

Sequence of Seven – A Guide to Successful Relationships and Teaching Practice

Schools succeed or fail on the quality of teachers and administrators. The tools that are the most widely employed lack the scope to accurately predict who among the many who approach an educational career have the capacities to be the person who can help guide students in academic areas but also in the critical areas of social and emotional growth. Standardized measures do nothing to demonstrate who among the emergent educators will be the one who students admire, respect and aspire to be like when they become adults. The sad fact is that many teachers in schools today and in the past have been woefully lacking in the human characteristics that this cycle of success is predicated upon.

Ask any student who emerges from schools today who their favorite teacher was and why they feel the way they do. Few will tell us that a teacher was their favorite teacher because they really knew their quadratic equations or if they were sticklers for trivial rules. Even fewer will indicate that the teacher who kicked back and allowed misbehavior and poor work products as their favorite. No, a vast majority will indicate the teacher(s) who cared about their entire wellbeing, not just test scores but also their emotional and social health.

A gifted philosopher and caring patron of public education has created a sequence of indicators by which we can gauge the likelihood of success for new teachers and a diagnostic tool to see why existing educators flounder in the classroom and many times take children filled with wonder and an inquisitive nature and transport them to a feeling of intellectual and emotional numbness. In this complex time of ever deepening poverty, broken homes, economic uncertainty and cataclysmic shifts of a global proportion it is essential that we increase the chances that those in schools will be able to provide a wholesome and healthy learning environment, in addition to a challenging and appropriate academic regime.

The No Child Left Behind legislation is the exact opposite of what we need to do as a nation to counter these social dynamics that are real and palpable in almost every school in this country. It makes no effort to provide opportunities for every child to feel a useful part of our culture. Too many children are left behind in emotional and social squalor. Check out the real drop out rates and the real connections between a poor school experience and lives that have few options and even less hope. These are the children who truly get left behind!

This philosopher has spent 30 years living among indigenous populations and among spiritual teachers trying to ascertain what components separate people of soul from those who are most interested solely in their own wellbeing. From this has emerged the *Sequence of Seven*. This is a progressive list wherein each step is predicated on mastery of the previous indicator. The sequence:

- ***Patience***
- ***Acceptance***
- ***Empathy***
- ***Compassion***
- ***Cooperation***
- ***Kindness***
- ***Love***

How many teachers did you experience who lacked patience? If they lacked patience then they also lacked all of the other components. Try it in your own life, see if it isn't a fool proof way to examine one's efficacy at establishing and maintaining healthy relationships and think deeply whether a successful teacher can be a person who can't develop and maintain relationships. Only when the entire sequence is fulfilled can trust exist and true teaching and learning can't exist absent healthy relationships and trust.

If we learn to utilize this list in schools of education and as an evaluative tool much of the frustration and failure in public schools can be avoided. When schools are inhabited by people who live their lives predominately using this sequence then we stand a real chance at creating school communities based on healthy relationships and ones focused on developing an atmosphere of trust. Life and research tells us that everything is possible when trust exists. In a very uncertain world our children deserve no less.

Take a walk or drive through the nearest poor area where you live and look in the eyes of the inhabitants. How would they be different if they had been educated in a nurturing and trusting school? How would they be different if their teachers had all showed them patience, acceptance, empathy, cooperation, compassion, kindness and love? I'll guarantee you that their test scores would be higher and that many, many more would have finished school and would have exponentially higher amounts of choice in their lives.

See if your life too wouldn't be more whole by adhering more fully to the *Sequence of Seven*.

SEQUENCE OF SEVEN RUBRIC

Sequence of Seven	1	2	3	4
Patience	No tolerance for other's needs or concerns	At times will show interest in other's needs or concerns but is sporadic and unpredictable	Shows care and concern most of the time but this will fade in correlation to energy level and focus	No matter the circumstances I will put their needs and concerns above my needs
Acceptance	Prejudges others who are not within their view of being acceptable	Wants to be open to more people but easily falls back on stereotypical judgments	Works hard to accept all people but knows in their heart that some people don't deserve it	People are all different and must be accepted as they are found. Creates healthy relationships with all those who are mutually capable
Empathy	People get what they deserve. If they live a troubled life, they deserve it.	Finds it hard to understand people who have not been successful. In rare instances it may not be their fault and can understand helping out.	Fully understands the intellectual point of view that in many cases people end up in unfortunate circumstances through no fault of their own but certainly some could do better by working harder.	Cares for all people regardless of what they did to contribute to their plight. My role is to help and not judge.
Compassion	What, work with that person? Yea, right!	I'll work with that person but I am not going to be really into it.	Sure, I'll give them an honest shot but I am always surprised when they rise to the occasion.	I don't care about a person's past. If they are willing to keep trying I will be willing to keep trying as well.
Cooperation	They made their own bed, now its time to lie in it.	Well of course I feel sorry for them but it's not my job to fix the world.	I donate to worthy causes and volunteer time even when I feel they aren't all worth it.	We are all souls trying to make it through life. It is an honor to help the most disadvantaged.
Kindness	The kindest thing I can do is to tell them to try harder and stay out of my way.	I would never go out of my way to hurt them but it's like an animal – I wouldn't hurt a dog or cat either.	I try really, really hard to be kind to everyone. With some people it is too hard and I feel badly but I do back off.	What a gift it is to be kind to someone who doesn't feel they deserve it. Kindness alone can cure many emotional issues for us both.
Love	What? Love? Yea right!	We need to try and love everyone – I've heard that my whole life and don't believe it. I save love for those who love me back.	Oh, what a wonderfully idealistic goal. I can't begin to imagine loving everyone. There are many people who don't earn my love.	I enter every new relationship hoping that it can become a loving one. Experience tells me that not everyone can accept love but it doesn't stop me trying.

*When all conditions
Are met than PEACE is possible

Body

Mind

Soul

Spirit

Sequence of Seven Portfolio Project

Due Date: Last week of regular classes

Product Due: A completed Sequence of Seven Portfolio binder showing how you have addressed how you have grown and what plans you have made to continue to grow in these critical factors of knowing yourself better so you can enhance your teaching and your own sense of wellbeing

Project Requirements: I will allow you to select any variety of means to demonstrate that you have accurately assessed your current capacities in each of the SOS indicators. Your portfolio must include a clearly explained starting point, or baseline, and then show what activities, therapies, readings, conversations, lessons or other endeavors that document your current status, growth over the semester as well as plans as to how you intend to keep growing as a person and an educator.

The second part of this will be a brief presentation, at your seat if you wish, about your SOS project and how this list may be used in a K-12 classroom

Action Plan: Before you begin it is essential that we meet to discuss the myriad ways you can choose to create a plan for personal growth within the parameters of the Sequence of Seven – Everyone must have a completed plan for all seven components to me and have met with me by no later than September 19th. If there are extenuating circumstances let me know in advance of the 19th please.

The following chart is a representative student response to the challenges represented by the words in the Sequence of Seven. As one moves vertically through the Sequence of Seven it indicates a gradual development in the growth of consciousness. As one moves across the columns 1-4, it indicates a developing awareness and sensitivity in the individual.

The chart indicates a shifting sensitivity and values in both directions. The chart's first objective is to stimulate student awareness and subsequent goal setting.