



**Will the Real Teacher
Please Stand Up?
(Finding Your Own Rhythm For Teaching)**

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The Teacher

"Concerning a teacher's influence, I have come to the frightening conclusion that I am the decisive element in the classroom. It's my personal approach that creates the climate. It's my daily mood that makes the weather. As a teacher, I possess a tremendous power to make a child's life miserable or joyous. I can be a tool of torture or an instrument of inspiration. I can humiliate or humor, hurt or heal. In all situations, it is my response that decides whether a crisis will be escalated or deescalated, and a child humanized or dehumanized."

--Haim Ginott

Tips For Being An Effective Teacher

By Debbie Silver

THE FIRST FEW DAYS:

Be ready for the students!

- Find out ahead who they are.
- Make phone calls, write letters, etc. to welcome them.
- Personalize your room; make it comfortable for the students and for you.
- Make your first bulletin board about you.
- Do engaging activities on the first day; do routine matters ahead of time (or later).

Be warm, be friendly, and be **ASSERTIVE!** Be a model for students.

- Go over procedures and routines.
- Tell them about yourself.
- Be very specific about your expectations.
- Model correct behavior.
- Practice correct behavior, procedures, and routines.
- Keep an index card on every child you teach with his/her schedule and other important data.

Find out about your students!

- Have them fill out personality inventories.
- Have them fill out family inventories; have volunteers correlate and distribute the information.
- Do activities to enhance self-concept and build team spirit.
- Read *100 Ways to Enhance Self-concept in the Classroom* by Jack Canfield and Harold C. Wells.
- Know their birthdays; celebrate important events for students.

HAVE A REASONABLE, CONSISTENT DISCIPLINE PLAN:

Remember that the goal is for students to have self-discipline!

- Be very specific about the rules.
- Violation of rules should have logical, consistent consequences.
- Stress the word "choice."
- Have a reward system that moves towards intrinsic rewards.

Above all, maintain the child's dignity!

- Use a "no strings attached" discipline system.
- Address the behavior, not the character of the child; leave off the value judgment.
- Criticize privately; praise publicly (except in cases where the staff or students prefer private attention).
- Write notes to students and parents reinforcing positive behavior.

Be proactive with your discipline.

- Utilize groupings that promote appropriate behavior.
- Make "good news" phone calls to parents.
- Move constantly; stand close to potential behavior problems.

FORM PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS:

Call or send letters to tell good news as often as possible.

Involve your parents as much as possible.

During conferences be warm, friendly, open, and **ASSERTIVE!**

- Have a plan.
- Defend your administrators and colleagues publicly or say nothing at all.
- Refuse to be defensive.
- Stick to the subject.
- If you made a mistake, admit it, apologize, and refocus on the child's behavior.
- Establish a common ground.

NEVER gossip with parents.

ESTABLISH POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS WITH ADMINISTRATORS AND STAFF:

Find a mentor or touchstone; stay away from negative people.

Act in a professional manner.

- In most cases, stay out of the lounge.
- NEVER gossip.
- Be yourself! Take the "real you" into your job and be prepared to be criticized for being different; ignore it.
- Be helpful to colleagues, staff, and administrators.

- NEVER allow negative comments about other administrators, students, faculty members, or staff to be made in front of students, faculty members, staff, or parents.
- Follow definitive school and district policies and rules.
- Keep administrators aware of what you are doing.
- Ask for help; do not get your feelings hurt; grow.
- Volunteer, but do not overload.
- NEVER tattle.
- Come early and stay late.

PROMOTE A CURRICULUM RELEVANT AND EXCITING!

Be a creative instructional leader.

- Plan lessons that address different learning styles; individualize instruction as much as possible
- Utilize teachable moments.
- Always demonstrate high expectations.
- Use a variety of hands-on, relevant activities appropriate to your subject area (teach like you would like to be taught).

- Employ cooperative learning whenever appropriate (read literature by Slavin and Johnson & Johnson).

- Follow the learning cycle model when developing lessons.

Become the ultimate professional .

- Join your professional organizations, and go to workshops and meetings.
- Listen to others; share ideas.
- Read subject and pedagogical professional literature.

- **BE PREPARED!**

- Get volunteers to help you (parents, business people, college students, friends).

