

ETpedia™

Management

500 ideas
for managing an
English Language
school



H



G

guidance

N

M

X

decisions



planning

F

A



professional
development

Q



O

T

Fiona Dunlop, Keith Harding and Robert McLarty

Series editor: John Hughes

www.myetpedia.com

Pavilion



ETpedia Management

500 ideas for managing an English language school

© Pavilion Publishing & Media

The authors have asserted their rights in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act (1988) to be identified as the authors of this work.

Published by:

Pavilion Publishing and Media Ltd
Blue Sky Offices
Cecil Pashley Way
Shoreham by Sea
West Sussex
BN43 5FF
UK

Tel: 01273 434 943

Fax: 01273 227 308

First published 2019

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission in writing of the publisher and the copyright owners. A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

Photocopying permission

The resources in the Appendix may be copied, without fee or prior permission, by the purchaser subject to both of the following conditions: that the item is reproduced in its entirety, including the copyright acknowledgement; that the copies are used solely by the person or organisation who purchased the original publication.

ISBN: 978-1-912755-27-1

PDF ebook ISBN: 978-1-912755-74-5

Epub ISBN: 978-1-912755-73-8

Kindle ISBN: 978-1-912755-75-2

Authors: Fiona Dunlop, Keith Harding and Robert McLarty

Editor: Penny Hands

Production editor: Mike Benge, Pavilion Publishing and Media

Cover design: Emma Dawe, Pavilion Publishing and Media

Page layout and typesetting: Tony Pitt, Pavilion Publishing and Media

Printing: Ashford Press

Contents

10 reasons for using this resource.....	6
10 ways to use this resource	8
10 facts about the authors	10

Getting started

Unit 1: 10 things you need to know about management	12
Unit 2: 10 misconceptions people have about managers.....	15
Unit 3: 10 areas of management in ELT	18
Unit 4: 10 roles and responsibilities in an ideal management team	21
Unit 5: 10 transferable skills for teachers who want to be managers.....	24
Unit 6: 10 external organisations and partners you need to work with.....	27
Unit 7: 10 conversations that need to happen in your school	30

Strategic management and communication

Unit 8: 10 questions to ask about strategic management	34
Unit 9: 10 ways to ensure an organisation is dynamic.....	37
Unit 10: 10 ways to encourage team-building and team morale	40
Unit 11: 10 reasons why meetings don't work	42
Unit 12: 10 things you can do with a decision	45

Human resources, administration and recruitment

Unit 13: 10 reasons why change may fail	48
Unit 14: 10 tips for making HR human	51
Unit 15: 10 steps to successful recruitment	54
Unit 16: 10 ways of achieving staff loyalty.....	57

Marketing and finance

Unit 17: 10 tips for writing policy statements and the staff handbook	62
Unit 18: 10 principles of efficient student administration	65
Unit 19: 10 things you can expect from technology	68
Unit 20: 10 ways of promoting your organisation	71
Unit 21: 10 ways of making an impact on a target market.....	74
Unit 22: 10 ways of networking and using social media	77
Unit 23: 10 ways of developing new products.....	80
Unit 24: 10 ideas you can borrow from other sectors	83
Unit 25: 10 financial concepts everyone should know	86
Unit 26: 10 checks to ensure cost-effectiveness.....	89

Quality assurance and quality improvement

Unit 27: 10 things you can do when times are bad.....	94
Unit 28: 10 things your customers expect.....	97
Unit 29: 10 early stages in the student journey.....	100
Unit 30: 10 types of feedback	103
Unit 31: 10 things you can do with feedback.....	106
Unit 32: 10 tips for dealing with complaints	109
Unit 33: 10 ways of turning 'OK' into 'Wow!'	111

Academic management

Unit 34: 10 points to remember when planning a new course	116
Unit 35: 10 principles behind timetable planning.....	119
Unit 36: 10 ways of ensuring and measuring student progress	122
Unit 37: 10 ways of improving the quality of teaching.....	125
Unit 38: 10 ways of doing lesson observations	128
Unit 39: 10 tips for effective appraisals.....	131
Unit 40: 10 ways of monitoring and rewarding staff performance	134

Professional development

Unit 41: 10 ways of encouraging professional development for teachers.....	138
Unit 42: 10 ways to ensure professional development achieves something	141
Unit 43: 10 ideas for managing your own professional development	144
Unit 44: 10 tips for managing yourself.....	147
Unit 45: 10 ways of networking and developing your own career.....	150

Positive working environments

Unit 46: 10 non-academic services you may need to provide	154
Unit 47: 10 ways to improve your working environment.....	157
Unit 48: 10 ways to ensure your premises are conducive to learning	160
Unit 49: 10 key points in safeguarding and well-being.....	163
Unit 50: 10 things you hope to hear when students (and staff) leave	166

Appendix



Introduction

10 reasons for using this resource

1. Everything in one place

There have been thousands of books written about management but very few written specifically with English language teaching in mind. There are also many blogs, websites, videos and articles offering advice on how to be a manager, but not one resource which brings all the key advice together in one place. That's the aim of *ETpedia Management*. It's a collection of resources for anyone involved in ELT management to consult whenever they need to.

2. Clearly organised

This resource contains 50 units and is divided into eight sections covering the key areas of current ELT management. Each section contains a number of units with each unit offering ten tips. Why ten? Well, we believe that knowing ten skills that are transferable from a teaching role into management will be enough to help you to make the move into management; reading about ten ways of making an impact in a new market will encourage you and your school make such a move if you choose to; and knowing ten things to do when things start to go wrong financially will always be useful, should the need arise.

3. Preparing for an interview

If you are applying for a managerial position, read the sections that are relevant to your potential role. Interviewers for management positions are interested in your experience, but they are also keen to hear ideas for situations you may not have encountered.

4. Training for a new management position

If you're starting a new position, you will be given training and advice on the role. Looking at the *ETpedia* tips alongside any in-house support will help enrich your understanding of the role and what's involved.

5. Studying for an ELT management qualification

If you're studying for a diploma in ELT Management or taking the subject as a module on a master's programme, you'll find that this resource complements the materials provided or recommended. The lists will be useful for brainstorming with other participants or for using as an aide-memoire when writing assignments.

6. On your own

You may find yourself in quite an isolated management position, responsible for a specific group of teachers in a particular location. This might be at home or abroad, working antisocial hours and possibly with very little support. If this is you, use this resource to brief yourself on any topics you are unsure of – or simply to reinforce what you already felt.

7. Troubleshooting and firefighting

There are times when a problem emerges that you need to deal with quickly. The course of action to take may not come to you instantly. Referring to the appropriate section or unit of this book may provide the answer, or at least get you thinking about practical approaches that will solve the situation.

