

**KEY
TO
STUDENT
SUCCESS**



Create a Student's User Manual

*With
Secrets About Teachers
Every Student
Needs to Know*

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Student's Personal User's Manual

I drove five different cars on my last vacation. They all worked, but differently. Not one of the cars started the same way. The control for the windshield wipers were in different places. There was no user's manual in the cars, so figuring it out was frustrating. It would have been so much easier if each rental company had provided me with a user's manual for each car.

Think about a teacher who has 32 students in one class. It's like having 32 different cars without owners manuals to tell you how they work. Some of them start differently than others, just like the cars I drove on my vacation. Each of them process information in their own unique way. It is truly a guessing game for teachers.

I created this guide to help you create your own user's manual for your teachers. It will give them valuable information about who you are and what you need to be successful in the classroom. It will take the guesswork out of knowing how to help you be the best student you can be.

Knowing a little about teachers will help you decide what to put in your manual. Teachers are unique in their own ways, just like you. What I am going to share

with you will help you understand your teachers. Most of what I share, they will not, so it is helpful for you to have a heads-up about what is going on in your teachers head, so you can decide what to put in your user's manual.



Secrets About Teachers



1. **Teachers go into the profession because they want to help children be successful, but they are not mind readers. They do not know how you learn best. Even if you have had all kinds of tests to find out about you, they still will rely more on what you tell them about yourself.**



2. **Teachers rely on students' questions to help them deliver information more effectively.** There are many ways to teach a concept and students are different year to year. There are many reasons students might not know what other students do know. Questions take the guess work out of teaching and helps students learn faster and retain the information longer. If you are afraid to ask questions, then I would like you to think of a time when someone in your class asked a question and you were glad they did. Think about why you were happy they asked it. It's probably because you had the same question. I imagine you didn't think they were dumb for asking it. You might have thought they were brave to ask. No one will think you are dumb for asking and if a

student is rude and acts like they know, it's just because they are insecure and want people to think they are smart. Ignore them. The questions of others are very important to listen to. It's a good way to check if you are correct in your thinking. If students get lost in class and wait until they get home to ask their parents questions, the teacher never learns that they were confused. If the parents do the instruction, then they are the only ones who know the student was lost. The teacher is one who needs to know when students are lost, so they can teach more effectively. No two classes are the same and some classes learned things the year before that the new class never learned.



3. **Teachers have feelings, too. They get frustrated just like you.** Teachers may think they are making sense, and then a student says, "I don't get it." That doesn't help the teacher, so it is helpful if you are more specific about what is confusing you during the instruction.



4. **Teachers often react because they have other challenges they are dealing with.** Maybe they are worried about losing their job. They might have had a disturbing phone call or a disagreement with someone before they came to class. I received a speeding ticket before school one day and wasn't in a good mood, but my students didn't know that. Maybe they are fighting a cold and feel horrible. One student didn't think I didn't like him because I had a funny look on my face the day he asked a question. It turned out that he had a great

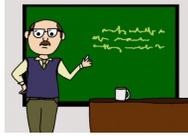
question, but I came to school even though I should have stayed home and by 2:00 in the afternoon I was thinking, “You should have stayed home.” He didn’t know that was what I was thinking. It was important that he ask me why I looked like I did and get clarification. Some teachers have old faces and never look happy, but they are. Children have to understand that just because a teacher looks a certain way, they shouldn’t take it personally. That is, unless you have done something disruptive.



5. **Teachers review information so they are sure the foundation is firm before they add more difficulty to previously learned material.** So, don’t tune out because you think what will be taught is something you already know.



6. **Teachers will not judge you by what other teachers say.** Behavior in students can always change. Teachers have permanent marker remover for those students who want to do better in the new school year. They will form their own opinions by the way you act. If you want to have a better year, you can change at any given time. Teachers secretly want children to succeed in their classes when students have struggled with other teachers. So every student has a chance to change behavior for a better year.



