

Observing Student Behavior



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The four personality style descriptor terms found in this guide (Mover, Connector, Thinker, and Planner) are used with permission from [Personality Lingo](#).

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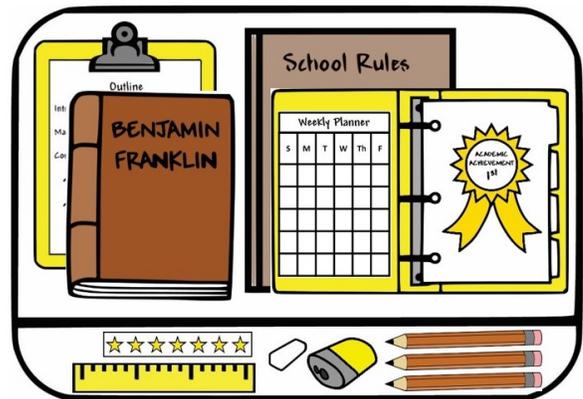
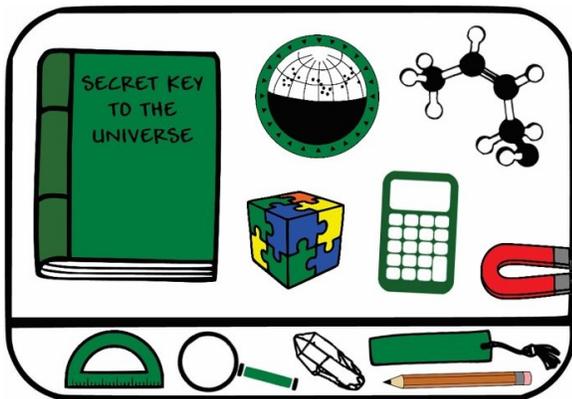
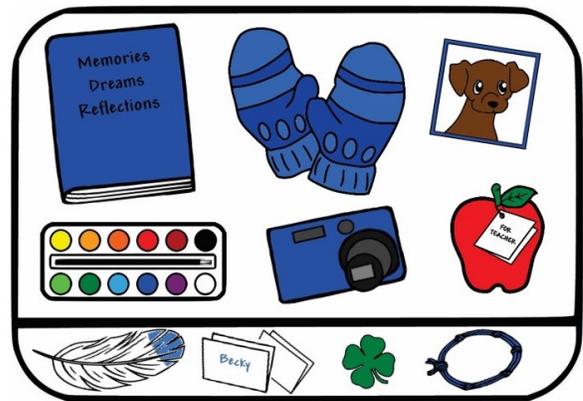
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A typical classroom will include students who follow instructions well, others who are good problem solvers, some who seem more interested in social interaction than learning, and those who have trouble sitting still in their chairs. Each of these students has their own needs, values, perspectives, motivations, and ways of operating. Some students will clearly display a significant number of traits from their dominant personality style while others may still be trying on different traits as a natural part of childhood development.

On the following pages you will find classroom observations which offer clues to a student's dominant personality style listed for each of the four personality styles. Next, personality insights, intended to help teachers deliberately guide interactions with students, are presented as comparisons between the four styles in several areas.



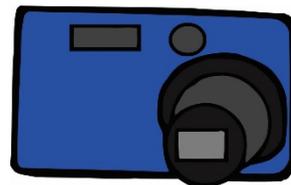
Classroom Observations Mover Personality Style

- ▶ Asks, “When do we get to start?”
- ▶ Reads adventure or heroic books
- ▶ Good at multi-tasking
- ▶ Wiggles in chair
- ▶ Doodles while listening
- ▶ Takes the long way to their chair
- ▶ Finds the fastest way to finish tasks
- ▶ Makes decisions in the moment
- ▶ Changes topics often
- ▶ Takes charge when a leader is needed
- ▶ Likes to compete and have fun
- ▶ Natural for them to be on the move



