



How Teacher Personality and Style Affects the Growth of Self Confidence in Students



*National Association of Special
Education Teachers*

About **NASET's** Survival Guides

NASET is proud to announce a series of Survival Guides for Special Educators that will provide practical information for individuals working with students with special needs. Each Survival Guide will cover a different topic commonly faced by special educator's experience during the school year. They contain practical and tried and true suggestions that we have developed and collected over the years.

At **NASET**, we are aware of the tremendous responsibilities, workload, and stress on all educators working in the field of special education. And we are all dedicated to ensuring that teachers receive the best possible resources when working with exceptional children and their parents.

Our research suggests that special educators want answers and direction using best practices and techniques. That is why we have streamlined all our Survival Guides with recommendations and information that can be used immediately in the classroom. We have written these guides in practical useful language, avoiding fancy jargon that may confuse any issues at hand.

Finally, these guides can be shared with parents so they can also understand the challenges faced by special educators, while also seeing practical real-world application of suggestions and recommendations that can be used for their children in the classroom.

Table of Contents

Introduction

Part 1 - Positive Teacher Characteristics

- ◆ GENUINENESS
- ◆ FAIRNESS
- ◆ ORGANIZATION
- ◆ LOGIC AND COMMON SENSE
- ◆ ABILITY TO SET CLEAR BOUNDARIES
- ◆ SENSE OF HUMOR OR LIGHTHEARTEDNESS
- ◆ ABILITY TO GIVE COMPLIMENTS
- ◆ ABILITY TO ADMIT MISTAKE
- ◆ WILLINGNESS TO LISTEN
- ◆ APPROACHABILITY

Other Positive Teacher Characteristics

Part 2 - Negative Teacher Characteristics

- ◆ EGO TEACHING
- ◆ EXCESSIVE CRITICISM
- ◆ BEING UNREASONABLE
- ◆ NARCISSISM
- ◆ RIGIDITY
- ◆ PUNISHMENT ORIENTATION
- ◆ DISORGANIZATION
- ◆ UNPREDICTABILITY
- ◆ LACK OF CONTROL
- ◆ CREATE ANXIETY IN STUDENTS
- ◆ “GOTCHA” MENTALITY
- ◆ OVERREACTIVITY

Other Negative Teacher Characteristics

How Teacher Personality and Style Affects the Growth of Self Confidence in Students

Introduction

Increasingly, teachers are becoming a primary influence in children's lives, and in some cases, they may be the only healthy adults some children encounter during the day. Twenty-five years ago, family structures were different, and teachers did not require the depth and variety of social/emotional skills that are required of today's teachers. Teachers today are not only educators, but therapists, parent substitutes, mentors, advocates, and more.

Therefore, it makes sense that a teacher's personality and teaching style can have a profound impact on children's academic performance and general development. The importance of teaching style in creating a positive environment in which student confidence is fostered is the discussion of this series. It will be especially important to step back and evaluate how you are defined as a teacher, your goals in teaching, and the way you present yourself to students. Does your teaching style allow for an environment where confidence, security, performance, and wellbeing can really be reinforced or an environment that may impede these and other factors in children?

No single aspect of a teacher's personality may be responsible for improving or impeding the growth of confidence in a student. For example, an extremely strict teacher who is fair, kind, genuine, logical, and nurturing may facilitate the growth of self-confidence and wellbeing despite being very strict. On the other hand, a teacher who is funny but unstructured and disorganized may not facilitate children's self-confidence or enhance performance. Even though the children love the teacher, they may not gain confidence or academic growth if the teacher cannot provide the real-life success experiences necessary for the growth of self-confidence, academic performance, security, and personal growth.

Part 1 - Positive Teacher Characteristics

GENUINENESS: if you describe a person as genuine, you approve of them because they are honest, truthful, and sincere in the way they live and in their relationships with other people.

This quality is shown by teachers who:

- ◆ Create a student-centered classroom environment.
- ◆ Go beyond what is expected of them to promote students' wellbeing.
- ◆ Are easily approachable.
- ◆ Are honest and up-front with students.
- ◆ Follow through what they say.
- ◆ Are consistent in their methods.
- ◆ Are not fake or hypocritical.

