The Teachability Factor

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Becoming a
Child Whisperer
Learning to read the
language of children

Gilles

Based on the work of
Dr. Gordon Neufeld

Canadian developmental
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Hold on to your Kids: Why Parents Need to Matter More than Peers

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How does a student come to...

... be full of interests & curiosity?
... want to try new things?
... think for oneself?
... be full of plans, goals & aspirations?
... fill solitude with creative endeavors?
... value originality and creativity?
... be self-directed in learning?
... regard the separateness & boundaries of others?

Vitality
Viability
Venturing forth

1) to venture forth from home base
2) to attend to that which is novel and unknown
3) to be autonomous and independent
4) to be separate and unique
5) to be the origin of what one thinks and does
The nonemergent have trouble learning & behaving because:

1) lack curiosity and interest
2) not inclined to figure things out themselves
3) lack aspirations to realize their potential
4) lack the bias to be the origin of what they think & do
5) lack a sense of agency and responsibility

6) lack adequate boundaries
7) lack a sense of separateness
8) lack a relationship with self
9) easily bored
10) easily lead astray

A PEDAGOGY for the EMERGENT draw out what exists and add to that.

* make room for initiative, creativity and originality
* place in charge of their learning whenever possible
* provide options and solicit intentions to get them in the driver’s seat
* discover their aspirations and make teaching facilitative
* give interests the lead when providing information
* generate questions before providing the answers
* provide opportunities for experimentation and exploration
* do not preempt intrinsic motivation with praise, rewards & incentives
Why some kids have trouble learning & behaving:

1. Failing to EMERGE as separate beings
2.
3.
4.
How does a student come to...

- ...learn from dissonance?
- ...overcome impulsiveness?
- ...appreciate context?
- ...exercise self-control?
- ...overcome black & white thinking?
- ...be considerate?
- ...understand irony & paradox?
- ...be civilized?
- ...work towards a goal?
- ...be capable of true cooperation?
- ...think two-dimensionally?
- ...develop morally?
- ...mix well with others?
- ...have perspective?
- ...be patient when frustrated?
- ...understand fairness?
- ...be capable of true cooperation?
- ...mix well with others?

Essence of Integration

*mixing without blending*

*togetherness without a loss of separateness*

INTEGRATIVE PROCESS

conflicting feelings, thoughts & impulses
An NONintegrative child

- learns from dissonance
- overcomes impulsiveness
- exercises self-control
- overcomes black & white thinking
- understands irony & paradox
- works towards a goal
- is capable of true cooperation
- thinks two-dimensionally
- develops morally
- is capable of true cooperation
- can mix well with others
- has perspective
- can be patient when frustrated
- understands fairness
- is considerate
- is civilized
- appreciates context

The nonintegrative have trouble learning & behaving because:

1. UNTEMPERED in experience and expression
2. Given to DISPLACED & ‘return swing of the pendulum’ reactions
3. Unable to consider context or use more than one dimension at a time in solving problems
4. Unable to get the concept of work or make sacrifices towards a goal
5. Lack ability to operate out of two reference points simultaneously

6) Incapable of true courage or real patience
7) Do not doubt their own perceptions, meanings, opinions or beliefs
8) Lack spontaneously developed morals
9) Knowledge fails to translate into action & good intentions are easily eclipsed
10) Fail to mix well with others
A PEDAGOGY for the INTEGRATIVE
create dissonance & let it do the teaching

- presenting different points of view
- confronting with the element(s) not considered
- cooperative learning
- using argument, debate and the dialectic
- forming thesis and antithesis
- revealing the subjective nature of ‘truth’
- defining and differentiating various perspectives and reference points

Why some kids have trouble learning & behaving:

1. Failing to EMERGE as separate beings
2. Failing to INTEGRATE that which conflicts
The KEY to adaptation is the registration of futility
Futility has to SINK IN before Adaptation can happen
An NONadapтиве child...  
- learns from mistakes & failure  
- benefits from correction  
- realizes the futility of a course of action  
- is resourceful  
- is resilient  
- benefits from adversity  
- transcends handicaps & disabilities  
- recovers from loss or trauma  
- accepts limits & restrictions  
- accepts not getting one's way  
- lets go of futile demands  
- accepts not getting one's way  
- accepts limits & restrictions  
- learns from mistakes & failure  
- copes confidently with stress  
- does NOT erupt in aggression when frustrated  
- is resilient  
- is resourceful