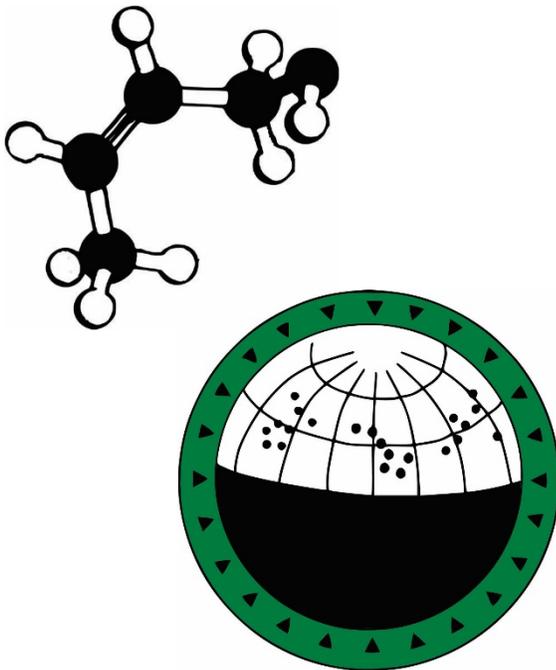
Classroom Observations Connector Personality Style

- ▶ Asks for permission to work together
- ▶ Reads fantasy or tragedy books
- ▶ Likes to role-play or make up skits
- ▶ Enjoys interacting with other students
- ▶ Likes happy endings
- ▶ Encourages others to succeed
- ▶ Empathizes with others' distress
- ▶ Connects meaning to actions or events
- ▶ Considerate of others feelings
- ▶ Will put an arm around other students
- ▶ Discusses concepts with others
- ▶ Usually pleasant and agreeable



Classroom Observations Thinker Personality Style

- ▶ Asks if they have to work with a partner
- ▶ Reads science fiction or mystery books
- ▶ Explores all aspects of a problem
- ▶ Suggests new ways of doing things
- ▶ Points out flaws or inconsistencies
- ▶ Needs time to think before deciding
- ▶ Likes to solve puzzles
- ▶ Sits alone to work when possible
- ▶ Prefers not to talk about private matters
- ▶ Will tell you when they don't understand
- ▶ Likely to stare at the floor when walking
- ▶ May lack social skills



Classroom Observations Planner Personality Style

- ▶ Asks, "When is it due?"
- ▶ Reads about historical figures or events
- ▶ Wants to know how things should be
- ▶ Waits patiently for their turn
- ▶ Will push in chairs and straighten up
- ▶ Likes to follow and enforce rules
- ▶ Naturally follows routines
- ▶ Likes to finish a task before moving on
- ▶ Resistant to unexpected changes
- ▶ Keeps personal space organized
- ▶ Has good study habits
- ▶ Likely to belong to school clubs



Personality Insights

The following insights provide comparisons between the four personality styles in each of several areas, as well as hints for bringing out the best in each style.

Motivation

When you can find the right angle to motivate students, they will naturally perform better.

- ▶ Movers are motivated by action and tangible results
- ▶ Connectors are motivated by happiness and harmony
- ▶ Thinkers are motivated by a good personal challenge
- ▶ Planners are motivated by a sense of accomplishment and honor

Both Movers and Planners like to compete and win tangible rewards. Connectors will try harder for a team win than an individual competition. Thinkers will try harder if they perceive the challenge as a competition with themselves.

Recognition

Let your students know that you truly honor them as individuals by understanding what qualities they prefer to be recognized for.

- ▶ Movers want to be recognized for cleverness and adaptability
- ▶ Connectors want to be recognized and appreciated for being considerate
- ▶ Thinkers want to be recognized for keen observations and innovative ideas
- ▶ Planners want to be recognized for achievements and contributions

Rapport can be built with a Mover if you recognize some way that they pushed boundaries without crossing them as cleverness instead of just rule breaking or risk-taking. Connectors may shy away from recognition of outstanding achievement if they have a friend who performed poorly. If you were to recognize a Thinker for doing something nice, they might make funny faces at you in embarrassment because that is not something they value. Planners respond well to recognition of outstanding achievement, but at a deeper level they like to know they made a significant contribution and are seen as being dependable.

Needs

Understanding the different needs of your students can help you determine how much and what kinds of attention to provide to them.