FAIRNESS: Fairness is treating people justly, not letting your personal feelings bias your decisions about others. You want to give everyone a fair chance, and believe there should be equal opportunity for all, though you also realize that what is fair for one person might not be fair for another.

Teachers with this quality:

- ◆ Can admit to making a mistake.
- ◆ Give assignments that consider students' needs and levels of ability.
- ◆ Give assignments that are reasonable in length with the main goal being feelings of success and accomplishment.
- ◆ Give tests that stick to what has been taught.
- ◆ Take a commonsense approach to grading homework and essays.
- ◆ Give helpful comments for improvement.
- ◆ Give students advance notice of quizzes and tests.
- ◆ Do not seek to “get” children by giving unfairly difficult assignments and tests.

ORGANIZATION: An organized personality is a person who is naturally neat, punctual, and detailed. Their habits and behaviors in life and at work are ordered,

planned and efficient. They have natural organizational skills that other personality types might have to work on to develop.

Teachers who have this characteristic will:

- ◆ Maintain order and routine in their classroom.
- ◆ Provide students with structure and logical rules that apply equally to all.
- ◆ Teach students to organize their materials, desks, and lockers.
- ◆ Have well-planned lessons with logical presentations and relevant follow-up assignments.
- ◆ Hand back tests, essays, and classwork in a reasonable amount of time

LOGIC AND COMMON SENSE: Logical thinking is a process of exploring different solutions to a given problem. Common sense is the ability to choose and apply the most appropriate solution for the problem from the list of explored solutions.

This quality is shown by teachers who:

- ◆ Recognize that students, like adults, have good and bad days.
- ◆ Understand that forces outside the classroom may be affecting a student's performance.
- ◆ Know the classroom is not the center of the universe.
- ◆ Know the difference between symptoms and problems and look for the root of the symptoms rather than label them in negative terms.
- ◆ Knows and believes that no child wants to fail in school and that failure is a symptom that needs to be investigated.

ABILITY TO SET CLEAR BOUNDARIES: examples of a person exhibiting healthy boundaries include:

- ◆ Being able to say, "no," and accept when someone else says "no"
- ◆ Being able to clearly communicate both wants and needs.
- ◆ Honoring and respecting their own needs and the needs of others.

Teachers with this ability will:

- ◆ Take a stand to promote fairness and enforce classroom rules, even if it makes them unpopular.
- ◆ Set clear and fair boundaries for students who may be out of control.
- ◆ Run the classroom with a sense of conviction rather than fear and intimidation.

SENSE OF HUMOR OR LIGHTEARTEDNESS: humor can be used to make others feel good, to gain intimacy, or to help buffer stress

This quality is shown by teachers who:

- ◆ Place priority on critical issues and understand that to err is human.
- ◆ Allow students to explore their “child” side without admonishing them to grow up.
- ◆ Can laugh at themselves when they make a mistake.
- ◆ Understand the difference between telling jokes and making fun of or belittling students.
- ◆ Know that no child should be the focus of a joke.

ABILITY TO GIVE COMPLIMENTS: Feeling valued and appreciated are basic human needs.

Teachers who possess this quality will:

- ◆ Spontaneously compliment students for their achievements and for trying their best.
- ◆ Find positive things to tell students before making suggestions on how to improve something.
- ◆ Make constructive comments on tests and essays without devaluing students’ efforts.
- ◆ Provide students with small notes and cards recognizing a decent job, a commonsense decision, assistance to another student, and so forth.

ABILITY TO ADMIT A MISTAKE: These are admirable traits, but a willingness to admit you do not have all the answers is an underrated characteristic for success. It turns out openness, a willingness to express uncertainty and the propensity to admit mistakes may take you further than a single-minded belief in yourself.

Teachers who possess this quality will:

- ◆ Admit their mistakes to let students see that mistakes present a learning opportunity.
- ◆ Not be afraid to show students how to correct a decision that is obviously wrong.
- ◆ Is solution oriented rather than blame oriented?

