee (2010), and Ramazani (2014)

The three categories in the previous studies also occurred in the current study. However, the terms used in the current study are quite different from those in previous studies. The current study employs the terms familiar in the Indonesian context based on regulation Number 16 taken from the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture (2013). These terms are pedagogical competence, which is another term for pedagogical knowledge; professional competence which is another term for subject matter knowledge or English proficiency; and social competence, which in another term for socio-affective competence. The explanation of these three categories in the current study can be seen in Table 4.

Pedagogical Competence	The ability to manage the teaching and learning process with focus on knowing and understanding the students, designing the lesson plan, preparing teaching materials and media, implementing teaching strategies to promote students' learning, evaluating students' learning, and doing teaching reflection (Irmawati et al., 2017). Pedagogical competence becomes one of the crucial competences to be owned by the teachers because it deals directly with how the teachers run the teaching and learning process which aims to help students learn the course learning outcomes. Without having this competence, the teaching and learning process cannot be run well.
Professional Competence	The ability to master the subject materials. Based on The Regulation Number 16, of the (Ministry of National Education (Number 16, 2007), there are four aspects in professional competence: such as mastering the learning materials, in which the ( teachers should have enough knowledge about the materials or the topic given to the students so that there will not be any misunderstanding); mastering the standard and basic competences of the subject matter, (in which the teachers should know about: <i>Kompetensi Inti KI</i> (Core Competences) and <i>Kompetensi Dasar KD</i> (Basic Competences) so that they teachers can make sure that the objective or the goal of the learning is achieved or not; developing the teaching materials (teachers should be able to by adopting, adapting or creating materials in which adopting is a process of taking or choosing the whole materials without any changes or the original materials, adapting: is a process of selecting the materials that match with the learners' need and the teachers' demands, and creating means the teachers can create the materials from basic to complex by themselves; and finally using media or online services, such as e-learning, e-library (EBSCO, SAGE, JSTOR), Google Drive, Google classroom, YouTube, and other sources.
Social Competence	Social competence refers to the ability to have a good social relationship with others. This competence consists of aspects such as effective interaction with students, other teachers, and students' parents. Ideally, the teachers are supposed to have a good relationship with everyone because humans are social by nature, and we need other people in our daily life. For instance: interacting positively with all students, regardless of their gender, age, religion, physical body, and economic status. Besides, teachers are also supposed to be adaptive anywhere, anytime and in any situation. Through social competence, teachers can positively interact with all students. This includes difficult students, students who work below grade-level and students whose personalities just grate on a teacher. Teachers must put aside their prejudices and feelings in order to treat all students with respect, provide them with equal opportunities for learning and make them feel confident.

Table 4: Explanation of the three categories used in this article.

Interestingly enough, the current study has one additional aspect, namely personal competence. This competence does not occur in the previous studies. Personal competence relates to ways to control emotion. This competence is reflected in some of the statements in Table 2, namely, being confident, having a loud and clear voice, having an interest in his/her job, and feeling responsible for teaching.

When asked to identify the most important competence category, the respondents show the ranking as presented in Table 5. In other words, the ranking was obtained by counting how many participants identified each competence as the most important in their response.

Teachers' competences	Number of participants
Pedagogical	16
Personal	9
Professional	6
Social	3
All of the competences	6

Table 5: Teachers' competences based on the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture (2013)

Based on the results, the first rank of competence perceived as the most important competence is pedagogical competence which refers to the ability to manage the teaching and learning process (Irmawati et al., 2017). Pedagogical competence is crucial for teachers because it deals directly with how they manage the teaching and learning process aimed at helping students achieve learning outcomes. Without having this competence, the teaching and learning process cannot run well.