GENERAL STRATEGIES FOR EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT:

Always focus on the question, "What is my goal?" Your answer should guide every decision that you make.

Never, ever allow your students' time to be wasted.

Develop routines and procedures that minimize confusion and time consumption.

Strive first to understand, then to be understood.

Do not try to rationalize with irrational people.

Remember that sometimes it is best to "agree to disagree."

Learn to fight only the "Important Battles."

Stay flexible.

Get to school EARLY!

Learn to delegate class "housekeeping chores"; save your energy for teaching!

Above all, KEEP YOUR SENSE OF SELF AND YOUR SENSE OF HUMOR!!

Debbie Silver

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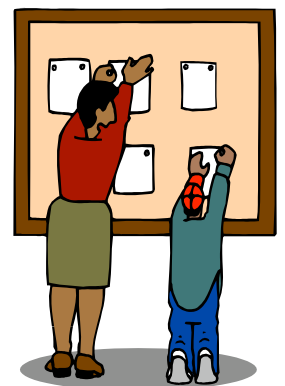
20 Basic Effective Teacher Qualities

1. Is fundamentally a kind, caring person who listens
2. Possesses a deep understanding of the subject matter
3. Is self-confident
4. Believes s/he can make a difference
5. Has good communication skills
6. Is creative and interesting
7. Has an open mind; is willing to try new things
8. Is generally optimistic and positive
9. Has a curiosity about the world
10. Is resourceful
11. Has a sense of humor
12. Is flexible
13. Shows tolerance and is not judgmental
14. Is able to organize time and materials effectively
15. Can be described by the students as "with it"
16. Is energetic and determined
17. Demonstrates professional and personal integrity
18. Has patience and persistence
19. Is willing to "go the extra mile" for students
20. Acts as an advocate for all students

10 WAYS TO SHARE WHO YOU ARE WITH STUDENTS

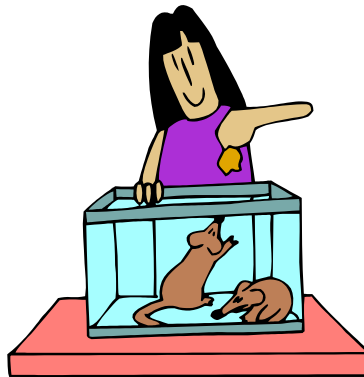
By Debbie Silver

1. Make a bulletin board about you. Put pictures of you when you were their age and on through your school career.
2. Have pictures of you, your family, your pets, and your friends framed and placed around the room.
3. Bring your scrapbook or old school yearbooks to class for students to view.
4. Weave relevant personal stories into appropriate teachable moments.
5. Participate in team building and/or advisory activities with students.
6. Stock a bookshelf with books you read at their age along with your personal favorites now.
7. Make a display or list of people you most admire.
8. Perform for them something you like to do such as a dance move, karate move, song, interpretative reading, magic trick, physical feat, or joke.
9. Bring in artifacts of your skills like a trophy, a certificate, a painting, a poem, a song, something you built, a needlepoint, a picture of your garden, a picture of you competing in a sport, a picture of you doing charitable work, or whatever it is you do when you are not with them.
10. Share with them your “dream list” of things you still want to do in this world before you leave it.



Ten Ways to Enhance Your Classroom Environment

Debbie Silver



1. Move classroom furniture around to suit your teaching style.
2. Bring in pets and plants.
3. Add your favorite fragrances.
4. Add music.
5. Bring in extra furniture like bookshelves, room dividers, bean bag chairs, and a small refrigerator.
6. Decorate with posters, pictures, student work, and your own artifacts.
7. Display models, diagrams, tip sheets, and illustrations of the subject matter you teach.
8. Add rugs.
9. Hang mobiles, kites, or student work from the ceiling or mount instructional posters on the ceiling.
10. Decorate your windows with curtains, window art, or creative shades.

Learning Styles

Behavioral and cognitive psychologists have long maintained that students come to school with certain inherent learning styles, many of which are at absolutely at odds with traditional teaching methods. Before we knew about Multiple Intelligences, teachers were encouraged by researchers to be mindful that students have fixed ways of internalizing new information. They told us that not all students learned equally well with traditional teaching strategies.