8. Building awareness of the manager role

In some schools, the manager can be seen as a distant figure living in a separate world from that of the teachers and administrative staff 'on the ground'. To mitigate against this, hold meetings or workshops with the teachers and administrative staff, where you all look at a unit or section of the book and talk about the manager's role. Many of the units include reflective tasks which can be carried out together with your staff.

9. Ideas for improving and updating existing systems in your school

All managers inherit or develop systems to suit a particular era, set of students or cohort of teachers. There comes a time when those systems need to be reviewed and amended. This resource will give you a starting point for such a review. It will provide food for thought and checklists of points to consider.

10. More ideas from managers around the world

Throughout this resource you will find further ideas in the form of quotes from a wide range of managers working in all sorts of schools throughout the world. Their thoughts on a particular topic are all based on recent and real experience as ELT managers.

"I know personally that the transition from teaching to management can be highly rewarding as well as challenging. You will have to adjust quickly but if you get the opportunity just go for it. The ETpedia management resource provides an excellent roadmap for making the move both manageable and exciting."

Huan Japes, Membership Director, English UK

10 ways to use this resource

This book is for teachers and managers at different stages of their managerial career. They might be teachers who have aspirations for management, people who have recently been given a managerial role or task, or managers with many years of experience. It also aims to help other people understand the manager role and to encourage them to consider ELT management as a career step. For these reasons, you can use this book in different ways.

1. Cover to cover

Start at the beginning and read it unit by unit to get an overview of the practical aspects of various management sectors and roles. This will show you the diversity and range of the managerial role – and how exciting and interesting the job can be.

2. Read a specific section

You may be responsible for or interested in a particular area. Perhaps you've been tasked with introducing a fresh approach to professional development or improving the way you gather and handle feedback. If so, then focus on that section to develop your ideas, modifying the tips to suit your own context.

3. Dipping in for ideas

There will be times in your working life when you are short of ideas but looking for something to spark a change in your school. If that is the case, open the book at random and read a few tips. You will be bound to find something to interest and inspire you, and your school will see the benefits.


4. Read it again

The first time you read this book might be as a new manager. After you've been doing the job for a while, read it again. You're likely to take something different from it every time you do.

5. Write in the book

Treat the resource a little like a recipe book. Read a unit, take your own notes and try things out. Reflect on your experience by noting things down. Over time your copy of the book will become an even more useful resource and something you can use as you recruit new managers yourself.

6. Use the Appendix

 You'll see this icon beside tips that have an accompanying photocopiable document in the Appendix. This might be an activity for you to use as part of your own teacher development in-house, or a template for a document you need to write as a manager, such as an observation form or an HR policy.

7. Activities and reflective tasks



This icon often appears at the end of a unit. It denotes an activity or reflective task that will help you develop your managerial culture and style. Activities can be done individually or collectively. They will not only focus your mind on various aspects of your job, but also help you to build a more holistic culture for your school.

8. Help and advise colleagues

One of the key roles of a manager is to identify talent and develop staff. You may want to use certain units of the resource as specific guidance and support for people you work with, such as your senior teachers or co-ordinators. Refer them to relevant parts of the book as part of their ongoing development, or to help with a particular issue.

9. Experiment with something different

You're unlikely to be able to implement every point in this book, and in any case there will be many that you feel are not relevant. But it's always good to try out something that's a bit different and out of your comfort zone. If it works, you've got a new approach. If it doesn't, you could try another one – or you might conclude that your existing approach was the best all along.

10. Write your own 10

Just as teaching is always evolving, so is management. People are coming up with new ideas all the time. You may think there's an area that this book doesn't cover but which is important to your situation. Write ten tips about a new area on page 198.

10 facts about the authors

Fiona Dunlop...

- ▶ has taught in Egypt, Brazil and the UK. She has been a director of studies, teacher trainer, academic director and school principal.
- ▶ has delivered teacher and management training in a large number of countries including Chile, Kurdistan, Georgia, Spain and Brazil. She has a particular passion for professional development and believes strongly in her own lifelong learning.
- ▶ is currently the Principal of Wimbledon School of English in London. She has worked there for 18 years.

Keith Harding...

- ▶ has worked as a teacher, teacher trainer, director of studies and school principal in the UK and the US, and has delivered ELT management courses in the Middle East, South America and Europe.
- ▶ has authored or co-authored coursebooks on business English, English for tourism and English for specific purposes.
- ▶ has been an inspector for Accreditation UK (British Council) since 2007. He is a tutor on the Trinity Diploma in ELT Management.

Robert McLarty...

- ▶ has taught in France, New Zealand and the UK. He has been a director of studies at International House, School Principal at OISE, a publishing manager at OUP and a principal academic staff member at Wintec.
- ▶ has co-authored coursebooks, workbooks and methodology titles for OUP, CUP, Pearson and Pavilion ELT.
- ▶ is currently living in New Zealand and is editor of *Modern English Teacher*.

All three authors...

believe in the importance of an approach to management that is both professional and practical and which works to the benefit of all stakeholders, including students, teachers, administrative and other staff, as well as managers themselves.



Getting started

If you are reading this book, it is because you are interested in, or already involved in, managing some sort of language school, centre or department. Managing is one of the most difficult concepts to define because so much depends on the context and sector you are doing it in. Levels of responsibility can vary enormously depending on the structure you are working in. There are aspects of leadership, stewardship and administration in most management positions, and in this book we hope to show you how to manage in a wide range of situations. Essentially, you can achieve this by doing what is expected of the manager: understanding, analysing, deciding, communicating and carrying out.

Everything we cover depends on your having a good basic understanding of what it takes to manage and what skills you already have. If you have managed before, you will already have views on what is involved in managing and leading people. In the first part of this section (Units 1 and 2) we look at the basics of what you need to know about management, and then go on to look at how managers are perceived in most language training contexts.

If you are thinking of moving into management, or who just want to consolidate what you have already learnt, you will find support in Units 3 and 4, which describe the industry standards and the different types of structure you might find yourself in. As a teacher you will have been put in situations where a lot of interpersonal skills are needed; Unit 5 looks at how you can use some of the skills you already have in a leadership role. You will not be able to develop fully without external support, and so Unit 6 offers ideas on where you can get this help. The section ends by looking at the kinds of conversations that should be taking place in your school if you are going to be able to manage and be seen to manage successfully.

10 things you need to know about management

If you're a language teacher looking to make the move into ELT management, or someone thinking about applying for a position with management responsibilities in a language school, there are a number of things worth remembering. They will help you cope with the inevitable moments when you face a problem you weren't expecting. They will also help you realise the positive aspects of leading and managing a team of people in a language school.