WILLINGNESS TO LISTEN: A recent study found that listening carefully and attentively increases the level of humility in any conversation. Being an unskilled listener can affect one's quality of relationships and quality of performance. To become a better listener, be comfortable with silence and believe in the benefits of listening.

Teachers who can listen:

- ◆ Put aside time to sit down with students who need to say something.
- ◆ Understand that reaching out to an adult is a difficult step for many students, especially for those who have no one to listen to at home.
- ◆ Teach students that being listened to does not always mean that someone will agree or be able to do what they ask.

APPROACHABILITY: Being approachable is all about being friendly, open, and welcoming. People who are described as approachable tend to make other people feel comfortable and are good at getting others to open to their feelings.

(approachability)

Teachers with this quality:

- ◆ Can make students feel at ease when they come to ask a question.
- ◆ Have a high approachability factor and students never hesitate to approach them for any reason.
- ◆ Exhibit a sense of warmth and comfort.

- ◆ Cultivate an atmosphere in which children do not fear negative reactions.
- ◆ Command respect does not demand respect.

OTHER POSITIVE QUALITIES OF EFFECTIVE TEACHERS

According to the Knowles Teacher Initiative, (2023) qualities of good teachers included:

KNOWLEDGE OF CONTENT

- ◆ Sharing personal enthusiasm for the content and learning
- ◆ Engaging all students in the content

PEDAGOGY (Pedagogy refers to the method and practices of a teacher. It's how they approach their teaching style, and relates to the different theories they use, how they give feedback, and the assessments they set. When people refer to the pedagogy of teaching, it means how the teacher delivers the curriculum to the class.)

- ◆ Personalizing and adapting instruction
- ◆ Engaging students in learning
- ◆ Challenging students to work hard and think critically.
- ◆ Using a host of pedagogical “best practices”

DISPOSITION TOWARDS TEACHING

- ◆ Caring for students
- ◆ Communicating with students and their families
- ◆ Collaborating with colleagues
- ◆ Reflecting on teaching practice

According to Abeka (2023), characteristics of effective teachers include:

PREPARED

The most effective teachers come to class each day ready to teach that day's lesson. They:

- ◆ Jump right into the lesson with enthusiasm.
- ◆ Avoid wasting instructional time. They start class on time, teach for the entire class period, and time flies in their classes.

CREATIVE

The most effective teachers are resourceful and inventive in their teaching methods. They:

- ◆ Might wear a clown suit if the class reaches its academic goal.
- ◆ Agree to participate in the school talent show.
- ◆ Use technology effectively in the classroom.

DISPLAY A PERSONAL TOUCH

The most effective teachers are approachable and friendly. They:

- ◆ Connect with students personally.
- ◆ Are genuinely interested in who their students are as people.
- ◆ Visit the students' world. For instance, they sit with them in the cafeteria; they attend sporting events, plays, and other events outside normal school hours.

CULTIVATE A SENSE OF BELONGING

- ◆ The most effective teachers have a way of making students feel welcome and comfortable in their classrooms.
- ◆ Have a warm, welcoming attitude that helps students know they belong in your classroom.
- ◆ Communicate how much they love teaching and prefer it to other occupations.

COMPASSIONATE

The most effective teachers are concerned about students' personal problems and can relate to them. Numerous stories established how the sensitivity and compassion of caring teachers affected them in profound and lasting ways. They:

- ◆ Understand when students are having a challenging time and act accordingly.
- ◆ Remember that students are people with lives outside of the classroom, just like teachers.

According to Strong (2023) in his article *Qualities of Effective Teachers* notes the following quality as effective:

THE TEACHER AS A PERSON

The teacher is the representative of the content and the school. How a teacher presents himself makes an impression on administrators, colleagues, parents, and students. Often a student links the preference of a particular subject to a teacher and the way the subject was taught.