7. **What teachers take the time to write on the board will most likely end up on a test**



8. **Teachers are human and they make mistakes.** They can incorrectly grade your paper. Don't make them feel bad if they made a mistake. A secret you need to know is teachers use teacher's guides to grade papers and many times the answer keys are wrong. The teacher won't discover the key was wrong until a student brings it to their attention. So make sure you ask the teacher if the answer key was wrong, because you are certain you had the correct answer. This way you are not blaming the teachers, they have feelings too.



9. **Teacher's don't get angry when students make mistakes.** They know that mistakes are an important part of learning. If you ask why you made the mistake and learn from it, teachers will be impressed and respect you. When a mistake is made and a student accepts responsibility for it and explains why the mistake was made and what they will do next time to avoid it, teachers will be impressed. If blame is placed on someone else for a mistake, then that can

frustrate anyone. Accepting responsibility is the first step in growing and learning from mistakes.



10. **Teachers don't go on pause when you go to the restroom or you are on vacation or out sick.** They continue teaching, so you are going to miss something that might be on a test. Ask a friend to take notes for you. Don't expect the teacher to repeat what you missed. They don't have time and it isn't fair to your classmates if they have to hear something a second time because a classmate didn't use the restroom at recess. Make sure you really need to use the restroom and that you are not confused. The stress response will make us feel like we have to go to the bathroom, so ask yourself, "Am I lost and need to ask for help, or do I really need to go?"



11. **Teachers set aside "office hours" so students can get one-to-one help.** Teachers have complained to me that the students don't use the special time to get answers because they think the teacher will get mad. They set the time aside for the reason they want to help students. In college, it is the most unused time in a college professor's day. One professor told me, "I don't know why students don't use it. It's like free tutoring. It also helps me know if I am being clear during my lectures. I love it when students come in because I get to develop relationships with the students. It's too hard to do that during lecture." When students utilize office hours several things happen. They get direct instruction from the person who will be grading them. They develop a relationship with the instructor that helps when the final grade is given. During lectures, the instructor has an idea of how to teach to the students who have

come to office hours and will change the way they deliver the material without even realizing it.



12. **Grades teacher give can easily be changed if they know you care.** If your first grades at the beginning of the semester were horrible and you have demonstrated great improvement, you can ask a teacher to drop the bad grades you got at first because of the improvement you have made. Explain that you learned a lot from those mistakes to help you improve and if they dropped the first few tests that were a learning experience then your grade will show the improvement you made. It's worth a try. It gives you a 50% chance of getting a better grade. Most teachers want to know that their students learned something of value and if the low grades motivated you to change, then they will be glad to support you.



13. **Teachers have the power to help you get into different schools and get jobs in the future.** Getting letters of recommendation for another school or job is easy when students have taken advantage of office hours. Begin using them in elementary school and it will become really comfortable. I recommend students visit the instructors the first week of school to be sure they are taking information in correctly. We can tend to confabulate, which means we take in bits and pieces of information and put it together to make sense to us, but it may not be the way the instructor intended to be taken. The instructor will quickly learn whether you understand what was being taught, reteach it if you

were incorrect, and learn how you learn. This will set the stage for a great year. The more the teacher can put in your training manual the more effective the instruction will become.



- 14. Teachers cannot tell if you are daydreaming.** It's hard for teachers to know if you have lost interest or are confused. Confusion will often lead students to daydream about something more interesting. If students lean forward in their seats, repeat the words the teacher is saying in their head, and ask questions when something is unclear, there will be less likelihood that daydreaming will occur.



- 15. Teachers like it when students express what they need to be successful.**

I hope this gives you an idea of what is going on in your teacher's mind and lives and gives you a reason to provide the teacher with a "User Manual" for you. The next section in this book is designed to help you determine what needs to be in your users manual.

Creating Your User's Manual



Without a manual, teaching you is all guesswork!

Creating a user's manual about yourself will help the teacher know the best way to help you learn. You will take the guesswork out of discovering what helps you learn best by using the following information to create a User's Manual and offer it to the teacher before the school year begins. Looking at the secrets about teachers will help you create this manual.