The concept of four basic personality types has its roots in ancient history and philosophy. Swiss psychologist Carl Jung (1923) popularized the division of personalities into four categories; thinking, sensing, feeling, and intuition. Since that time numerous psychometric instruments have been developed that basically attribute central human tendencies to four major groups. The MBTI® (Myers-Briggs Type Indicator) distinguishes areas similar to Jung's; extroverted/ introverted, intuitive/sensing, feeling/thinking, perceiving/judging. Silver (no relation), Strong & Associates, Inc. (1980) identify areas similar to Jung's; sensing/thinking (mastery style), sensing/feeling (interpersonal style), intuitive/thinking (understanding style), intuitive/feeling (self-expressive style).

Religious writer, Florence Littauer (1986) has spoken at length on her four categories; sanguine, choleric, melancholy, and phlegmatic. A current popular testing/training program is that of True Colors®, which uses colors to indicate these personality distinctions; courageous, conventional, compassionate, conceptual. And there are many others.

The important thing to remember is that whatever the classifications, there is demonstrable evidence that different learners can best be taught through identified instructional strategies and assessments. Teachers can most effectively engage each and every learner by adapting differentiated approaches.

Most of the learning style inventories and categories I have studied have the same theoretical underpinnings as the one by Dr. Anthony Gregorc. The following classifications are the property of Dr. Anthony Gregorc. They have emerged from his extensive research on the topic of learning styles. For a full presentation of this material along with a self-scoring inventory, please visit Dr. Gregorc's website at <http://www.gregorc.com/instrume.html>

Applying What We Know Student Learning Styles

By [Dennis W. Mills Ph.D.](#)

Research tells us that we now have 100% new information every five years. If that trend continues, students who are in grades one through three will graduate during a time where, in some technological fields, there will be new information every 38 days. That could mean that the information they learned this month may be outdated two months from now!

David Kearns, former CEO of the Xerox Corporation, defines "uneducated" as "*not knowing how to keep on learning.*"

That is telling us that as teachers we need to help our students learn how to be life-long learners. If students haven't learned how to learn, they may not be able to be effectively trained in a career that they choose.

You and I receive new information every day that we live. Understanding how we naturally take in and process that information will go a long way toward making us life-long learners. Helping our students understand how they naturally take in and process information will go a long way toward making them life-long learners.

We know that people are not all alike. We each see the world in a way that makes the most sense to each of us as individuals. This is called **perception**. Our perceptions shape what we think, how we make decisions, and how we define what's important. Our individual perception also determines our natural learning strengths, or **learning style**.

Since we are not basically alike, when we approach a learning task or situation, we do not all benefit from the same approach. Each individual has his or her own unique learning strengths and weaknesses. It is vital for us as teachers to deliberately use a variety of methods to reach the students.

There are many approaches to individual learning styles. One of the most effective models for use in learning comes from the research of Anthon F. Gregorc and Kathleen A. Butler. The Gregorc model provides an organized way to consider how the mind works.

There are two perceptual qualities: *concrete* and *abstract*.

Concrete: This quality enables you to register information directly through your five senses: sight, smell, touch, taste, and hearing. When you are using your concrete ability, you are dealing with the obvious, the "here and now." You are not looking for hidden meanings, or making relationships between ideas or concepts. "*It is what it is.*"

Abstract: this quality allows you to visualize, to conceive ideas, to understand or believe that which you cannot actually see. When you are using your abstract quality, you are using your intuition, your imagination, and you are looking beyond what is to the more subtle implications. "*It is not always what it seems.*"

Although all people have both concrete and abstract perceptual abilities to some extent, each person is usually comfortable using one more than the other. The person whose natural strength is in the **concrete**, for example, may communicate in a direct, literal, no-nonsense manner. The person whose natural strength is the **abstract** may use more subtle ways to get a point across.

There are two ordering abilities in Gregorc's model:

Sequential: Allows your mind to organize information in a *linear*, step-by-step manner. When using your sequential ability, you are following a logical train of thought, a traditional approach to dealing with information. You may also prefer to have a plan and to follow it, rather than relying on impulse.