A teacher who exudes enthusiasm and competence for a content area may transfer those feelings to the students. In addition, how the teacher relates to the pupils has an impact on the students' experience in the class. The teacher's personality is one of the first sets of characteristics to look for in an effective teacher. Many aspects of effective teaching can be cultivated, but it is difficult to effect change in an individual's personality.

Positive qualities include:

- ◆ Assumes ownership for the classroom and the students' success
- ◆ Uses personal experiences as examples in teaching.
- ◆ Understands feelings of students
- ◆ Communicates clearly.
- ◆ Admits mistakes and corrects them immediately.
- ◆ Think about and reflect on practice.
- ◆ Displays a sense of humor.
- ◆ Dresses appropriately for the position
- ◆ Maintains confidential trust and respect.
- ◆ Is structured, yet flexible and spontaneous.
- ◆ Is responsive to situations and students' needs.
- ◆ Enjoys teaching and expects students to enjoy learning.
- ◆ Looks for the win-win solution in conflict situations.

- ◆ Listens attentively to student questions and comments.
- ◆ Responds to students with respect, even in demanding situations.
- ◆ Communicates high expectations consistently.
- ◆ Conducts one-on-one conversations with students.
- ◆ Treats students equally and fairly
- ◆ Has positive dialogue and interactions with students outside the classroom?
- ◆ Invest time with single students or small groups of students outside the classroom.
- ◆ Maintains a professional manner at all times.
- ◆ Addresses students by name
- ◆ Speaks in an appropriate tone and volume.
- ◆ Works actively with students

According to National University (2023), You don't need to have a specific personality type to be an inspiring and effective teacher. However, there are some useful traits you should work on developing or strengthening if your goal is to be a more engaging and successful educator. Some of these include:

1. Adaptability

Adaptability is a must for teachers, who need to continuously evaluate what's working for their students – and even more importantly, what isn't working. Being adaptable and flexible allows you to flow between different theories of learning and modes of teaching – something we'll discuss momentarily – without becoming immobilized by stress or indecision.

2. Empathy

Empathy is the ability to understand what another person is feeling or experiencing – put simply, putting yourself in another person's shoes. As a teacher, it's vital to practice empathy instead of making assumptions – for instance, making efforts to understand and address the root issue that's causing a student to fall behind their peers, perform more poorly than they used to, or lash out in class.

3. Patience

Patience is important both to possess and to model for your students — who, as we discussed in our post on theories of learning, may view you as a role model and emulate your behavior. Having a reserve of patience will make it easier for you to work through each student’s unique struggles and challenges, which may be difficult or slow-going to overcome.

4. Engagement

Students are perceptive from an extremely young age and can easily tell when teachers are bored by or apathetic toward their own material. If you want to generate engagement and enthusiasm in your class, it’s imperative to exemplify those traits yourself, showing your students an infectious passion for learning — and all the exciting discoveries and hobbies that it can unlock for them!

5. Active Listening

Active listening is vital if you want to effectively diagnose and help overcome students’ unique obstacles and challenges. Seek feedback, encourage honesty, provide ways for students to contact you easily, and be attentive whenever you listen, always trying to read between the lines and assess body language while you’re communicating.

6. Lifelong Learning

The best educators aren’t just interested in teaching — they also have a passion for lifelong learning, which is reflected in their enthusiasm and engagement as instructors. Continued learning and professional development deliver invaluable insight, keeping professionals “sharp” and reminding teachers of the real-world challenges that their students may be facing — creating a pathway for greater empathy.

7. Free of Bias

As an educator, you’ll be responsible for teaching an extraordinarily wide range of students. To combat inequality and discrimination and ensure fairness, you need to assess your students’ needs in a way that is free from bias — something that requires you to continuously check in with your own judgments and assumptions about others.

8. Cross-Discipline Teaching

Drawing on multiple subjects and disciplines shows students how businesses operate — and how problem-solving works — in the real world, grounding their learning in practical real-life scenarios.

If you don't possess all these traits already, don't panic — just be mindful that there may be some areas where you could benefit from a little practice. Whether your goal is to tune up weak skills, refine strong ones, or develop new abilities, a degree or credential program provides the perfect opportunity to acquire the qualifications and experience you need to go further in your chosen career path.