Excerpt 6:

*Pedagogical is the first thing in terms of transferring knowledge. The teachers themselves should have/master the content they want the students to have. Rather than other competences, this one is the most important thing teachers should have. Then it is followed by professional competence, which cannot be separated from the prior competence. Many teachers are good, but they cannot level up the students' cause of a lack of strategies, methods, etc. I put the social and personal afterward because what is the ability to link to the colleagues for a while s/he cannot build the class live. What is the good personality for it is not able to train students? Nevertheless, the four [competences] are essential. Whenever the students love the subject, then they love the teacher. In an organization, making good relations is a part of a professional, too. (P8)*

Excerpt 7:

*Moreover, social and personal competence is followed by the ability to link or have a good relationship with colleagues. It can be concluded that the four competences are essential. Whenever the students love the subject, then they love the teacher. In an organization, making good relations is also a part of a professional. (P9)*

The second most important competence is personal competence, which refers to the ability to control emotion. Based on regulation Number 16 taken from the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture (2013), there are five aspects of personality competence: being steady, stable, mature, wise, and good as an expected role model. Steady and stable refer to doing actions based on social norms and norms that are consistent with their job; mature refers to being an independent teacher and having a work ethic as a teacher; wise refers to doing actions that are beneficial for students and also being an open-minded person who is willing to accept some comments, suggestions or criticism; having a good character means being a role model for students because the students tend to follow what the teachers do and imitate what they say. Excerpt 7 reflects the instances.

Excerpt 8

*The first essential competence is pedagogical competence because this competence is very beneficial for the teachers in managing the classroom and the teachers should know how to teach students and how she/he will guide the class. The second competence is personal competence, being teacher with the good personality can be the role model for the students and by having this competence the teacher will have the appropriate behaviour for the students. The third is professional competence because by mastering this competence the teacher can deliver the material easily to the students, and the last is social competence, it is important if the teacher can have a good communication to the students as we know that she/he will face the different character of students. Besides that, by having this competence the teacher will have good relationship with their students so that the interaction among them can be run well. (P12)*

The third most important competence is professional competence. This competence refers to the ability to master the subject. Ministry of Education and Culture's (2013) regulations identify four aspects of professional competence: mastering the learning materials, mastering the subject matter's standard and basic competences, adopting and adapting materials, and creating materials. First, mastering the learning materials requires teachers to have sufficient knowledge about the materials or topic assigned to students in order to avoid misunderstandings. Second, mastering the subject matter's standard and basic competences requires teachers to be familiar with *Kompetensi Inti KI* (Core Competences) and *Kompetensi*

*Dasar KD* (Basic Competences). Third, adopting materials from existing textbooks and authentic materials allows the teacher to use relevant materials in their classroom. The teachers can simply follow units in the selected textbooks and its activities. In adopting materials, the teachers should be able to choose materials that are suitable for the students' needs. Besides that, the teachers can select more relevant materials they find in their environment, for instance, magazine articles, advertisements, leaflets, songs, and posters. Meanwhile, adapting can be made by altering the existing materials, for instance, leaving out things deemed inappropriate and irrelevant, then reorder and combine activities. Fourth, creating implies that the teachers construct the materials from the simplest to the most complicated on their own. Evidence of this competence category can be seen in the following excerpt.

Excerpt 9

*First, pedagogical competence, which is the ability to understand students, design and implement instruction, evaluate learning outcomes, and develop students to actualize the various potentials the students have, the second is personal competence which is the ability that reflects a steady, stable, mature, wise, and being role model for students, and third is professional competence which includes mastery of the curriculum material of school subjects, materials and the structure and methodology of discipline, and the last is social competence which is the ability to communicate and interact effectively with students, school staffs, parents, and community. (P19)*

The last is social competence, which deals with the ability to have a good social relationship with others. This competence includes the ability to communicate politely, empathetically, and effectively with others while having a good relationship with students, fellow teachers, staff, and students' parents. Teachers must be able to socialize with the local community politely, have a spirit of togetherness, and be able to adjust to various cultures and regions. By having social competence, the teachers should relate favorably with all students, including challenging students, students who work below grade level, and students having personality disorders. Teachers must set aside their preconceptions and emotions to treat all students with respect, provide them with equal opportunities for learning and make them feel confident. Such findings align with the ideas proposed by Sulistiyo (2016), who stated that the teachers should be professional teachers who have good academic qualifications and teaching certificates and also have a set of professional competences. This statement is also evidenced in the responses to an open-ended questionnaire item.