The NONadaptive have trouble learning and behaving:

1) not able to learn from trial & error  
2) not able to transcend any handicaps or disabilities that exist  
3) not able to benefit from having their mistakes, errors or failures pointed out  
4) not able to learn from consequences  
5) stuck in what doesn't work  
6) lack the resourcefulness to resolve conflict and avoid trouble  
7) lack the resilience to handle adversity  
8) fail to accept limits or restrictions  
9) not able to let go  
10) easily provoked
A PEDAGOGY for the ADAPTIVE:

present futility & let it do the teaching

- what won’t work, can’t work, shouldn’t work, etc
- mistakes, failure, errors, shortcomings
- limits, rules, restrictions, reality
- consequences, sanctions, loss of privileges, etc

Why some kids have trouble learning & behaving:

1. Failing to EMERGE as separate beings
2. Failing to INTEGRATE that which conflicts
3. Failing to ADAPT when things do not work
Part I

emergent

adaptive

integrative

The VULNERABILITY Factor

why some kids get stuck
The Teachability Factor
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The Vulnerability Factor

too sensitive for the environment into which he/she is born,

Limbic System of the Brain

defends against too much stress

It protects against VULNERABILITY

It cannot do both jobs at the same time.

sensitivity $\times$ stress

- genetics
- too much separation
- prenatal & birth experiences
- too much shame
- feeling too alarmed
- stress
Stuck children have trouble learning because…

1. They instinctively avoid doing anything that would lead them into vulnerable territory – trying new things, asking questions, presenting original ideas, exploring the unknown.

2. To look at their own mistakes or to attend to their failures would make them feel vulnerable.

3. To admit to inadequacy or ignorance, or to confess confusion, would open them to feelings of shame.

4. To ask for assistance from the teacher would create feelings of dependency/vulnerability.

5. To set goals or to care about outcomes would set the stage for failure and disappointment.
Learning & Behaviour Problems

STUCK developmentally
MISSING the pivotal feelings that would move them to mature
DEFENDED against the vulnerability of their experience
SENSITIVITIES OVERWHELMED

TEACHABILITY & ATTACHMENT

why the immature need to attach to their teachers

attachment

emerging
integrating
adapting
Attachment introduced:
- is about the pursuit & preservation of proximity
- is a human manifestation of a universal force
- takes precedence over other needs
- is the default context for learning

HOW CHILDREN ATTACH

six ways to hold on
Attachment Facilitates Dependence

What attachment does... enables adults to...

1. Arranges hierarchically
   - Take charge of them, take care of them and act with natural authority

2. Renders endearing & tolerant
   - Like them and endure them

3. Creates a sense of home
   - Provide comfort, rest and a place of retreat

Attachment Facilitates Dependence

What attachment does... enables adults to...

4. Creates a compass point
   - Command their attention, guide & direct them and transmit our culture

5. Activates proximity instincts
   - Keep them close and command their loyalty

6. Evokes the desire to be good for those attached to
   - Act with natural power & authority

The IMPOTENCE that stems from a lack of natural attachment power can lead to:

- a preoccupation with behaviour management and HOW TOs
- the assumption that something is wrong with the student
- permissive or laissez-faire teaching
- power struggles and a search for leverage
Why we have trouble with the immature who are not attaching to us:

1. are NOT predisposed to attend to us
2. are NOT inclined to seek our assistance
3. do NOT use us to orient by
4. are NOT predisposed to look to us for their cues
5. are NOT inclined to use us as models

Why we have trouble with the immature who are not attaching to us:

6. are not instinctively moved to defer to us
7. NOT motivated to find favour with us
8. NOT open to being influenced by us
9. NOT inclined to be good for us
10. NOT spontaneously motivated to work for us or make things work for us

Kids who have the most trouble learning or behaving usually have TWO problems:

- Psychological IMMATURITY
- A lack of adequate ATTACHMENT to those responsible for them
Children only desire to be good for those to whom they are attached.

It is not so much what we do, but rather WHO WE ARE to them that counts.