Part 2 - Negative Teacher Characteristics

Now let us look at personality characteristics and teaching styles that increase the chance of children developing negative self-esteem or low self-worth.

EGO TEACHING: The quality of putting your needs above the best interests of the students.

Teachers with this characteristic:

- ◆ Have unrealistically ambitious standards that create intense stress in their students.
- ◆ Give excessively long homework assignments designed to impress parents how good a job he/she is doing.
- ◆ Give difficult tests that require children to learn minutiae.
- ◆ Have grading systems that create numerous failures.
- ◆ Demand respect by frightening and intimidating students

EXCESSIVE CRITICISM: Most psychologists agree that criticism does not lead people to change behavior. Instead, it creates anger and defensiveness on the part of the person criticized.

This characteristic is shown by teachers who:

- ◆ Criticize children in public.
- ◆ Criticize more often than compliment.
- ◆ Believe that compliments and rewards reduce his/her authority.
- ◆ Use sarcasm as a means of motivation.
- ◆ Are quick to blame a child's lack of progress or poor grades on the student rather than analyzing the situation for teaching problems.

BEING UNREASONABLE: a behavior that includes not being guided or based on good sense.

This characteristic is shown when teachers:

- ◆ Refuse to listen to a child's explanation.

- ◆ Make demands without giving reasons.
- ◆ Provide work and experiences that are too difficult for children to finish without parental help.

NARCISSISM: an unreasonably high sense of a person's own importance. They need and seek too much attention and want people to admire them. People with this disorder may lack the ability to understand or care about the feelings of others.

This aspect of a personality exists when teachers:

- ◆ Use children to keep the spotlight on themselves.
- ◆ Give a great deal of work but rarely hand it back or hand it back with few or no comments.
- ◆ Focus attention on themselves rather than the needs of the students
- ◆ Take it out on students if they have a difficult day.
- ◆ Are always the victim, always complain the most, and always brag that they have the most difficult class.

RIGIDITY: Rigid people are people with inflexible thoughts and behavior patterns. Being rigid in one's thinking is the very opposite of being open-minded. Rigid people are resistant to the latest ideas, ways of being, and ways of behaving.

This behavior is shown when teachers who:

- ◆ Take everything seriously.
- ◆ Are unwilling to change their minds.
- ◆ Are unwilling to admit mistakes.
- ◆ Will stick with something even if it makes little sense or has little educational value.

PUNISHMENT ORIENTED: a heavy orientation or a belief that punishment will create change in students.

Teachers with this mentality:

- ◆ Punish students for small infractions.
- ◆ Make a public spectacle of students.
- ◆ Hold students' behavior or performance up to their peers for ridicule.

- ◆ Always see students' explanations as excuses or attempts to control the situation.
- ◆ Enforce rules with harsh, unrealistic consequences.

DISORGANIZATION: Disorganized individuals typically have a challenging time maintaining order, structure, and organization. Their cluttered physical environment can show this, missed deadlines, lapse of memory, and problems taking care of tasks.

Teachers with this characteristic tend to:

- ◆ Change the rules frequently, thus creating confusion in students.
- ◆ Give tests or quizzes without letting students know in advance.
- ◆ Frequently lose students' work
- ◆ Appear to be “winging it” with no real plan or structure.

UNPREDICTABILITY: the quality of being guided by sudden unpredictable impulses

Teachers with this characteristic will:

- ◆ Change rules without informing students, sometimes until they break them.
- ◆ Have different rules for different students.
- ◆ Be nice to a student one day and not another, for no apparent reason.

LACK OF CONTROL: Loss of control refers to lack of the ability to provide conscious limitation of impulses and behavior because of overwhelming emotion. States of agitation such as fighting, screaming, and uncontrollable weeping are most often thought of as behavior illustrative of loss of control.

Teachers who exhibit this behavior:

- ◆ Have no set classroom rules for discipline or opportunities for reward.
- ◆ Always seem to be yelling and screaming
- ◆ Make extreme threats that rarely are enforced.
- ◆ Let the students “run the show.”

