

Personality in the Classroom

A typical classroom includes students who follow instructions well, those who have trouble sitting still in their chairs, some who seem more interested in social interaction than learning, and others who are good problem solvers. Each of these students has their own needs, values, perspectives, motivations, and ways of operating.

Understanding the personality style patterns can help you form more realistic expectations of student behavior and strengthen the teacher-student relationship.

Planners (SJ-Gold)

- ▶ Start projects when they are assigned
- ▶ Value bringing things to closure as soon as possible
- ▶ Rapidly approaching deadlines may cause stress or anxiety
- ▶ Tend to put other things on hold until the project is completed
- ▶ Find comfort in everyone doing what they are supposed to do
- ▶ Need to know what is going on - will question when rules are not followed

Things you can do to honor the Planner personality style:

- ▶ Understand how much they value having time to prepare
- ▶ Offer guidance on how to proceed after unexpected changes
- ▶ Give them clear assignments with step-by-step instructions

Movers (SP-Orange)

- ▶ May not show progress on a project until the last minute
- ▶ Value keeping options open as long as possible
- ▶ A sense of urgency will stimulate effective thinking
- ▶ May ignore or forget to stay within established boundaries
- ▶ Tend to focus on new ways to make things fun
- ▶ Extra effort is required for them to remember or keep within the rules

Things you can do to honor the Mover personality style:

- ▶ Help them identify a realistic “last possible minute” to start a project
- ▶ Post written rules so they don’t have to remember them
- ▶ Provide assignments with movement, competition, and fun

Connectors (NF-Blue)

- ▶ Continually look for validation of their feelings and values
- ▶ Measure themselves by how much approval they receive from others
- ▶ Need to know that others care how they feel
- ▶ May only be able to receive criticism delivered gently
- ▶ May feel rejected if an adult addresses an issue but not feelings
- ▶ Tend to share stories with enthusiasm to invoke passion in others

Things you can do to honor the Connector personality style:

- ▶ Recognize what may appear like complaining or bragging is enthusiasm
- ▶ Teach them to set boundaries and evaluate their own performance
- ▶ Acknowledge their feelings and use a calm caring demeanor when correcting them

Thinkers (NT-Green)

- ▶ Have a sincere need for things to make sense
- ▶ Good at spotting flaws or inconsistencies
- ▶ Measure themselves by their knowledge or skills
- ▶ Place high value on competency and dignity
- ▶ May become frustrated by their inability to know everything
- ▶ Will try to solve their own problems before going to anyone for help

Things you can do to honor the Thinker personality style:

- ▶ Understand that their questioning is not showing disrespect
- ▶ Offer guidance on how to set priorities and narrow their focus
- ▶ Provide think time before expecting a response to a question

Extraverts show their most dominant personality style to the world but introverts tend to use their top style to process on the inside. Thus, if a student is introverted, the behavior patterns you observe may be their second style.

Students with an Extraverted Orientation

- ▶ Often speaks before thinking things through
- ▶ Develop their thoughts by talking through them
- ▶ Having someone to talk with helps them clarify and make decisions
- ▶ May find it difficult to wait their turn to speak
- ▶ Gain energy from contributing to, and can easily dominate, a conversation
- ▶ Struggle to retain thoughts long enough for their turn to come
- ▶ May repeat themselves if not given sufficient indication that they were heard

Things you can do to honor a preference for extraversion:

- ▶ Practice a response that lets them know what you heard them say
- ▶ Give them a chance to change their tune by asking “is that what you meant to say?”
- ▶ Help them learn how to keep thoughts active while listening to others

Students with an Introverted Orientation

- ▶ Often displays a blank stare when forming a response
- ▶ May give a one-word answer or “clam up” if “put on the spot”
- ▶ Need alone time to recharge at the end of the day
- ▶ May not speak at all during a group discussion
- ▶ Enjoy listening to a discussion and contemplating other threads inside their head
- ▶ May lose track if conversation moves more quickly than inner dialogue
- ▶ Will miss chances to speak while forming thoughts internally

Things you can do to honor a preference for introversion:

- ▶ Understand that being asked questions can feel invasive
- ▶ Allow them time to process before verbalizing a response
- ▶ Provide opportunities to express thoughts in writing

When you better understand your students and treat them as individuals, they respond in kind.

Needs

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

Motivation

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

Recognition

- ▶ Planners want to be recognized for achievements and contributions
- ▶ 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

Opportunities

- ▶ Planners crave opportunities to uphold a duty and make a lasting impact
- ▶ Movers crave opportunities to push boundaries and break new ground
- ▶ Connectors crave opportunities for expression and personal growth
- ▶ Thinkers crave opportunities to solve mysteries and improve things