WORKING WITH STUCK KIDS
1. Maximize Attachment
2. Minimize the effects of immaturity
3. Build a Village of Attachment
4. Minimize the effects of Peers
Attachment – THE CONTEXT
The REALITY in 2010
Schools are no longer a part of the Society’s Village of Attachment
➢ We must prime attachment EVERY DAY
➢ EVERY TIME we meet students for the first time each day.
➢ Whenever we interact with children we must PROTECT the RELATIONSHIP.

When dealing with the immature, we need to win their hearts to open their minds to our influence.

A. ENGAGING the Attachment Instincts
1. Get in their face (or space) in a friendly way – collect the eyes, a smile and a nod. Greeting rituals often do this for us.

2. Provide something to hold on to – touch, attention, love, affection, similarity, contact, closeness, connectedness, delight, interest, sameness, warmth etc. (not Praise as praise is conditional upon performance)
3. **Invite the student to be dependent upon you**
   – reach to him; reassure her that she can do it; tell him you will be back to check up on him.

4. **Act as the student’s compass point**
   – assume the responsibility to orient the student, especially in times of confusion and disorientation.
   *If the student is peer oriented this will need to be done alone or away from peers.*

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### WORK ATTACHMENT

- **Greet at the door**
- **Circulate to collect students**
- **Learn and chat about each student’s interests**
- **Develop a greeting ritual**

**COLLECT BEFORE YOU DIRECT**

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### ATTACHMENT BEHAVIOURS

- Using a person’s name
- Remembering what’s important to the person
- Walk with them in the corridors (2 x 10 strategy)
- Caring for in unexpected ways
- “Help me understand”
- Listening with full attention even if only for a moment
- Actively look for an occasion to act as their compass point or just to interact with them
Develop a **GREETING RITUAL** to ENGAGE the **ATTACHMENT INSTINCTS**
- Include NODS and SMILES
- Focus on the Teacher (consider desk arrangement)
- Engage All the senses
  Use this greeting each and every time you meet them as a class
  Use Wong’s “Bell Work” Routine

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**Re-engaging Rituals (“calling to order”)**

**Engage All the Senses**
- Songs
- Chants
- Body movements
- Handshake and a smile

Make it a “Ritual” or “Habit”

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**Use Attachment to Maximize your impact**
If limited by time **focus on a few**
Work attachments explicitly with:
The class “leader” - male and female
The challenging student – before he/she becomes a challenge
Find some way to become attached to the least attachable*
PROTECT THE RELATIONSHIP
WHEN THERE IS TROUBLE
– Stay calm
– Use a neutral tone
– Don’t use excess language (be brief)
THIS HELPS THE STUDENT STAY OPEN TO YOUR INTERVENTION
– Don’t try to make headway in the incident
– Manage the incident, not the student

2. MINIMIZE IMMATURETY

STRUCTURE,
ROUTINE and
HABITS

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
ESTABLISHING ROUTINES

- Make routines as simple as possible – e.g. Pencils, baskets, books, supplies, desks
- Spend time teaching students how you want them to do activities in your room.
- Insist that routines are followed – gentle practice
  - Practice – Practice – Practice
  - Think Driver Training

3. BUILD A VILLAGE OF ATTACHMENT

- Engage the parents
- Develop a TEAM of interveners
- Match-make with adults

“It takes a Village to raise a child.”

4. MINIMIZE THE INFLUENCE OF PEERS

Find ways for the Immature to spend time with the Mature or More Mature:

- Cross Age Mentoring
- Lunch time activities with adult supervision
- Home Base Room for lunch & breaks
- Avoiding time in the hallways
When children misbehave they are trying to tell us that something is not working in their life.

**CHILD WHISPERERS UNDERSTAND THIS**

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**Suggested Readings**

- **Hold On To Your Kids** - Gordon Neufeld, Ph. D. and Gabor Mate, M. D. (*Retrouver son rôle de parent*)
- **The First Days of School: How to be an Effective Teacher** - Harry K. Wong (from his website effective-teaching.com)
- **Educating Oppositional and Defiant Children** - Philip S. Hall and Nancy D. Hall
- **The Explosive Child** - Ross W. Greene, Ph.D.
- **Secrets of Discipline and With All Due Respect** – Ron Moorish (from his website – realdiscipline.com)
- **Real Boys** - William S. Pollack
- **The Boy who was raised as a Dog** – Bruce Perry
- **Why Students Underachieve** – Regalena Melrose