

## **Teacher Education Institute (TEI)**

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### **Teacher's Temperament**

Teaching is a two way process. It involves an interaction and relationship between teacher and child. The information described in the other fliers relates to ways in which children act, think and feel and how these are determined, to a very great extent, by temperament. We need also to consider the other side of the interaction. The ways in which the teacher's temperament will determine what is happening in the classroom. We shall assume again that one temperament is predominating although, generally speaking, there should be a greater balance of temperaments within the adult than within the child.

An important part of the process of education should be to develop a balanced temperament in each child. By the time adulthood is reached it is hoped that the excesses of any one temperament have been tempered and that some sort of mature balance has been reached.

Accepting that a greater balance should exist, we can appreciate how choleric teachers should have little difficulty in asserting their authority in the classroom. They will probably be efficient organisers and act decisively and quickly in dealing with problems and mishaps, yet they may lack sufficient perception to meet certain needs. They might well, for example, meet choleric children "head on" which could result in continual confrontation in the classroom situation. Melancholics might easily become frightened of the assertiveness of the choleric teacher and withdraw; phlegmatics might well decide not to bother with a teacher who obviously does not possess any patience and does not understand that they need time to produce their best results. Sanguine children might well form the best relationships with the choleric teacher until they are made to persevere and complete work.

The melancholic teacher will usually perceive the needs of the children better than teachers of the other temperaments. It is in the area of classroom management where difficulties may arise. They may lack authority and become preoccupied with their own thoughts and feelings particularly if the class is difficult or things keep going wrong. They will need to be quietly assertive with choleric children and not pander excessively to the needs of the melancholics. They may well form the best relationships with the phlegmatics; their approach to problems is so different from the sanguines that minor or major conflicts are almost inevitable.

The phlegmatic teacher will probably be well prepared. Yet their methodical approach will relate to some children's needs but not to others. Phlegmatic children will obviously relate well to a phlegmatic teacher; the danger here is that the teacher may not encourage the type of interaction necessary for their development. Melancholic children are likely to get on well with the phlegmatic teacher and produce good work. Sanguine children, on the other hand, may well react against the slow and methodical approach. Choleric children, too, may sense a lack of the type of authority they need and become assertive.

The sanguine teacher will probably be on better terms generally with the children than teachers of the other temperaments. They will probably not take too seriously the outbursts of the choleric; the moans of the melancholics; the slowness of the phlegmatics or the unreliability of the sanguines. They may well, however, not be sufficiently prepared, may wish to change activities especially if things have gone wrong with the lesson or whatever.

Therefore, in order to be effective each teacher needs to be aware of their own strengths and shortcomings in the teaching situation.