1. It is very rewarding

Leading a group of people and managing any sort of project is a valuable experience for anyone. Being faced with a problem, discussing solutions with a number of people, deciding what to do and carrying it out is very satisfying. Being able to combine your experience and intuition with those of others and come to a conclusion that will improve the quality of service in the classroom or help learning conditions get better is one of the most rewarding outcomes of a manager's job.

2. Everyone needs training

A lot of people are reluctant to take on responsibility because they lack confidence in certain skills, whether that relates to IT, logistics, health and safety, teacher training or other administrative or pedagogic matters. The myth here is that certain people have all this knowledge and take to management very smoothly. The truth is that nearly every management position will involve skills that a new manager will require training in. There will be systems to learn, processes to use (and question), and styles to follow. There might be particular meetings to attend and relationships to maintain for which you will require help and coaching. Don't expect to do it alone and don't be afraid to ask for help.

3. Be a good communicator

One thing you learn very early on as a teacher is the need to communicate clearly and in good time, so that your students are always as well informed as they can be. Collaboration with other teachers, team-teaching and peer observations are all opportunities to improve this skill, so that when you are in a position of responsibility, you can keep your colleagues fully informed in a timely, unambiguous way. A common mistake made by managers is not informing the right people at the right time, which can lead to difficulties in the staffroom. Learn to be consistent in what you say and who you say it to, and also learn to know when to keep quiet. Until a decision has been made, don't fall into the trap of speaking too soon.

4. Be decisive

The people who put you in the position of manager expect action. There will be decisions to make, often ones that should have been made already. Weigh up the options, evaluate them, listen to an appropriate number of people and then make your decision. It is always better to be decisive (even if you don't get it quite right) than to dither. Once the decision has been made, stick with it, amend it and, if absolutely necessary, abandon it if it proves to be the wrong one.

5. Be consistent

One of the hardest skills to develop is consistency, simply because no situation is ever the same. Teachers and learners vary tremendously with a wide range of personality types, learning and teaching styles and academic expectations. Judgements you make, opinions you offer and steps you choose to take have to be consistent so that staff and customers can have confidence in you.

6. Read about it

Everyone needs to keep learning how to manage. One readily available way of getting ideas is to read about it. Blogs, articles and book reviews are everywhere, and they usually offer ideas to consider. As with any form of professional development, it is a good idea to make small changes and see how they work, rather than to radically alter your style. By keeping a regular eye on what is being suggested for managers in other areas of business, as well as in ELT, you can pick up lots of useful tips on how to manage your time, how to have tricky conversations, how to deal with data, etc. Before you attend an interview for a position, it is useful to read up a little. In that way, you will be able to show that you are interested in embracing new ideas.

7. Get a mentor

It might not happen automatically, but it is really useful to have a mentor when you first take on management responsibilities. You might need to choose one yourself, but this is no bad thing. The mentor could be a manager above you or perhaps the owner of the school; they could even be someone who doesn't work in your organisation – in fact, sometimes this is a bonus. Whether or not the mentor works in your organisation, they should be there to listen to you, support you and guide you. They are not there to tell you what to do. Having a mentor allows you to talk off the record and be listened to in a non-judgemental way, allowing you more creative space to come up with good solutions.

8. Don't expect immediate approval

It can be quite hard at first when the people you are managing don't appear to be hugely positive about you and your decisions. It is a difficult job with a steep learning curve, and people are going to wait and see how you do. Ironically, if you are doing well, they probably won't tell you. Just be patient. You will probably win them over in the end. Don't forget, many people you manage don't want to manage themselves; indeed, they might already have tried it and not got on with it.

9. Manage your time

It's very easy to spend too long at work in a new position of responsibility. You will be busy doing the job itself and you will also want to spend time getting up to speed on aspects you are less confident about. Beware of letting your work hours expand too much into your private time. Becoming a manager does not mean losing the right to a life outside work. Keep that work-life balance healthy. Most successful managers are adept at getting others to help. When we first start managing, we don't want to appear too needy or too bossy; however most people are happy to help, so make sure you ask them. Once you have delegated a task, be sure to show that you are interested in how things are going, but beware of 'micromanaging' (i.e. being too involved).

10. Reflect



Effective managers are also reflective. They develop the ability to draw on their experiences and learn from their mistakes. If you are considering becoming a manager, try this activity: think about the points above in relation to how you currently manage your classes and teaching load. Order them from 1 to 9 in terms of how ready you feel you are to take on more responsibility. Which ones are going to require the most effort on your part?

“If you are successful at persuading, encouraging, motivating and keeping on track your students then many of the skills you employ will be suited to management. People-skills are very important in leading staff and management uses many of these skills that you will have been utilising and developing as a teacher. Great teachers don’t need to shout and bully their students and it’s the same with great managers.”

Duncan Perrin, Manager Strategic Projects and Teacher Development, Monash University English Language Centre, Melbourne, Australia

10 misconceptions people have about managers

Management is something everyone does on a personal level every day. Planning, organising, choosing, setting deadlines, making decisions and controlling budgets are things that every adult has to do. In an educational institute, teachers have a huge amount of management to do in terms of goal-setting, planning, delegating, resourcing, problem-solving, etc. So in many ways teachers are getting lots of management training just by doing their job. But there still seems to be some reluctance to become a manager. Let's begin by looking at some negative perceptions of managers and try to view them in a more positive light.

1. Managers often think of the organisation before the individual

It is often said that managers cannot afford to consider individual opinions if those opinions interfere with the direction the organisation is going. Yet if you think about good managers you have worked with, one of their strengths is the ability to deal with people on a personal basis while at the same time moving the team forward in the direction the general strategy requires. To achieve this you will need to develop the capacity to show each person how they fit into the overall plans for the organisation as well as how they will continue to develop as individuals.

2. They don't always express their own opinions

Managers are often placed in a position where they have to speak on behalf of the organisation rather than expressing their own opinion. This is particularly difficult when the manager has been promoted from within the staff. The newly promoted manager will be open to criticism for apparently abandoning their principles (or 'selling out'). For example, as a manager, you might be asked to oversee aspects of a system that you personally disagree with. It is worth persevering, though, because it will happen quite often and these occurrences can usually be turned into useful learning experiences. Remember to choose carefully between voicing your own opinion and that of the role you are filling.

3. They are out of touch with reality

Moving out of the classroom for even a few hours a week changes the perspective of the teacher/manager in terms of how they view the students and their learning. When a teacher is responsible for their own classes, they have an in-depth knowledge of the students, the curriculum, the content, and so on. A manager, on the other hand, has a 'helicopter view', looking at the bigger picture across a number of classes. Managers obtain the information they need by reading teachers' class records and reports. For them, every individual student is important, but so too are the courses and policies that relate to all students. Be aware of the different sources you will need to use to keep abreast of what is happening in your classrooms.

