



### News & Announcements

#### Fall Workshops

Three more fall workshops left to register for through Pearkes and Juan de Fuca Recreation Centres:

- ▶ KidSpeak! (public speaking for middle school kids) 3 hours: Nov 7
- ▶ Provincial Exam Preparation 3 hours: Nov. 26, Dec. 3, or Jan. 7
- ▶ Essay Writing 4 hours: Nov 5

Workshops focus on building understanding through practical, engaging activities.

For more information on workshops, visit us online, contact us via telephone, or register directly through Pearkes or Juan de Fuca Recreation Centres.

*Space is limited, so please register early to avoid disappointment.*

#### Giving Back

In September, Dahlia Miller, STR's Managing Director, gave a talk to the Mt. Douglas Secondary Peer Tutoring Group. The talk focussed on the qualities of a good tutor (this month's newsletter topic).

Smart Tutor Referrals is committed to improving quality of life in Victoria through education, and to building partnerships with local schools to support our students.

#### We're 3 Years Old!

We are pleased to announce the third anniversary of STR. Since 2002, hundreds of students in Victoria have benefitted from STR's private tutoring services and workshops.

Supporting the individual to success with a values-based approach is the key to our on-going success. Students and families benefit from our dedication to honesty, respect, positive vision, building learning confidence, individual ability and contribution.

by Dahlia Miller

*"Knowledge - like the sky - is never private property. . . Teaching is the art of sharing."*

Abraham Joshua Heschel

Anyone can be a teacher, right? There isn't much to teaching, right? As long as a person understands a topic, that person is qualified to teach it, isn't that true? What is there to teaching anyway besides explaining how to do something?

Well, a lot.

There's much more to teaching than demonstrating a process. A teacher, tutor, peer tutor, parent, in fact, anyone in a teaching role, has a tremendous impact on a student. How the student is addressed and supported leaves lasting effects on his/her self-esteem and skill set.

I've listened to hundreds of students' stories about their experiences of being taught. I've heard many positive stories, and unfortunately have heard horror stories as well. Students who are told that they are stupid, or that they don't deserve to be in the level that they are in, students who are told that they aren't trying, or can't do it, or that they must have a learning disability don't take these comments lightly. They notice when their teacher is frustrated or doesn't want to take time for them. Students carry these negative experiences with them, and change their behaviours (often in negative ways) accordingly.

On the other hand, it's wonderful to witness the inspiration sparked in a student when a teacher makes an effort to be a positive teaching model. A teacher can inspire a student to go further than she thought possible, to see herself as

capable, to cultivate an interest in learning.

Having interviewed hundreds of tutors, and been an academic director, I've come to recognize many of the qualities that good teachers demonstrate consistently. In our December 2004 issue, we looked at the qualities of a good student, now let's have a look at the qualities of a good teacher. So what are these qualities?

We can break effective teaching behaviours into four broad categories. As you read through these lists, consider teachers that you've known who have exhibited these qualities. What feelings did they inspire in you as a student? Also, please consider how you can incorporate these qualities when you are in a teaching role.

### Qualities of a Good Teacher

#### 1. Communication

How well we communicate affects how well we are heard. Much of the communication in teaching is listening. Listening with our full attention, we begin to discover what a student needs. Then, if we ask open-ended questions at appropriate times, the student can explore the topic, and any issues, with the teacher's guidance.

Behaviours that define the quality of communication are:

- ▶ Effective listening
- ▶ Clear communication
- ▶ Knowing when to jump in
- ▶ Building confidence
- ▶ Asking questions

# About Us

## Our Mission Is:

- ▶ To provide top quality, flexible learning support and service to students and parents of students through:

*Superior private tutoring matched specifically to each student's needs.*

*Stimulating workshops building skills in a practical and creative way.*

- ▶ To enhance students' skills and increase learning confidence through individualized support, recognizing each student's unique abilities.
- ▶ To improve the quality of life, in individuals and communities through education.

**Our tutors** are certified teachers and professionals. Each is carefully screened and selected to match individual students' needs.

*We help students to achieve.*

For more information, and free study tips, visit us on-line at:

[www.SmartTutorReferrals.com](http://www.SmartTutorReferrals.com)

# Contact Us

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## 2. Approach

A skilled teacher is capable of changing her approach to meet the needs of her students. An engaging teacher is one who is interested in the topic and in developing her students' interest in it. She monitors her students closely for their responses, presenting concepts and topics in a style that is both informative and stimulating.

A student who loves stories would rather discuss a concept than build a model of it. A student who enjoys movement would rather form letters with his body than read phonics books. We're all different. Different approaches spark our different interests.

A good teacher monitors her approach by:

- ▶ Checking comprehension
- ▶ Gearing approach to interests
- ▶ Teaching to the student's level
- ▶ Using learning styles
- ▶ Watching responses

## 3. Mentoring

The teacher's role as a mentor carries a responsibility to model respectful communication and support. Students look to teachers for clues as to how to behave and respond to others.

A teacher can benefit by honestly considering how she leads students. The more a teacher knows herself, the better she'll be able to move beyond her limits.

When you are in a teaching role, what types of responses do you give to students when they are right? What types of responses do you give to students when they are wrong?

Other behaviours that support a teacher's role as mentor are:

- ▶ Maintaining professional distance
- ▶ Helping set goals
- ▶ Being kind
- ▶ Being patient
- ▶ Supporting

## 4. Professionalism

A teacher who models professionalism accepts his responsibility to be current with his information and open to learning. He appreciates the student-teacher relationship and stays within the boundaries of his role.

A professional teacher is one who is:

- ▶ Knowledgeable
- ▶ Friendly
- ▶ Open to sharing with other teachers
- ▶ Prepared
- ▶ Focussed on the student

Through reflecting on your gifts and skills as a teacher you'll gain better perspective. With practice and perspective, you can learn to step back from any teaching situation to see what direction or approach will most benefit your student(s). Through practice we can all learn to use our strengths as teachers. This will allow us to lead our students most effectively.

Happy teaching!

*"Learning is finding out what you already know. Doing is demonstrating you know it. Teaching is reminding others that they know just as well as you. You are all learners, doers and teachers."*

Author unknown