

# 12 Characteristics of an Effective Teacher

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12  
Characteristics  
of an  
Effective Teacher



"Inspirational Stories of Teachers Who Inspired Others to Become Teachers"

A Longitudinal Retrospective Qualitative Quasi-Research Study of In-Service and Pre-Service Teachers' Opinions of the Characteristics of an Effective Teacher

Robert J. Walker, Ed.D.

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# About this Study

- ✓ What started out as a simple first week class assignment evolved into an educational revelation.
  - ✓ Over my collegiate teaching career, I have engaged college students in discussion and writing assignments pertaining to the outstanding characteristic of their most effective teacher.
  - ✓ Effective was defined as the teacher who made the most significant impact on their lives.
  - ✓ After years of listening to students and reading their essays about their favorite and most memorable teacher, I have isolated what students said are the *12 Characteristics of an Effective Teacher*.
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# Significance of this Study

- ✓ The *12 Characteristics of an Effective Teacher* are more personal traits than they are academic traits.
- ✓ They are *not* qualities that teachers, going through a college academic course of study, learn in their classes or by way of the textbook.
- ✓ These 12 characteristics make the point that no longer can teachers view themselves as merely a dispenser of knowledge.
- ✓ These 12 characteristics make the inference that teachers must model the character that they seek to instill in the children they teach.



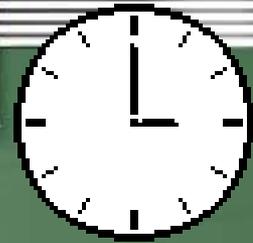
# Survey

- ✓ Please take a few minutes to complete the *12 Characteristics of an Effective Teacher Survey* found in your handout.
- ✓ You will not be asked to turn this survey in to me.
- 😊 This is just a presentation activity!



# Characteristic #1

# Prepared



Prepared - The most effective teachers come to class each day ready to teach.



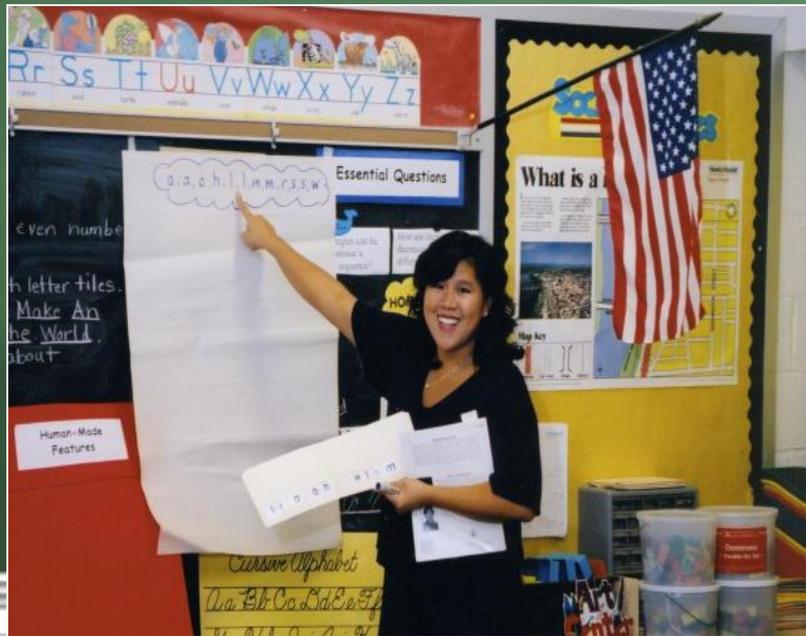
- ✓ They know the subject matter and are able to teach it in a way that students can learn.
- ✓ It is easy to learn in their class because they are ready for the day.
- ✓ They do not waste instructional time. They start class on time. They teach the entire class.
- ✓ Time flies in their class because students are engaged in learning (not bored, less likely to fall asleep).

# Characteristic #2

# Positive



**Positive** - The most effective teachers have an optimistic attitude about being a teacher and about their students



- ✓ They see the glass half-full (They look on the positive side of every situation).
- ✓ They are available to students.
- ✓ They communicate with students about their progress.
- ✓ They give praise and recognition.
- ✓ They have strategies to help students be positive towards one another.
- ✓ They love teaching and would not want to do anything else.

# Characteristic #3

## High Expectations

**High Expectations:** The most effective teachers do not set limits on any of the students and believe they all can be successful.



- ✓ They have the highest standards.
- ✓ They consistently challenge students to do their best.
- ✓ They are caring professionals who build students' confidence and teach students to believe in themselves.

# Characteristic #4

# Creative



**Creative** - Effective teachers are very resourceful and inventive in how they teach their classes.



## Examples:

- ✓ Kissing a pig if the class reaches its academic goals.
- ✓ Wearing a clown suit.
- ✓ Agreeing to participate in school talent show.
- ✓ Using technology in the classroom.