4. They only comment on negative feedback

Unlike the majority of teachers, managers tend to have most dealings with students who are either unhappy or underperforming. As such, a key management skill involves dealing positively with dissatisfaction. Get used to talking to staff on a regular basis and knowing what they are doing. In that way, any necessary feedback can be communicated in a reasonable, non-threatening way. Ensure also that good feedback does get passed on to teachers by setting up processes that circulate all feedback on a regular basis. Feedback should not be restricted to the teaching staff, either. All staff who regularly interact with students need to be kept informed of how their dealings are being perceived, and how they are adding value to the service being offered.

5. They are more interested in processes than performance

Schools are judged on their ability to help their students along their journey. A Business English student might be sent by their employer for an hour of private language tuition every week for a few months to improve their ability to communicate in English. Or a family might send their 18 year old to an English-speaking country for a foundation course to make them better prepared for the academic world. At every stage of these journeys there are choices to consider, key decisions to be made, options to evaluate, advice to be offered and assessments to be carried out – and all of these events need to be recorded. Overseeing these processes is a key part of management, but that does not mean that there is no room for intuition, risk-taking or trusting your own judgement. Use the systems to complement your judgement.

6. They are good at administration but less good with people

It is often said that good teachers have the interpersonal skills required of any manager. This is true, but as we have already said, administration has become a major part of management. Systems are set up which have to be adhered to, processes are in place for everything from recruitment to dealing with difficult customers. Accreditation is often achieved as much by the procedures in place as by the people carrying out those procedures. Make sure that as a manager you use those systems, even when you feel they are not that efficient. You have time to evaluate and make suggestions on how they could be improved, but in the meantime use what is there. Prove to everyone that you are as good with systems as you are with people.

7. They don't take suggestions on board

One thing that is often complained about in language schools is that there are some obvious areas for change that the management seem loath to consider. This might be an overcomplicated testing procedure or a timetabling system that creates more problems than it solves. Whatever the issue, make sure that, as a manager, you listen to suggestions and make it clear which ones are being adopted, which ones are not, and for what reason. Not all suggestions can be taken on board, but good managers acknowledge good suggestions and where they have come from.

8. They aren't around

Managers who encourage independence and decisiveness can be accused of not being around enough. On the other hand, there are also managers who are accused of being around too much! This can be particularly tricky if you are the only person being managed. In many ways it is better to be one of a number of direct reports so you have more space. Part of the natural evolution of a manager is wanting to nurture talent and, ideally, see that talent develop as far as it can. Make sure you give your reports space to act and develop – plan catch-up meetings to allow them time to report on their progress and to ask for advice.

9. They don't listen

One of the most frequently heard criticisms of managers is their inability to listen, or at least their inability to listen and act. Unfortunately, they cannot always act in the ways desired, but they should make every effort to make that clear as they listen. Active listening is a key attribute of modern managers; few of us do it naturally, so it is a skill that has to be learnt. Remember that being able to really listen to a member of staff can be vital in ensuring that the people you manage feel trusted and able to trust you.

10. They have favourites

Managers have to be seen to be fair, and this fairness spreads as far as spending equal amounts of time with staff. There will always be people with whom a manager has more empathy or shares interests, but it is vital that all members of staff get time to discuss their classes, any suggestions they may have, or something they need to get off their chest.

10 areas of management in ELT

ELT managers are in a particularly unique position in that the areas of responsibility in ELT are very far-ranging. One day you might be enrolling new students, the next you're analysing feedback or checking copy for a new brochure. This can be either motivating or overwhelming, depending on the circumstances. However, you are likely to find that certain areas allow you to play to your strengths whereas others will require you to seek training and hard work to get you up to scratch. Here's an introductory list of ten key areas in ELT management that will be expanded upon in later units.

1. Operations and logistics

This is one of the areas where an ability to deal with data is useful. For a lot of people, coming into language teaching from an arts and languages background can initially come as a bit of a shock, but most people eventually find it an interesting part of the job. A lot of what is required from you will depend on context: are you sending teachers to teach off-site? Are you receiving inbound students via airports and bus transfers? Are you timetabling a large number of classes into a finite set of classrooms? Whatever the operational task, organisation of information is usually the key. Make sure you have everything you need to know or, at least know where and when you can get it.

2. Human resources (HR)

One of the main areas of HR that you will be involved in is recruitment. This will mean dealing with applications as well as interviewing and task-setting. It will also involve mentoring and offering in-service training to staff. HR-related work might also lead you into areas where difficult conversations are needed to discuss performance and other issues. You will need to have a good handle on employment law, and this might be one area where your personal opinion and the policies of your employer might be slightly different. For example, zero-hour and casual contracts have become commonplace in the training sector, and this might be something you are not comfortable with despite it being both legal and widely practised. Remember to retain objectivity in all HR-related conversations.

3. Product development

Markets and customers are constantly changing, and many successful suppliers react to these changes in terms of the products they offer. It is advisable to keep real data relating to your courses and to analyse the information closely to see what trends are being revealed. How popular are the courses? What results are participants getting from them? Is the content still reliable and useful? The more you analyse, the more you will be able to tweak, alter or replace products. Keeping an eye on the competition will also give you invaluable data. What products are growing? How are they being marketed? What materials are being used? We look at this area more closely in Units 21 and 23.

4. Marketing

Whatever your role in the institution, you are likely to be involved in marketing its products. Teachers are directly involved as they are dealing with some of your best opinion leaders – their classes. Word of mouth is a hugely important aspect of marketing, particularly since there are so many ways of recommending or complaining via social media. Networking has always been an important means of marketing services, and the benefits of visiting agents and potential contacts, as well as receiving them as guests at the school and explaining to them what you can offer, are many. Talking about the reality of what goes on in the classroom, how a new programme could be constructed and what resources would be used are areas where managers who have recent classroom experience are in high demand. Learning how to talk about those things from this slightly different perspective is a skill you will develop.

5. Professional development

One of the first steps people often take in terms of academic management is the role of mentor or senior teacher to one teacher or a group of teachers. This is usually a good way of finding out how well suited you are to teacher training and teacher development. Encouraging staff to develop is a long-term plan for all good institutions, and getting the right balance of introducing new approaches and maintaining standards is vital. As part of the academic management team, you might find yourself encouraging colleagues to lead or attend sessions, present at conferences, take further qualifications or think about taking on new responsibilities. A background in teacher training will be useful for this sort of role but is not compulsory. All of these areas require the manager to demonstrate sensitivity, active listening skills and a genuine interest in people.