1. Teachers are not mind readers and have no idea how you learn best.

The teacher doesn't know if you remember more of what you see and less of what you hear. If you are a visual learner, you will try to block out sound that



interferes with you focusing on what you need to see.

If you are auditory, you may look like you are not paying attention, when in fact you are. Auditory learners have to block out all visual information so

they can focus on what they are hearing. If the teacher knows you are auditory, they will not form a negative

impression of you when you are not looking up, but you are listening. Decide if you are a person that does better when seeing information and writing it down. Maybe you are one who takes notes with pictures. I had a student who remembered everything by doodling. At the end of a class, she had one page full of little doodles and when I asked her what it meant, she could remember the who lesson.



Do you remember more of what you learn if you such on a peppermint to smell peppermint on a cotton ball. For some reason, the scent of peppermint can stimulate creativity and help in the retention of information.



I used to ask to chew peppermint flavored gum. It helped me from talking too much and the scent was helpful when I was taking a test.



Sometimes we need to learn by talking with others about what we learned. If the teacher knows this is the best way you learn they will think about putting into the lesson plan. I have a student who asked permission to talk to a friend about the lesson and the teacher thought she just wanted to be with her friend. Telling a teacher this information before school starts will avoid a teacher forming that opinion. You have a 50% chance of getting the opportunity if you ask and 100% chance of not getting if you don't ask. It's worth the try.



Are you more productive doing seat work sitting or lying on the floor? If your core muscles aren't strong enough, lying on the floor can often allow you to read for a longer



period of time. Standing up to write can also help because our legs give us the support that we need to lift a pencil. When we are sitting, we have to use our stomach muscles and they get tired faster than our legs. Some children have found that their handwriting gets better when they are standing and they can write for longer periods of time. Their best work is often done standing and writing on a counter top. It's a good idea to try this at home to see if it helps you.



Are you working with Puppy Dog Paws? Some children have weak hand muscles when they are young because they haven't grown into their hands yet. AS they get older, they get more coordinated and writing becomes easier. But if a child is going to be over 5'10" when they are fully grown, it could take awhile for them to grow into their hands, so using a computer can make writing activities more efficient. There are recording apps in Google that will allow students to record what they want to say and the app will turn what was said into a document. Many students found recording all their ideas on sticky notes first allowed them to organize their ideas before they began writing the assignments. I actually used them when writing one of my books. I had them stuck all over the wall in a bedroom in my house.



Are you more alert in the morning or afternoon? We are like batteries. Some children wake up with a full internal battery that is over charged when we wake up and we need it to be quiet so you don't get anymore charge. Sometimes exercise helps. If you have a low battery when you awake, your processing speed might be slower and mornings will not be the time you are the most alert. Letting the teacher in on this information is helpful. It would even be fair to ask not to be called on in the morning or be given think time to answer questions. The fully charged child will have their hand up right away, which may make you feel like you are not as smart, but is just that you are not charged enough. Some children with low batteries get a big charge by moving a lot or talking to others. Being in the middle of the class is not good for them because they will be more inclined to talk to other children. Fully charged students should ask to sit at the back of the class, away from others or on the side of the room. Alerting the teacher to the best seating placement for you before school begins will not only impress the teacher, but most likely guarantee you get the seat of your choice. Remember, you are in the class to learn not be with friends. You can always play with them at lunch and breaks. Do you do your best seat work with music playing or do you need it so quiet you need earplugs?



Do you confabulate? Do you put bits and pieces of information together incorrectly. Our brain is always trying to make sense of what we are seeing, hearing, feeling, smelling, and tasting. It often puts the information together

differently than the teacher expects, which results in making mistakes on tests. It's important to let the teacher know that you might do this at times and you may need to have time to talk to the teacher to make sure you are taking the information in correctly.