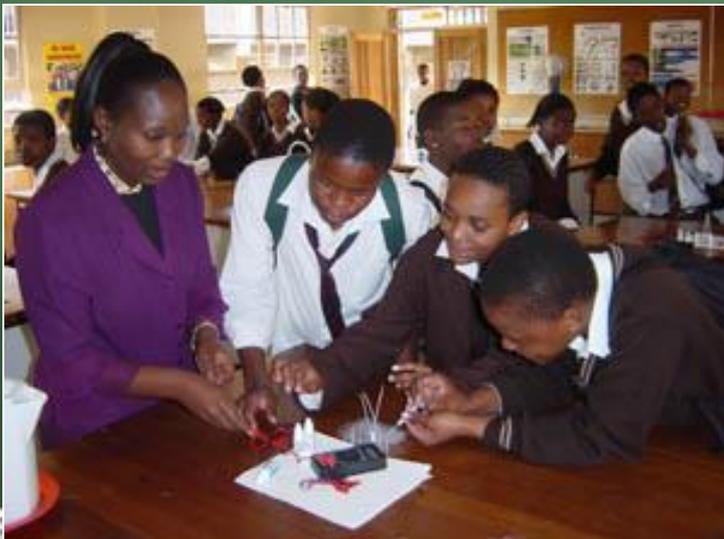




# Characteristic #5

# Fair

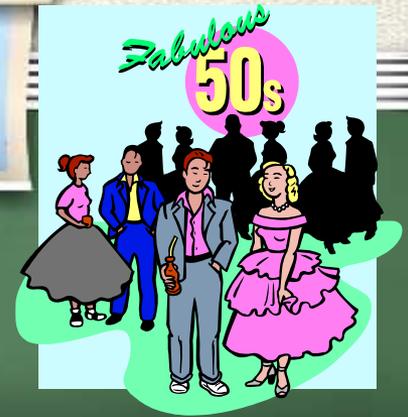
Fair - The most effective teachers are just in how they treat students and in their grading.



- ✓ They allow all students equal opportunities and privileges.
- ✓ They clarify requirements for the class.
- ✓ They recognize that "Fair" doesn't necessarily mean treating everyone the same, but giving every student what he or she needs in order to be successful.
- ✓ They understand that all students don't learn in the same way and at the same rate.



# Characteristic #6 Personal Touch



Personal Touch - Effective teachers are approachable.



- ✓ They connect with students in a personal way.
- ✓ They share personal experiences with the class.
- ✓ They take a personal interest in the students and find out as much as possible about them.
- ✓ They visit the students' world (neighborhoods, homes, sit with them in cafeteria, etc.).
- ✓ They come to sporting and other events outside normal school hours.

# Characteristic #7

## Develops a Sense of Belonging

Develops a Sense of Belonging - The most effective teachers make students feel welcome and comfortable in their classrooms.



Two comments repeatedly mentioned by students were:

- ✓ Feeling a sense of belonging in the classroom.
- ✓ Feeling that the teacher was happy to have them in the classroom.



# Characteristic #8

## Admits Mistakes

**Admits Mistakes** - Effective teachers are quick to apologize to students when an error was made.

Example (1): When a student is mistakenly accused, the teacher is willing to apologize to the student.

Example (2): The teacher is willing to make adjustments when students inform the teacher that there was material on the test they were not told to study or when errors are made in grading.

Example (3): The teacher is willing to give students an opportunity to redo a project if she did not explain an important step in the assignment.





## Characteristic #9

# Sense of Humor

Sense of Humor - Effective teachers do not take everything so seriously and make learning fun.

- ✓ They have the ability to break the ice in difficult situations with humor.
- ✓ They bring humor into the classroom.
- ✓ They enjoy laughing *with* the class (but, not at the expense of a student).



# Characteristic #10



## Gives Respect to Students

Gives Respect to Students - The most effective teachers do not deliberately embarrass students.

- ✓ Teachers who give the highest respect, get the highest respect.

Examples:

- ✓ Respect students' privacy when returning test papers.
- ✓ Speak to students in private concerning grades or conduct.
- ✓ Effective teachers were remembered for showing sensitivity for students' feelings, and for consistently avoiding situations that might unnecessarily embarrass students.



# Characteristic #11

# Forgiving



Forgiving - Effective teachers do not hold grudges against their students.



- ✓ They are willing to forgive students for inappropriate behavior.
- ✓ They have a habit of starting each day with a clean slate.
- ✓ They understand that an attitude of forgiveness is essential if difficult students are to be reached.
- ✓ They understand that disruptive or antisocial behavior can be upsetting and quickly turn a teacher against a student. But, the willingness to never give up on a difficult student can result in a wonderful success story.

# Characteristic #12

## Compassionate

**Compassionate** - Effective teachers are genuinely concern about students' personal problems and can relate to them.



- ❖ The teacher takes a special interest in helping students solve personal problems.
- ❖ Students can tell that their teacher loves them.
- ❖ The sensitivity and compassion of a caring teacher affects students in profound and lasting ways.

# Review

When students are fortunate enough to be in the classroom of a teacher who displays a majority of the 12 *Characteristics of Effective Teacher*, it can make a life-long difference.