6. Systems

No language teaching organisation can survive without good systems for enrolling, managing and recording the progress of the students they are teaching. All systems rely on staff inputting the information correctly, and these tasks can become quite mundane. Without such records, however, teaching and learning cannot be properly assessed. Despite increases in the speed and memory size of computers, there never seems to be much of a drop in the amount of time managers spend recording and analysing data; it looks likely to continue to be a major part of the academic manager's role for the foreseeable future.

7. Customer service

The most important part of any school is the student body, and that is why the way we deal with students is critical for maintaining a good level of teaching and learning. What good service really boils down to is respect for the customer, rather than a blind following of the 'customer is king' mantra. Ensure a good level of service by making sure that clients are getting what they expect, that the learning conditions and other services are as good as possible, and that students are genuinely listened to when they offer feedback.

8. Compliance

'Compliance' means ensuring that everything the institution does follows local laws, regulations and policies. One particularly important area is data protection; this is especially significant when you are dealing with large numbers of enrolments containing a lot of personal data. As a manager you will have to ensure that areas you are responsible for are compliant with local regulations. This could mean carrying out certain checks on teachers' backgrounds, ensuring your assessment methods follow the correct procedures, or monitoring attendance from students whose visa approval is dependent on being in class. Finally, you will need to be aware of any local regulations relating to your school's accreditation requirements.

9. Finance

Academic management will always involve certain activities linked to finance. This involvement might be on a very basic level, such as buying resources, paying for subscriptions, or ensuring that a budget does not overrun. Another aspect of finance-related activity might be getting the class sizes right, based on both pedagogic and financial criteria. Institutions will not be able to afford classes that drop below the expected income levels, and opening a new class can have a considerable impact on profitability. You will have to learn about key performance indicators for your institution, such as average class size, ratio of teaching costs to income, and average cost per student for teaching materials (including photocopies and copyright protection fees). An understanding of these elements will greatly improve your ability to manage a successful school.

10. Performance

Another important part of the manager's role is to monitor and improve performance. A language teaching institution has to improve the learners' ability to use the language in as efficient, engaging and enduring a way as possible. Of course, this puts a lot of pressure on the teachers, but there are other elements within the school that also need to perform well: technology, self-study systems, assessment methods and support staff. As well as making sure average performance on an average day is good, managers also need to ensure that everyone can improve within their own context and style. Keep in mind, too, that improving performance which is already good is just as important as training up those who are underperforming.



Think about the school where you are currently working. If you were to do a performance rating today, which areas would require the most improvement? Make a list of key areas and reflect on how they might be improved.

10 roles and responsibilities in an ideal management team

Most institutions over a certain size have a team of managers whose combined responsibilities cover the whole learner journey from the initial enquiry right through to course completion. Being part of a team has the benefit of removing a lot of pressure from individuals; it also ensures that most people can play to their strengths. In an ideal world this adds up to a very positive learning experience for all members of the team. In larger institutions there will be a wide range of senior management roles helping to develop the vision and strategy. In this unit we will concentrate on the roles and responsibilities of the hands-on operational team.

1. Organising and monitoring learning

The academic manager is responsible for organising and monitoring students' learning. They take into consideration each student's learning objectives, their current level and the amount of time they have available. They will also try to choose the most suitable class and teacher, and monitor progress regularly, either through student and teacher feedback, by sitting in on classes or through informal conversations with participants and teachers.

2. Timetabling

At the heart of all institutions is the timetable. A wide range of factors have to be taken into consideration when deciding which teachers will teach which classes in which rooms. If the teaching is to be taking place off-site, the teacher's journey from their home to the teaching location will also need to be considered. Long working days are illegal in certain countries, whether that relates to the number of teaching hours in total or the span of the day from the first class to the last. Trying to ensure that each class is taught well with each teacher having a good spread of classes can be further complicated by teacher preferences for level and the need to continually vary their load. Timetabling requires more than just a good knowledge of spreadsheets: knowing the teachers and the students is also key. It is also an excellent way of developing a wide range of management skills and handling both qualitative and quantitative data. (See also Unit 35.)

3. Assessing students for level

Being responsible for assessing learners' levels is an important role for both pedagogic and commercial reasons. All learners are usually assessed and placed in the appropriate level of class when they first join an institution. Stakeholders in this placement include the learner, future classmates, parents, and anyone else interested in the progress made by the learner. Although initial placement is important, it is only a judgement call based on test materials, level descriptors and the assessor's experience and intuition. If the learner is further ahead or further behind than at first realised, then a change can be made. A level co-ordinator's role might involve choosing appropriate materials and coursebooks for the level, advising on curriculum and assessing progress. Depending on your school, there might be specific language areas to be assessed, including grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and the four main skills as well as soft skills, such as collaboration and communication.

4. Welfare and student advice

There are numerous factors outside the classroom that can have an impact on learners, and many of these come under the remit of the student counsellor. Typical areas of concern will vary depending on the age of the learner, the nature of the course and its location. Learners outside their home country may have intercultural issues to contend with, a new teaching approach, or psychological matters linked to being away from home. All students will be concerned about the amount of progress they are making and will feel under pressure if expectations (theirs and those of other stakeholders) are not being met. Many students have no real understanding of the amount of time and effort required to make progress in a language, which relies so much on practice and skills development.

5. Sales and marketing

In many institutions, particularly smaller ones, sales and marketing are the responsibility of the same people. Teachers often move into these areas because there are transferable skills involved: good teachers are usually quite persuasive, articulate and good at communicating, and so are good salespeople. Knowing exactly what goes on in the classroom and how challenges can be overcome is a useful attribute when promoting a particular institution or course. Writing honest but engaging promotional materials or social media content can also come more easily to people who have recently been teaching because they have recent practical examples to base their claims on. There are excellent sales and marketing people who haven't come from the classroom, but it really can be a plus if teaching experience can be tapped into. For those who come from a non-teaching background, ensure they have an active observation role within the school. As non-experts, they will have worthwhile comments to make about the teaching being delivered. Likewise, encourage managers who have come from an academic background to sit in on sales or finance meetings.

6. Curriculum and course design

This is an area that is key to an institution's success and needs careful and constant management. Most learners will only experience a part of the curriculum, as they will only be in the school for a fixed period of time but it is vital that each part is well paced, varied and meaningful with realistic and achievable learning outcomes. Institutions offering short, intensive courses might only be able to focus on one or two skills or prepare a learner for a particular exam or a professional task like a conference or a presentation; however, whatever the time available, appropriate aims and course content should be provided. In institutions where the learners attend classes for longer periods, the curriculum has to be graded and paced to cover a reasonable amount of learning – not so much that it becomes overwhelming and difficult, but not so little that learners feel they are coasting.