Excerpt 10:

*To my mind, pedagogical competence should come first because once we've determined that teaching is our passion, we need to understand all of the qualities that a teacher must possess. The teacher knew that they play an essential role in classroom instructional activities that affect the students' success in the teaching and learning process. In my opinion, if the teachers' competences should be ranked from the most to the least important, it will be pedagogical, personal, professional, and social competence. (P3)*

However, the rank is based on the point of view of average people. All competences are important and have their functions as well. Social competence was ranked last, which may reflect the participants' tendency to prioritize competences that are more directly related to classroom practices. This finding is in line with previous research indicating that pre-service teachers' perceptions of social competence may vary depending on their experience and context (Sánchez-Tarazaga et al., 2023). While social competence is recognized as important, it may not always be prioritized compared to competences more directly related to classroom instruction.

## Conclusion

This study shows that TPEP students sufficiently conceptualize the characteristics of effective English teachers. They perceive effective English teachers as those having good pedagogical knowledge, English proficiency, teacher-student relationship, and personal qualities. In terms of pedagogical knowledge, what makes effective teachers includes monitoring students' understanding during instruction, preparing the lesson well, providing activities that can attract students for learning English, and creating lesson plans based on the goals of the basic education curriculum. With reference to subject matter, the most important characteristics of effective teachers were mastering the teaching materials, developing strong English reading skills, knowing about *Kompetensi Inti KI* (Core competences), and *Kompetensi Dasar KD* (basic competences) and having good pronunciation skills. Regarding teacher-student relationships, the most important characteristics of effective teachers were treating the students fairly and not discriminating against them, helping students develop self-confidence and providing appropriate feedback to the students.

Concerning personal qualities, the most important characteristics of effective teachers were being confident, having a genuine interest in their job, feeling responsible for teaching, and having a loud and clear voice. It indicated that in the Indonesian context, *PPG* students (TPEP students) have good knowledge about the concept of effective teachers.

### Recommendations

The results of this research can be used as a guide for teachers, pre-service teachers/student teachers, instructors, and faculty members in the teaching and learning process. They can employ the 14 characteristics identified as most important by the TPEP students so that the teaching and learning process will be more effective and enjoyable. Additionally, they should possess the four competences to be professional teachers.

Those 14 characteristics can be employed in the values of the TPEP program. The detailed explanation of these characteristics can be seen in Figure 2. By putting those characteristics as the values of the TPEP program, administrators and student teachers are responsible for considering them. In addition, those characteristics can be used as guidance for the student teachers to be applied in their activities. Based on the identified characteristics, pedagogical and professional competence are considered as the most prominent characteristic teachers should have, and then followed by personal competence and social competence. Therefore, pedagogical and professional competences are placed at the top of personal and social competence.

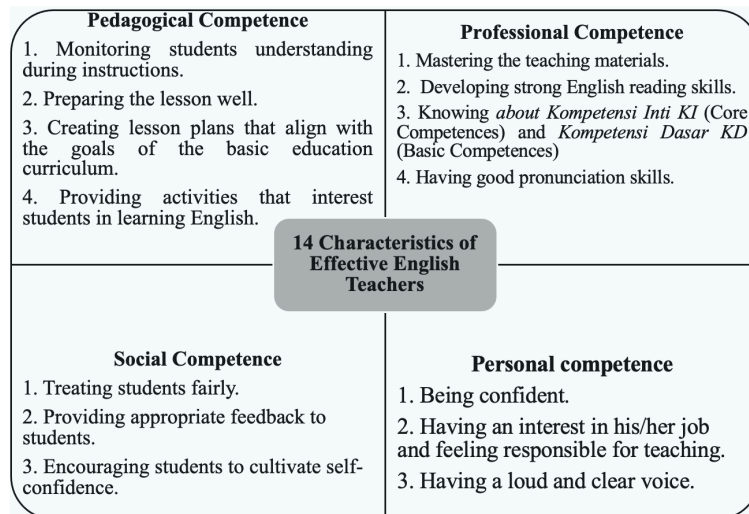


Figure 2: The 14 characteristics of effective English teachers

Figure 2 reveals the fourteen characteristics of effective teachers ranked high by the participants. These characteristics are derived from the Ministry of Education and Culture's (2013) teaching competences.