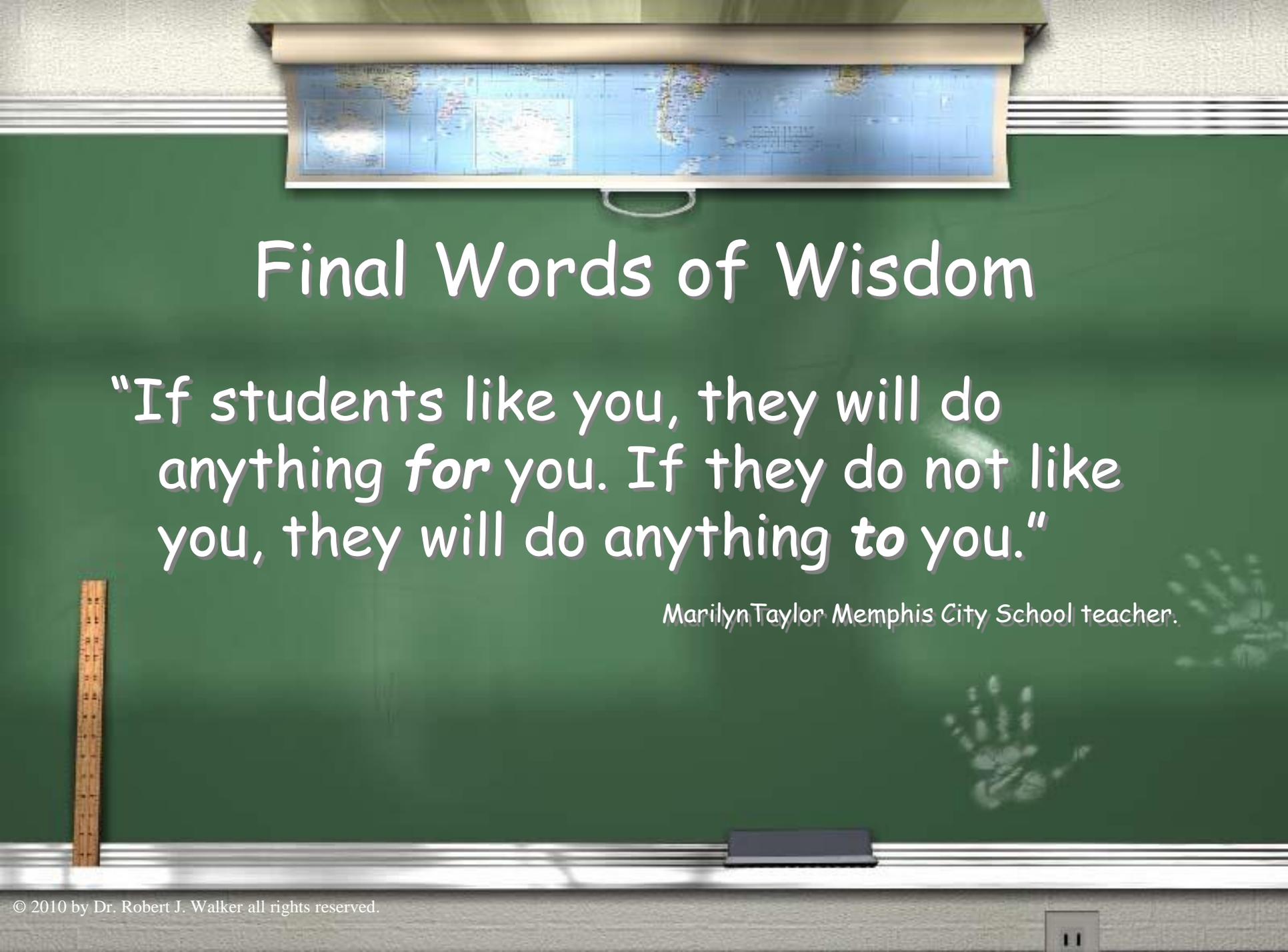
- ✓ Characteristic #1 - Prepared
- ✓ Characteristic #2 - Positive
- ✓ Characteristic #3 - High Expectations
- ✓ Characteristic #4 - Creative
- ✓ Characteristic #5 - Fair
- ✓ Characteristic #6 - Personal Touch
- ✓ Characteristic #7 - Develops a Sense of Belonging
- ✓ Characteristic #8 - Admits Mistakes
- ✓ Characteristic #9 - Sense of Humor
- ✓ Characteristic #10 - Gives Respect to Students
- ✓ Characteristic #11 - Forgiving
- ✓ Characteristic #12 - Compassionate



# Group Activity

**Directions:** Divide into four groups and discuss the following question:

**If you had only one of the *12 Characteristics of an Effective Teacher*, which one would you like to have and why?**



# Final Words of Wisdom

"If students like you, they will do anything *for* you. If they do not like you, they will do anything *to* you."

Marilyn Taylor Memphis City School teacher.



The End



F.Y.I.

This study was published in book format (144 pages paperback).

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