

# Teaching For Success Faculty Success Center

## *Success Insights*

### Positive to Causative

For years, we've heard that being positive is the ultimate condition for success. But today, it seems learning how to go from positive to causative is fundamental to achieving your professional, instructional, and personal goals. Creating a positive, optimistic mindset is necessary for success, but it's not sufficient. Today those who strive for improvement and growth must create a synergism between a positive, success-seeking mindset and a causative skill-set.

Such a synergism in the field of teaching is based on simple, yet powerful combinations, such as a personal desire to work for the development and betterment of others, combined with an ongoing effort to learn from real-life observations of peoples' needs, goals, and development stages. Teachers should continuously learn how age, gender, culture, personality types, characteristics, and preferences affect their students learning expectations and behaviors. Observations must be corroborated with data from surveys and academic studies to avoid incorrect conclusions.

Fundamentally, one must work to understand human behavior even though it would seem to be a totally intuitive process. For example, one axiom of human behavior has been a great help to me, and it's this: A person's behavior and choices always makes sense to that person, even if from the outside the choice seems utterly without logic or common sense. Learning this has helped me to be more accepting, understanding, and supportive.

Teaching today is all about understanding the diversity of students and working with individual uniqueness and systemic change as fundamental realities. Depending on one's mindset, the diversity of today's students can be accepted as an opportunity to expand the level of one's teaching skills, or it can be seen as a frustrating and stressful experience. Either can be a reality according to the mindset you choose.

Most teachers design their instructional strategy to mesh with their students' commonalities. But superior teachers offer assignments, learning product choices, and learning modalities based on student differences. Developing instruction that melds commonalities and idiosyncrasies together creates a dynamic and engaging learning environment.

Being positive and enthusiastic is important, but it's not sufficient. Effective teachers go one step further to causative. They innovate and find ways to cause deeper student engagement and offer learning choices that foster faster and more long-lasting learning. Deftly moving from positive to causative is another aspect of teaching for success.

*~John H. (Jack) Shrawder, Exec. Director,  
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