7. Product research and development

We have already mentioned that, as the market changes, institutions need to reassess their courses and develop new ones. Schools make huge efforts to take advantage of new technologies in language teaching in order to develop independent study through blended learning and flipped classrooms. And this will continue to become increasingly important as learners insist on getting maximum benefit from their courses. Make sure that the investment your school makes in new technology is well considered and future-proofed. This makes the role of course research and design increasingly important.

8. Recruitment

Having the right staff ensures that the majority of courses delivered will be well designed, successfully marketed, professionally delivered and accurately assessed. Getting the right people and keeping them is therefore key. Choosing staff who are going to fit in, who are going to bring something new and who are also going to want to stay for a reasonable length of time comes down to having good recruitment systems in place and a reputation for being a good employer. Having the best possible terms available will always act in the institution's interests as they try to attract good staff, but there are other factors which can help with recruitment, such as good professional development and career opportunities. See Unit 15 for more on this.

9. In-service training

One factor that is usually high on the list of what staff expect from an employer is good-quality training. It seems logical that an organisation dedicated to teaching would consider education for their own staff as a priority, but this is not always the case. Organisations that take training seriously and provide just enough in-service training tend to retain and develop good teachers. Getting it right is hard since some teachers do not welcome extra training, seeing themselves as already adequately qualified. Others might require more training, so coming up with a training plan which is the result of talking to the staff is an important management decision. Finally, ensure that your organisation is offering a wide range of delivery methods such as workshops, meetings, subscriptions to magazines and attendance at conferences.

10. Learner technology and resources

We touched earlier on the importance of technology in teaching. Management of those resources is a vital part of the management team's responsibilities. There are a huge number of decisions to be made to make sure the best possible learning environment is being set up. Sometimes the key decision might already have been made regarding which learning platform to use, for example. For the person responsible for this area, however, there is still much to do. Finding a balance of useful, efficient and trackable learning activities which appeal to both learners and teachers is what this role is all about.



Spend some time thinking about your current school. What technology resources are available to your teachers and students? Could there be more? Would they be used? How would things have to change?

10 transferable skills for teachers who want to be managers

Becoming a manager should not be seen as a major change, but rather part of normal career development. Taking on new responsibilities might involve managing other teachers, but it might also mean managing projects, resources, students or a mixed team of both teachers and administrative staff. There are plenty of skills that you will have developed in the classroom and which are going to be of immediate use in your new role. This unit will allow you to identify which ones you have already.

1. Communication

Language training is fundamentally about developing your students' communicative ability, and as a teacher you are well versed in the importance of these skills and how to use them effectively. You need to present new language and content, keep your classes informed about their development, have tutorials and other conversations, listen actively to their worries and suggestions and report concisely and unambiguously on their progress. As soon as you take on a management role, you will need to be able to move projects forward and hold meetings to inform people of your decisions, always remembering to listen to people and to let them know their views have been taken on board. Many of these skills have been honed in the classroom and can be transferred to a managerial role.

2. Product development

As a teacher, you might well have developed an interest in course design and materials development. It might have been for class use only, for example, a worksheet to sit alongside a reading text or a game to provide revision of a particular item. You might have been involved in organising teaching hours to fit a new coursebook or writing assessments for a particular level. As a user of classroom resources and the main driver of progress for a particular class, you are in an excellent position to use that know-how on a broader level for other classes apart from your own. The knowledge you have about curriculum design for one class now needs to be broadened to cover a number of classes. Similarly, your ability to produce materials for one or two classes will be useful across the whole school.

3. Project management

Managing any group of learners for the duration of a course and achieving the expected learning outcomes requires great skill. Keeping all the students engaged and interested, however well they are doing, and making sure that their individual milestones are being met is just one example of project management. Ensuring learners, parents, sponsors and managers are all informed of progress, have opportunities to give feedback and know that they will be listened to is all part of this process. Getting any group of learners from A to B given all the variables there will be on the way is a great testament to your project management skills.

4. Training and professional development

As you reflect on your own teaching, perhaps carrying out small classroom research projects, you will gain a valuable insight into how students learn. Making small adjustments to your practice and seeing what happens is a rewarding way of developing your own good practice. Reading and peer observations will add to your understanding, as will developing a working knowledge of the teaching materials available. An academic management role in any school or department would require this sort of experience. It will put you in good stead to lead workshops, observe teachers and be of use on the professional development team.

5. Course design and curriculum

Experience you have gained in the classroom will give you a head start when it comes to helping with course development and curriculum design. Your institution might perceive a gap in the market or a new type of student and want to encourage them to sign up. To do this successfully, the organisation has to be able to offer a course designed with appropriate aims and objectives, and a clear prediction of the time required. Your skills will be valuable in ensuring that the learning outcomes, success criteria and course content are coherent. At a later stage you might develop into a materials writer, briefed to ensure that the institution's resources remain up to date and relevant.

6. Assessment

'Assessment literacy' (i.e. understanding how assessment can be used to inform our teaching as well as how it can inform students about their achievements) is a major part of professional development in many institutions. Developing assessment materials that are both valid and efficient (in terms of time spent) is a skill only a small number of teachers are likely to have. As the language-learning world becomes more used to detailed level descriptors, and a requirement to prove the reliability of assessment tools becomes the norm, teachers with skills in assessment will be valuable and in high demand.

7. Mentoring

Mentoring is usually carried out by more experienced teachers in a school, and is an excellent learning experience for a senior teacher on the way to becoming a manager. The skills required of a good mentor are an ability to listen, to offer useful, practical, immediate solutions, to reassure, and to provide a sympathetic ear. While a mentor usually has only a couple of mentees and has to leave certain questions for the managers to answer, even on this reduced scale, mentoring constitutes very useful preparation for certain management techniques.

8. Promotion

One adjective that often features in positive student evaluations is 'enthusiastic'. Teachers who show enthusiasm tend to be well respected by learners. This passion can manifest itself in different ways, but learners are sensitive to it and teachers and managers need to develop it if they haven't got it. It is hard to be enthusiastic all the time, but it is important for teachers to remember that, although they might be covering a particular language item for the hundredth time, it is not the hundredth time for the learner. This ability to kindle interest at any time of the week or term is a huge asset, and can be transferred into a sales or marketing role. Clients often respond positively to an enthusiastic person, and combined with trust, the result can be a persuasive combination.