This study calls for attention from many parties to help teachers enhance their effective characteristics as perceived by student teachers. For instance, curriculum designers of teacher professional education programs (TPEP) and ELT programs are recommended to include these characteristics and competences in teaching and learning requirements so the student teachers and the teachers can implement those characteristics in the job field. In addition, they are suggested to include in the courses that are more oriented on enhancing the teachers' competences, like practicing how to be effective teachers. Besides that, the teachers are also suggested to find programs or activities that can develop their competences, for instance, joining teacher training programs (conferences, workshops, seminars).

To improve the development of the characteristics of effective teachers in the student teachers, the administrators and teacher trainers of the TPEP Program should engage the students in the creation of creative learning instruments that can be used during the teaching practice phase since the student teachers are required to teach at some schools with which the administrator has partnered. Innovative and contemporary instruments should be used for instruction, so students can gain fresh insights into the instruments. For example, administrators and teacher educators can invite a speaker with expertise in verbal art or linguistic creativity to share his/her knowledge with student teachers through workshops, training, webinars, seminars, or conferences to increase students' sense of humor. The student teachers should also attempt to develop classroom humor. Active learning training in which the materials focus on enjoyable

learning activities can boost students' interest in studying. Therefore, teaching will be more entertaining; students will have more fun, be more motivated, engage with the content more effectively and boost their learning. In addition, student teachers can cooperate with other teachers through peer observation and class research. Furthermore, administrators can provide instructional modules filled with entertaining activities.

The results of this study are revealing for ESL/EFL teachers. This research provides suggestions for ESL/EFL teachers on how to conduct their classes. Since the findings relate to the four English skills, the ESL/EFL students can use these competences as their point of reference. Besides, ESL/EFL instructors might employ or emulate the traits of effective educators in their teaching and learning processes. Moreover, to increase the pedagogical expertise of student instructors, they should take additional courses emphasizing class management. For example, a teacher's verbal and physical responses communicate to students whether their behavior is proper or inappropriate.

### **Limitations**

Due to the small sample size of university-affiliated student instructors, the present study may have limited implications for its findings. Therefore, this study's findings cannot be generalized. Future researchers would benefit from involving TPEP administrators as research subjects, as they are more familiar with the program's weaknesses and strengths. In addition, future researchers may potentially select parents and employees of the Ministry of Education as research subjects. Each stakeholder will have unique perspectives, and the outcomes would be more comprehensive.

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## Appendix 1

### Questionnaire

**Section A: Demographic Data (Personal Data)**

This section is intended to collect information on your personal data related to your perception of effective teachers.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Gender:  Female  Male

When joined the PPG Program:  2017/2018 Academic Year  2018/2019 Academic Year

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**Section B: Survey Main Questions**

**Directions:** Please read each statement carefully and choose one of the options 1, 2, 3, or 4 which best indicates the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about effective teachers. The number on the top of each column means the following 1=Not very important, 2=Slightly important, 3=Important, 4=Very important

No	Category Of Attributes	1	2	3	4
	<i>Pedagogical Knowledge</i>				
	<b>An effective and competent English teacher is someone who should show these qualities:</b>				
1	Preparing lesson well				
2	Teaching how to learn English outside the classroom				
3	Using various materials including video and multimedia				
4	Teaching English incorporating students' various learning styles				
5	Monitoring students' understanding during instruction				
6	Teaching English using English as a medium of instruction				
7	Assessing what students have learned rationally				
8	Providing opportunities to use English through meaningful activities, such as speeches, debates, drama, etc.				
9	Providing activities that accommodate students' interests in learning English				
10	Creating lesson plans fitting in the goals of the basic education curriculum				

No	Category Of Attributes	1	2	3	4
	<i>English proficiency</i>				
	<b>An effective and competent English teacher is someone who should show these qualities:</b>				
1	Mastering the learning materials				
2	Knowing about KI (Core Competencies) and KD (Basic Competencies)				
3	Being able to read English well				
4	Having a high level of proficiency with English vocabulary				
5	Being able to write English well				
6	Developing the teaching materials by creating, adapting and adopting				
7	Having good knowledge of English grammar				
8	Having cultural awareness of target language				
9	Being able to listen English well				
10	Being able to pronounce words correctly and speak English well				