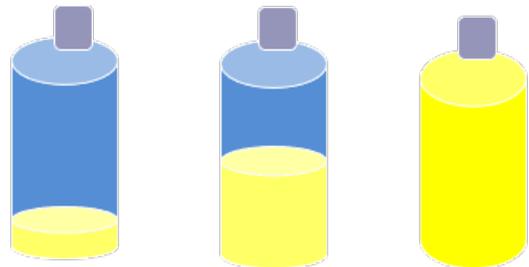


Do you work best under pressure and are told you are a procrastinator? Are you a planner? Those who are procrastinators just need to create fake due dates before assignments are due. Do you have any challenges at home that make getting assignments done. Do you need support with time management? Do you need physical breaks so you can concentrate. A five minute walk can help you complete seat work when you are hitting a wall or get frustrated. How often do you need brain breaks? If students are experiencing a brain block, they need a walk for a few minutes. Making the teacher aware that you can think better if you can take a 5 minute walk make it possible for you to do so. If you are more productive when you return, you will get the brain breaks you need.



We are like the cars in a lot. We all start our days differently with different energy levels. We also charge differently. If we wake up with a low battery, we may find it hard to be alert first thing in the morning.

Getting some exercise before school can charge your battery. But, if you aren't able to get the exercise, you can share this information with the teacher. It might make your thinking time a little slower first thing in the day. If you are slower in the morning and the teacher calls on you, you will be less



likely to have a quick answer. Whereas the person with a full battery will be the one who has quick answers. Teachers will often call on students randomly, which for a deep slower thinker can pose a problem. If teachers know in advance that you are slower in the morning and need some think time, they won't put you on the spot or give you an opportunity to think about a question first before you are called upon to answer. Some children like to talk to people to charge their batteries. In order to do well in the class, you might ask to sit on the perimeter of the room so you aren't able to talk to others and ask to chew gum to help with concentration.

If you have a full battery and you are around people, you may need to get some exercise to get rid of some of the energy. Being around people will overcharge you at times and chewing gum and going for a run can help balance your energy. Sharing what battery type you are with the new teacher will increase their understanding of what you need to be successful.

There are other things that can be added to your manual. Determine which are best for you and share that with the teacher. If a student came to me and shared that they remember how to spell words if they can write them several times on a white board starting out really big and getting smaller every time, the teacher may let you use the board during free time. Hint: This method of study uses the larger arm muscles that create a stronger memory. Some students like using a dry erase pen on a sliding door or a big mirror to get this type of practice.



Here are some other items that can be added to what you will share with your teacher:

1. Write words in the air using the larger arm muscles to improve your memory.

2. Using your finger, write the words in the carpet or on sandpaper.
3. Ask permission to use graph paper to keep all your math problems in line. This way your tens column won't get mixed up with the one's column.
4. Ask permission to use manipulatives when trying to solve problems.
5. Ask permission to use fidget tools like squishy balls or hard clay that can keep your hands busy so you can concentrate.
6. Request a chair band around the legs of a chair where your feet can rest and also allow for some movement when you have to sit still for long periods of time.
7. Use notecards to remember vocabulary words or take notes. Using different colors can help with recall of facts and vocabulary words.
8. Some students need to have a little movement instead of sitting in a standard chair. There are swivel stools available that help students put their feet on the



floor and help their spines stay erect. It allows for movement. One brand I have used is called a Hokki stool. It can be found on Amazon. There are many brands that work. If a student has tried it at home and finds it helps with concentration, then teachers may be opened to letting them bring them into the classroom.

9. Do you lose attention at times and need to ask to sit close to the front of the room?
10. Do you need to lean forward and place your feet on the floor so you can concentrate on what the teacher is saying?
11. Do you need to be at the back of the class, so you can see everyone, but have the opportunity to stand a little to maintain your attention?
12. Do you do best if you sit in the middle of the class, because you rely on the energy of others to give you the stimulation you need to pay attention? Telling the teacher you want to sit in the front before school begins will assure you of getting the seat that will support you.



One way to improve your personal User's Manual is to continually ask questions in class. With each question, you are helping your teachers understand how you process information which allows them to become more effective in delivering information.