CREATE ANXIETY IN STUDENTS: a quality that emanates from a need to control and never allows anyone to be better than oneself.

Teachers who do this:

- ◆ Say things to scare children (for instance, “You’ll be lucky if you get a 65 on tomorrow’s test”)
- ◆ Never offer reassurance before or after tests
- ◆ Constantly inform students of how much trouble they will be in if they do not do well on this test or assignment.
- ◆ Create self-doubt in students.

“GOTCHA” MENTALITY: Gotcha is an unpleasant surprise, usually a disconcerting challenge, attempting to expose something, such as underperformance or poor management. Gotcha implies someone is after you and you must figure out how to avoid any negative implications.

(“gotcha” mentality)

Teachers who have this characteristic:

- ◆ Hope to catch students making mistakes.
- ◆ Always correct students for breaking rules, no matter how minor
- ◆ Will seize any opportunity to exhibit power over students.
- ◆ Will publicly broadcast what they uncover about students’ infractions.

OVERREACTIVITY: We define overreacting as inappropriate, unnecessary, or excessive feelings and/or behaviors. We have all been in this situation. We have many expressions for such instances, like overreaction to a minimal situation. However, some people overreact too often.

Teachers who exhibit this behavior will:

- ◆ Turn minor events into major crises.
- ◆ Enforce punishments inappropriate to the situation.
- ◆ Scream and yell at students for minor infractions

OTHER CHARACTERISTICS OF INEFFECTIVE TEACHING:

According to Strong in his article of *Qualities of Effective Teaching* (2023) he notes the following red flags of ineffective teaching:

TEACHER AS A PERSON

- ◆ Believes that teaching is just a job.
- ◆ Arrives late to school and class on a regular basis.
- ◆ Has classroom discipline problems?
- ◆ Is not sensitive to a student's culture or heritage.
- ◆ Expresses bias (positive or negative) with regard to students.
- ◆ Works on paperwork during class rather than working with students.
- ◆ Have parents complaining about what is going on in the classroom?
- ◆ Uses inappropriate language.
- ◆ Demeans or ridicules students.
- ◆ Exhibits defensive behavior for no apparent reason.
- ◆ Is confrontational with students.
- ◆ Lacks conflict resolution skills.
- ◆ Does not accept responsibility for what occurs in the classroom.

According to Prezi (2023), characteristics of an ineffective teachers are:

- ◆ Self Centered
- ◆ Un-prepared
- ◆ Careless
- ◆ Unprofessional
- ◆ Read straight from his/her notes
- ◆ Lazy
- ◆ Un-motivated
- ◆ No eye contact
- ◆ Poor lesson plans
- ◆ Prevents learner achievement

In Conclusion

Although successful experiences are the most critical factor in building confidence, a positive teacher with a constructive teaching style can go a long way toward breaking down initial resistance barriers. Positive or negative, a teacher's personality and teaching style, even for one year, can directly affect a student for the rest of his/her life.

We hope you have found this Survival Guide useful and practical and we look forward to any comments or suggestions for future Survival Guides.

NASET will continue to develop additional Survival Guides. At the time of publication of this Survival Guide the following is a list of Survival Guides that are presently available:

- ◆ **Adapting Curriculum for Students with Special Needs**
- ◆ **Building Student Confidence in the Classroom**
- ◆ **Classroom Management Tool Kit**
- ◆ **How Teacher Personality and Style Affects the Growth of Self Confidence in Students**
- ◆ **Identifying High Risk Behavior in the Classroom**
- ◆ **Introduction to Functional Behavior Assessments**
- ◆ **Overview and Preparation for Annual and Triannual Evaluations**
- ◆ **Setting Up Your Special Education Classroom**
- ◆ **Specific Types of Learning Disabilities**
- ◆ **Teacher's Responsibilities in Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect**
- ◆ **What You Need to Know About Disciplining Students with Disabilities**

For more information about NASET Survival Guides go to:

<https://www.naset.org/naset-survival-guides>