No	CATEGORY OF ATTRIBUTES	1	2	3	4
	<i>Teacher-Student Relationship</i>				
	<b>An effective and competent English teacher is someone who should show these qualities:</b>				
1	Being helpful to students in and outside the classroom				
2	Knowing all students by calling students' nick names				
3	Caring about students' personal problems				
4	Reducing students' anxiety in the classroom				
5	Helping students to develop self-confidence				
6	Attracting and maintaining students' attention				
7	Being friendly to students				
8	Treating the students fairly and not discriminating between them				
9	Providing appropriate feedback to students				
10	Spending time with the students outside the class				

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No	CATEGORY OF ATTRIBUTES	1	2	3	4
	Personal Qualities				
An effective and competent English teacher is someone who should show these qualities:					
1	Being mature				
2	Being wise				
3	Good appearance				
4	Being self-confident				
5	Being enthusiastic and lively				
6	Being creative and spontaneous				
7	Having a loud and clear voice				
8	Being punctual (in terms of starting the class and returning students' paper)				
9	Having patience with students				
10	Having interest in his/her job and feeling responsibility for teaching				

1. Are there any particular characteristics that you believe a teacher must possess in order to be an effective English teacher?
2. There are 4 kinds of teachers' competencies, such as pedagogical competence, professional competence, personal competence and social competence. Based on your point of view, which competencies should be mastered firstly by the teachers? Please explain and rank them from the most important to least important!
3. Based on your point of view, what is the best way for the teachers to develop their competencies in order to be effective teachers? Please explain.

## Appendix 2

### Participants' Responses to the 40 Questionnaire Items

No	Item	N	SUM	Mean
1	Mastering the teaching materials	40	153	3.82
2	Developing strong English reading skills	40	153	3.82
3	Monitoring students understanding during instruction	40	152	3.80
4	Preparing lesson well	40	152	3.80
5	Treating the students fairly and not discriminating between them	40	152	3.80
6	Knowing about Kompetensi Inti, KI (Core Competences) and Kompetensi Dasar, KD (Basic Competences)	40	151	3.77
7	Having good pronunciation skills	40	151	3.77
8	Providing activities that interest students in learning English	40	150	3.75
9	Being confident	40	150	3.75
10	Having an interest in his/her job and feeling responsible for teaching	40	150	3.75
11	Creating lesson plans that align with the goals of the basic education curriculum	40	149	3.72
12	Having a loud and clear voice	40	148	3.70
13	Providing appropriate feedback to students	40	146	3.65
14	Encouraging students to cultivate self-confidence	40	145	3.62
15	Being helpful to students inside and outside the classroom	40	134	3.35
16	Being friendly to students	40	130	3.25
17	Helping students to create self-confidence	40	134	3.35
18	Reducing students' anxiety in the classroom	40	131	3.27
19	Attracting and maintaining students' attention	40	128	3.20
20	Being enthusiastic and lively	40	132	3.30
21	Being creative and spontaneous	40	130	3.25
22	Having a high level of proficiency with English vocabulary	40	133	3.32
23	Having good knowledge of English grammar	40	129	3.22
24	Being wise	40	131	3.27
25	Having patience with students	40	133	3.32
26	Using various materials including video and multimedia	40	129	3.22
27	Teaching English incorporating students' various learning style	40	126	3.15
28	Being mature	40	126	3.15
29	Teaching English using English as a medium of instruction	40	130	3.25
30	Assessing what students have learned rationally	40	128	3.20
31	Developing the teaching materials by creating, adapting and adopting	40	126	3.15
32	Good appearance	40	131	3.27
33	Teaching how to learn English outside the classroom	40	127	3.17
34	Providing opportunities to use English through meaningful activities, such as speech, debate, drama, etc.	40	129	3.22
35	Having cultural awareness of target language	40	133	3.32
36	Being able to write English well	40	130	3.25
37	Being able to listen English well	40	128	3.20
38	Knowing all students by calling students' nick names	40	126	3.15
39	Caring about students' personal problems	40	129	3.22
40	Spending time with the students outside the class	40	132	3.30