9. Versatility

When we talk about ELT management, 'versatility' is a word that often crops up. Managers need to be great generalists who can cope with a wide range of tasks, tapping into a large skill set. Making sure classrooms are fit for purpose might well involve moving furniture one minute and the next you might be showing a potential customer around the same building. You could be checking attendance for visa purposes in the morning and trying to give helpful feedback to one of your teachers in the afternoon. This versatility is often gained from teaching, where you are often called upon to perform professionally in a rapidly changing situation.

10. Classroom management in general



All the tasks performed in a classroom have their management equivalents. Spend some time looking at a typical day and deciding what management hats a teacher has on at any given time, from checking attendance, to dealing with latecomers, to setting up tasks, to giving instructions, and so on. Look at the table on page 160 of the Appendix and discuss with colleagues or reflect alone on which skills you have which are transferable.

“Moving from teaching to management presents its challenges, but there are many transferable skills and approaches that can stand a teacher in good stead. Time and workload management, organisational skills, and coping with complexity will all be familiar. The teacher’s people skills with individuals and across teams, as well as the self-awareness that develops from self-reflective teaching, and the ability to make reasoned judgements are transferable directly to the management office. Perhaps most important however, is that unique insight teachers have into what is of most relevance to successful teaching and learning, that can be positively influenced when they move into a management role.”

Jo Thomas, Centre Director Centre for Languages, Wintec, Hamilton, New Zealand

10 external organisations and partners you need to work with

It is nice to think of a language school existing in isolation with a fixed number of teachers and happy, motivated students. This would mean an easier teaching environment, more homogeneous classes and time to focus on teaching your class. In reality, schools are in a constant state of flux, with new learners to get started, established classes heading towards the end of a term, short courses coming and going, exam classes getting close to deadlines and so on. The world outside the school is also changing, and a lot of those changes will bring benefits or challenges to the school. To be in the best place to deal with them all is to be in regular contact with other external organisations.

1. Teachers' associations

Every country, region and town has associations of teachers, formed with the aim of sharing ideas, discussing issues and helping to professionalise the industry. Encouraging staff to attend meetings and conferences, and joining local teachers' associations yourself, will keep your institution in touch with what is happening in terms of the market, the law, national or regional policies, and innovations in course content and delivery.

2. Providers' associations

These are groups of schools with similar aims and values. There may well be a mix of private and public organisations within the association, but they will all be keen to share ideas and discuss issues, particularly in terms of large data and trends. Talking to competitors allows you to see which sectors are growing and which are in decline, and might even provide you with good sources of potential staff members if you can offer career opportunities to new recruits. Associations often have more influence compared with individual organisations, so membership is nearly always beneficial. At all levels, lobbying by groups will have a bigger impact than that done by an individual, whether in terms of improving standards, developing the profession, or speaking up for a particular sector on a specific issue such as health and safety.

3. ELT publishers

It's worth forming a relationship with both local publishers and international publishers. The larger publishers are keen to involve schools and institutions in market research, and this can be an interesting area for certain teachers to get involved in. Helping with research might sometimes lead to other work, such as writing materials or helping promote titles at conferences. Publishers are also aware of the kinds of courses that are being developed elsewhere, giving you a broader view of the ELT world. Their websites and teachers' clubs also provide a huge amount of professional development and teaching resources.

4. Government ministries and associations

The extent to which you are involved with ministries and government organisations will depend on the status of your school and the type of learner you are dealing with. In many countries, the ministry of education (or equivalent) has a lot of influence over curriculum, learning outcomes and assessment, and it is beneficial for organisations to be a part of that consultation process. In other countries, organisations such as the British Council have an important role to play and can be a useful source of advice and ideas.

5. Examination boards

The influence of examination boards on ELT continues to grow as their exams are used as proof of level for an increasing range of activities – from university entry through to visa applications. With so many students learning with a view to working, studying or living in an English-speaking context, exams like TOEFL, TOEIC or IELTS have become ends in themselves for certain students. Knowing what the exam boards are doing and planning is therefore important. Encouraging teachers to become examiners or item writers is a useful part of professional development.

6. Influencers

As in any industry, there are various influencers you might need to be aware of. Everyone is looking for the next ‘magic method’ that can be used to teach anyone English quickly. Speakers at conferences, bloggers, marketing experts and researchers will all claim to have discovered something new. New teaching approaches come and go; some have a short life but others can have an influence on your teachers and learners. With the development of social media, these influencers can have an impact more quickly than in the past. In any case, all new ideas are worth knowing about and evaluating. Most classes and teachers rely on a combination of approaches and methods developed over time. Learner-centered teaching, for example, should be a key aspect of your classes but not 100% of the time. Other approaches that demand high levels of pronunciation or grammatical accuracy are equally valid, but if you have only three hours a week and a full curriculum, compromises will have to be made. As with so many aspects of management, you will need to evaluate what is out there and make a call as to what your institution should take on board.

7. Agents

If you are working in a market where schools benefit from recommendations and sales from third-party agents, you will be aware of how important it is to remain in regular contact with them and their associations. As well as being a valuable source of customers in their own right, they can be very useful in suggesting new course types for you to consider offering.

8. Accreditation bodies

Depending on your market, there will be various bodies offering accreditation. The benefits of being accredited include being compliant with national requirements, being benchmarked to a particular standard, and being validated in a way that will allow you to attract both customers and staff. The downside of the process is that the actual inspection can put a lot of stress on your organisation at a busy time of the year. Once the right systems and processes are in place, however, it should allow your organisation to run more efficiently, so it is worth ensuring those standards are always maintained. Not being accredited in a market where the competition does have accreditation will make your commercial survival difficult. Try to ensure that the criteria used to benchmark the various aspects of the organisation at inspection time are also used at other times as part of an ongoing quality improvement process.

9. Consumers

Language teaching is just like any other product in that there are consumer organisations testing and commenting on our products and services – and rightly so. Huge amounts of money are invested by governments, companies, parents and individuals in an attempt to improve language levels, and all customers are entitled to a reasonable return, good learning conditions, qualified teachers, realistic aims and excellent resources. We know what we would expect as end users, and we must ensure our customers get the same.

10. Local business support and training organisations



It is always good to step outside the bubble of our own school and even outside the ELT industry itself to connect with other local organisations. Language learning is not really understood by most people, other than the fact that it is difficult, so any chance to network and promote your organisation should not be ignored. Local firms thinking about investing in language training will approach the people they know, so try to raise your organisation's profile whenever you can. You will also find that the more you know about how other businesses and organisations are run, the more your own business will benefit.

Find out the following:

- ▶ How do other organisations find customers?
- ▶ How do they develop new products?
- ▶ How do they set their prices?

All sorts of information is available once you take the time to form relationships outside your immediate circle.