- ▶ Movers need variety, choices, and immediate feedback
- ▶ Connectors need to share and be included
- ▶ Thinkers need freedom, independence, and privacy
- ▶ Planners need clear roles and expectations

Movers crave a constant change of pace and enjoy reporting on progress made. Connectors want their contributions to be appreciated; they desire a lot of personal feedback. Both Movers and Connectors appreciate immediate feedback of approval or disapproval to keep them on track. However, if you were to take that approach with a Thinker or Planner they might take it as a sign that you do not value their independence or dependability.

Stressors

Help students get to know their own stress triggers and stress responses by providing them with words to express their feelings and needs.

- ▶ Movers stress by having to sit still and/or work quietly from written instructions
- ▶ Connectors stress with not being able to include everyone or if others are stressed
- ▶ Thinkers stress when discouraged from thinking outside-the-box or if their knowledge is challenged
- ▶ Planners are stressed with things are undecided or unclear

When you can anticipate which students will respond negatively to an aspect of an assignment you can prepare a mitigation strategy. Sometimes, simply having a private conversation that recognizes the difficulty a student is having can bring enough awareness for them to step out of the moment and observe the situation from a different perspective. Labeling a behavior or state of mind that occurs frequently will promote discussion. Do what you can to stay present and take on an attitude of curiosity instead of criticism or frustration. The more self-knowledge students gain, the more they will understand their own stress responses and be able to articulate what it is they are upset about.

Opportunities

Energize your students' behavior by providing them with the kind of opportunities that their personality style craves.

- ▶ Movers crave opportunities to take risks and make an impact
- ▶ Connectors crave opportunities for expression and personal growth
- ▶ Thinkers crave opportunities to solve mysteries and improve things
- ▶ Planners crave opportunities to uphold a duty and make an impact

If active leadership is required to get everyone on task, ask a Mover to help you round everyone up. If there is a misunderstanding in the classroom, ask a Connector to help each party see the other's perspective. If something is missing from the classroom, ask a Thinker to help you retrace your steps to locate the item. If there is an opportunity to count, collate, create a list, or keep a record of things in the classroom, ask a Planner to help out.

Group Dynamics

Knowledge of students' personality styles can help you manage group dynamics. This is especially useful in spotting when there are too many of one style in a group.

- ▶ Too many Movers in a group can result in too many leaders
- ▶ Too many Connectors in a group could result in too much socializing
- ▶ Too many Thinkers in a group can mean they will all want to work alone
- ▶ Too many Planners in a group could lead to excessive attention to detail

If you observe students heading off in different directions then there is probably more than one Mover in the group. If you observe students talking about everything but the assignment, they are likely a band of Connectors whose sincere need to connect is much stronger than their need to start an assignment right away. If you observe students working in silence there may be too many Thinkers in the group. If you observe a group getting bogged down in the details, they may have too many Planners and could benefit from the addition of a Connector or Thinker.

Strength-Based Collaboration

Encourage use of individual strengths to improve engagement among students. Help them understand the advantages for a group that draws upon the contributions from each of the styles.

- ▶ Movers think on their feet and keep the ball rolling
- ▶ Connectors recognize strengths in others and get consensus
- ▶ Thinkers come up with ideas and strategies for a desired outcome
- ▶ Planners supervise details of a project and sequence the events

Thinkers bring visionary ideas. Planners excel at developing a schedule, a list of resources needed, and at monitoring progress. Connectors can ensure that the roles in the group are appropriately assigned and that everyone has their needs met. Movers just need to be pointed in the right direction; they will gather the resources and execute the plan, making improvements along the way.

Types of Assignments

Try offering alternative means for students to complete assignments whenever possible.

- ▶ Movers prefer assignments with movement, competition, and fun
- ▶ Connectors prefer essay assignments and group discussions
- ▶ Thinkers prefer independent assignments using problem-solving skills
- ▶ Planners prefer written directions, workbooks, and instructor-led discussions

Providing the big picture and step-by-step details up front will satisfy the needs of both the theoretical and the hands-on types. Connectors and Thinkers desire freedom to be creative. Movers and Planners need details for the logistics of completion. It may not be possible to offer a completely fair and balanced approach to learning. However, offering some amount of variety in assignment implementation will demonstrate to the students that you understand that they have diverse strengths and preferences.