Random: Lets your mind organize information by *chunks*, and in no particular order. When you are using your random ability, you may often be able to skip steps in a procedure and still produce the desired result. You may even start in the middle, or at the end, and work backwards. You may also prefer your life to be more impulsive, or spur of the moment, than planned.

Again, both ordering abilities are present in each person, but usually a pattern emerges for using one over the other more comfortably.

There are four combinations of the strongest perceptual and ordering ability in each individual:

1. **Concrete Sequential (CS)**
2. **Abstract Random (AR)**
3. **Abstract Sequential (AS)**
4. **Concrete Random (CR)**

No one is a "pure" style. Each of us have a unique combination of natural strengths and abilities. By learning some of the common characteristics of each of the four combinations used by Gregorc, we can recognize and value what our students do best. We can help them to improve in areas that are least used and understood.

It is my hope that by understanding your students' learning styles, you will be better able to adapt your teaching styles and strategies to meet their needs. It is not as important to figure out what a person is as it is to recognize **how** and **why** a person is doing something.

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Gregorc's 4 Basic Learning Styles

The **Abstract Random** learner's approach to change is subject to emotions and level of interest. Her/his approach to life is idealistic, emotional, and always intense. This learner prefers an environment that allows emotional and physical freedom, is active, and is vibrant. S/he is distinguishable by attention to human behavior and an extraordinary ability to sense and interpret feelings. S/he prefers to receive information in an unstructured manner, and is therefore, comfortable in groups and with busy environments. S/he tends to evaluate all experiences "as a whole" and see the world in "black and white."

Appropriate Instructional Strategies for the Abstract Random Learner:

- Role playing
- Team games
- Short reading assignments
- Discussions
- Videos
- Peer tutoring
- Group investigations
- Active, busy environments

NOTES:

The **Concrete Sequential** learner is usually slow and hesitant about change. This learner's approach to life is realistic, patient, and conservative. S/he prefers an environment that is ordered, quiet, and stable. S/he has a finely tuned ability to derive information through direct, hands-on experience. This person has an extraordinary development of the five senses and likes touchable concrete materials. This student likes step-by-step directions when confronted with a new situation. S/he does not like surprises and prefers to be in control of most situations. S/he is the one learner who not only looks for directions but follows them!

Appropriate Instructional Strategies for the Concrete Sequential Learner:

Step-by-step directions
Workbooks
Drill and practice
Lectures with PowerPoint Demonstrations
Labeling drawings and models
Well-structured field trips
Color-coded study organizers
Logical sequencing
Focused, quiet environments

NOTES:

The **Abstract Sequential** learner is indecisive about change. This person focuses on knowledge and facts; s/he insists upon documentation before “buying into” new ideas. Her/his approach to life is realistic, serious, logically intellectual, and determined. S/he likes an environment that is mentally stimulating but non-authoritative. S/he likes to direct her/his own learning. This student has excellent decoding abilities in the areas of written, verbal, and image symbols. S/he has a preference for presentations that are rational and have substance. S/he pays attention to detail and usually prefers to work alone.

Appropriate Instructional Strategies for the Abstract Sequential Learner:

Extensive reading assignments
Lecture with time for reflection
Debate
Essays
Logic Problems
Research-based lessons
Finding information on the World Wide Web
Individual projects
Journaling
Inquiry-based activities
Quiet, well-controlled environments

NOTES:

The **Concrete Random** learner is open and amenable to change; this person is sometimes the instigator of change. Her/his approach to life is inquisitive and independent. S/he likes an environment that is competitive and stimulus-rich. This person has an experimental attitude that is often accompanied by a trial-and-error approach to problem solving. S/he gets the gist of ideas quickly and demonstrates the uncanny ability to make intuitive leaps in exploring unstructured problem-solving experiences. This person is often self-motivated and not interested in details.

Appropriate Instructional Strategies for the Concrete Random Learner:

- Independent study projects
- Learning games
- Simulations
- Optional reading assignments
- Open-ended discussions
- Divergent thinking activities
- Unstructured exploration time
- Mini-lectures
- Activities on the Internet
- Moderately active environments

NOTES:

LIST OF RELATED CITATIONS

“FINDING YOUR OWN RHYTHM FOR TEACHING”

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