#1 FEAR

Are you afraid to talk to your teachers. Most students are. But, teachers don't know what their students don't know. They want to know what you don't know, because teaching you everything you know will be boring. The only way they will know what you don't know is if you ask them questions when you don't understand something. They may seem frustrated if children ask questions that indicates they weren't listening, so learning how to ask questions is important. Some children don't listen to other's questions. It is frustrating to a teacher if students ask the same question. For the this reason, it is important to listen to all questions asked, even if they are not your own. If someone asks a question that you think you know the answer to, think about your answer, and check to see if you are correct. It's also important to listen to other's questions, because they often ask something you might not think of asking. By listening to the questions and thinking about the answers you would give, you will be more likely to remember the instruction because you are actively listening and were more involved in the lesson. It will also help you keep your attention.

Most students fear asking questions for a number of reasons. They are afraid classmates will make fun of them or think they are dumb. There have been times when teachers are not feeling well and do not respond kindly. For whatever reason they may fear asking, they still need to ask.

If you don't want to ask questions, I have a question for you?

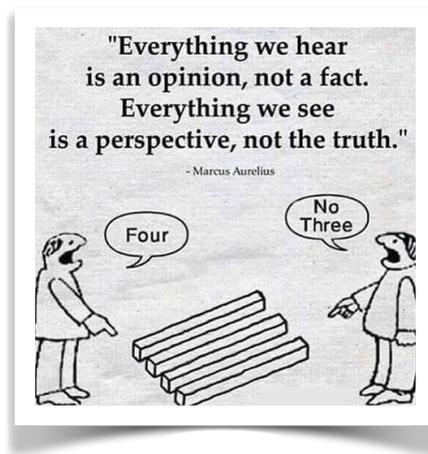
Has anyone ever asked a question in class and you were glad they did?

Think about why you were glad they asked the question. Was it because you had the same one?

If they asked a question and you were glad they did because it was the same question you had and you probably thought they were brave for asking it, why would you be afraid to ask it?

Is it because you don't want them to think you are dumb?

If you were glad they asked a question because it was the same one you had, why would you think they would think you are dumb if you ask.



We all see things differently and there are times when other students will see something you might not have thought about. You might also think of something that someone else might not think of and they will be happy you asked questions to alert them to think about it. It will give the teacher important feedback about how the students learn and process what is being taught. It also makes sure that students have a firm foundation on which to build more complex concepts.



No one knows what has happened to a teacher before school. They may be feeling pressure to get test scores up. They have a lot of pressure placed on them by their

administrators. They want the best for their students and when they think they are clear during instruction and children say, “I don’t get it,” the pressure can be too much. Be sure to listen to other’s questions so you aren’t asking the same question that was just asked. That can be frustrating to a teacher. Even if you still have the same question, try stating the question differently.

Think about challenges you had in the past and share what they were. Then tell the teacher what you plan to do differently this year. Ask for help in changing things for yourself.

Your manual can be added to at any time, even during the school year. There will be times when you have some of the following issues:

1. You were out sick and you missed information. The teacher doesn’t always remember who is present and who isn’t or if they miss something important.
2. They don’t know if you were in the bathroom when something was taught and that is why you missed it.
3. They don’t know when you had a disagreement with a friend or parent and that is all you can think about in class. You can talk to them to let them know you something troubling you. They can help.
4. What have you learned from previous challenges that will help the teacher get to know you better.



Make sure to visit the office hours provided or ask for meets times to review what was taught. Because we all confabulate, it is important to visit the instructions as soon as the new class begins to make sure the instruction is clear. This sets the stage for a wonderful year with the teacher.

As you learn more about yourself, you will have more to share. Don't wait for the teacher to figure out what you need. Be ahead of the game by offering important information from which to work before school begins.

Get Help Personal

Contact Ms. Olivadoti if you need some support in asking questions or to get the confidence to ask. She has worked with hundreds of students and helped them overcome their fear and experience amazing success as a result.

Email: theworkdoc@gmail.com