“The following partners stand out as milestones in the development of our school. Joining the International House World Organisation back in the 80s provided expertise in teacher training, recruitment and methodology. Then working for and obtaining accreditation with the EAQUALS Association in the 90s helped enormously to improve our systems of work and later with the incorporation of the CEFR system of levels. I have no doubt that the school would not have developed so successfully without the contribution these external organisations have made and, in fact, continue to make.”

John Bradley – Ex IH San Sebastian]

10 conversations that need to happen in your school

Some of the best managers are those who are good at MWA (Managing by Walking Around). The benefits of talking to people both in and around your institution cannot be overstated. These conversations should take place regularly so that the exchange becomes natural and honest: everyone will gain from the chance to run their niggles, ideas and suggestions past you. By listening and showing that you find these conversations valuable, you will gain a lot of useful information. As with any strategy, use with care. Staff are not keen to be continually interrupted by a manager striving to be communicative. The conversations below are examples of when and how this approach can be used in a positive way.

11. How's it going?

The most important conversation of the day for many people is that brief chat on arrival, particularly if you can use it to find out how they are and what is happening. Make sure you know what levels people are teaching, what projects they are working on, if there is a new student in the class or if there is an exam coming up. Having your finger on the pulse in this way will allow colleagues to share things with you. It also prevents small things becoming blown out of all proportion. Maybe a room can be changed or a meeting shortened; perhaps some help with marking can be offered or a standby teacher found: any of these things might well just ease the pressure on a teacher. You can only find out what they need, though, by having regular chats and being approachable.

12. How did it go?

Equally important is knowing when people have been trying out something new, dealing with a difficulty or simply dealing with an extra task like an observation or a parents' meeting. Afterwards, allow them to give you some feedback, let off steam or even congratulate themselves. You can make sure that happens by simply being around to ask the question.

13. Well done!

Most of us like to be recognised for our successes, and nothing is more motivating than being praised unexpectedly, particularly by someone who has a million other things to think about. In any management position it is well worth being aware of the good things that people are doing and being ready to let them know. Comments such as 'I hear your class did really well with their project work' or 'Thanks for covering that class last week – the feedback was very good' are worth their weight in gold to a busy teacher.

14. Being around

Having an open-door attitude, even if you're in an open-plan office, is also a useful approach to management. Colleagues need to know that you are approachable and can be talked to. This is particularly important when you are in a new post or when you are dealing with new team members who need to get to know you. Being isolated and distant will not help. This doesn't mean you cannot have quiet times when you need to get on with other things. Just make sure you are available more often than not.

15. Difficult conversations

Difficult conversations are a key part of any organisation. As a manager it is your role to ensure that all conversations are two-sided and that everyone is listened to and says what they want to say. Sometimes you will be passing judgement on someone, giving negative feedback or asking them to do something they don't want to do. Learn to do this in a neutral, natural and timely way. After a particularly difficult conversation, reflect on how it went, how the turns were taken, where it ended and how well it really went. Did all parties speak their minds? Did everyone understand the same things? Were your points clearly made and understood? Rehearse particularly sensitive conversations and try and predict how things might go.

16. Appraisal conversations

These will make up a formal part of the employment terms but it is important that (a) they actually take place and (b) they are taken seriously. As one of the conversations that should be taking place in a well-managed organisation, they are crucial. Ensuring that people think about their goals and ambitions in a serious, structured way is something all good schools should do. We look at appraisals in more detail in Unit 39.

17. Informal chats

The chat in the kitchen or by the vending machine is also part of the management process. Talking to people as they come in and out of work sessions, be it teaching or administrating, is a unique opportunity to touch base with them and see what is on their minds. Great ideas can come from these chats, and it is a useful way of finding out unofficially what their plans, thoughts, aims and worries are.

18. Suggestions meetings

It is often said that innovation is at the heart of all successful businesses and organisations, so why are so few places open to suggestions? The oft-repeated phrase: 'We've always done it this way – that's what people expect' might keep some staff and customers happy but it won't last for ever. 'We tried that before and it didn't work' is equally frustrating to hear. Make sure you have a system in place for conversations about your products, processes and services. For example, it could be a regular lunchtime slot every few weeks which is dedicated to suggestions. Maybe prizes could be awarded for the best suggestions of the year. If you have an online forum for staff members, dedicate part of it to new suggestions and make sure it is well moderated. Having a clear process for suggesting and getting feedback on suggestions will always pay off.

19. 'Welcome' conversations

So many great organisations fail to welcome new staff and students physically, thereby failing to ensure that, on a purely human level, people feel part of the new place. A lot of this can be overcome if people are introduced and common ground is found between them. In this way, the new staff member or student starts to feel part of something. Making sure that new students meet students from other classes, and that they know who the support staff are is also important, particularly when the teaching is off-site, or when staff operate at different times of the day.

20. Motivational conversations

As a manager, you might not have particular students you teach and, as such, your relationship with them will be different from those they have with their teachers. You will be the voice of the organisation and your opinions and comments will carry more weight, both in and out of the school. Make sure you find time to have conversations with them about their progress, their homework and their ambitions. This will make them feel looked after, and it will also give you some real insights into how your organisation works and how it handles different customers' journeys. If you do enough of this it will become part of the institutional approach, and your team will start to do the same. Ensuring that learners feel they can open up to teachers is an important step in making them feel they are part of an ongoing learning process. Of course, there will be issues and setbacks, but doing this will also create a general sense of confidence that solutions can be found.

"I love the idea of 'One Minute Praisings' (Ken Blanchard). The DoS walks around and tries to catch her employees doing something good, which she then reinforces with immediate praise – perhaps adding a positive label which then acts as a self-fulfilling prophecy: For instance [during recess]: 'I love the way you just replied to that student in English. You are so committed and you set such a good example'."

Nick Michelioudakis , trainer and author, Athens, Greece.



Strategic management and communication

Many ELT managers rise up through the ranks from a teaching role and, perhaps as a result of this, have a 'bottom-up' approach to management. In other words, they have a good understanding of the core product of teaching/learning and its operational needs. However, they sometimes lack a 'top-down' perspective, or the ability to manage strategically. Shifting from classroom management and the micro-management of academic tasks to the bigger picture of strategic management can be a challenge.

In this section we aim not only to explore approaches to strategic management, but also to look at other familiar areas that may require a different management perspective.

We begin by asking some key questions about strategic management and its crucial role in driving an organisation forward. In Units 9 and 10 we go on to look at ways of ensuring that an organisation is dynamic and adaptable, focusing on the important role that team-building and team morale plays.

Units 11 and 12 look at two of the more familiar aspects of the ongoing management role: meetings and decision-making. Finally, we bring together the broader area of strategic management and the areas covered in Units 9 to 12 by looking at the issue of change management and how change can either succeed or fail as a result of management actions.