

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

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### **Expectations of Different Temperaments**

The main task of the teacher is to work with the main temperament of each child and not against it. Once the inner need, according to temperament is satisfied, the attitude to work will be positive and constructive and far more will be achieved than would be the case if the teacher had ignored the needs of each temperament. Thus the teacher needs to approach children of different temperaments with quite different expectations.

There is no point in chiding the choleric for over-enthusiasm or expecting that the melancholic will pay immediate attention. It is no use criticising the phlegmatic for being so slow or getting angry with the sanguine for not remembering the contents of yesterdays lesson.

Teachers, therefore, need to be realistic in their expectations of the behaviour of children of different temperaments. It would be futile to expect the choleric to be patient; the melancholic assertive; the phlegmatic enthusiastic; the sanguine tenacious.

The practice of education is thus an art and teachers need to be aware of this if they are not only going to bring the best out of the children but out of themselves as well.

In many subject areas teachers will be able to structure content so that it appeals to children of different temperament. For example, in a story they can appeal to characteristics of each temperament; to the initiative and assertiveness of the choleric; the sensitivity and reflection of the melancholic; the calmness and patience of the phlegmatic; the enthusiasm and warmth of the sanguine.

If development of children occurs in the right way the qualities in each of the different temperaments will be nurtured and realise their potential; in so doing making up all that is good in human nature.

The choleric can be a pillar of strength in affliction - supportive and ever resourceful; the melancholic can teach us to be perceptive and aware of the many problems facing us; the phlegmatic how to endure and be persistent and faithful; the sanguine how to rise above minor tribulations and irritations and discover the joy in life.

If natural characteristics are not developed in a balanced way the results can be disastrous sometimes resulting in severe behavioural problems and even physical and mental illness.

It should be emphasised again that the teacher's task is to bring about the balanced development of all the different temperaments within each child. The way to do this is twofold. In the first place it is to satisfy the inner needs according to temperament. There is no point in working against the main temperament.

Once these inner needs are satisfied the other temperaments which, in part, the child possesses can be worked upon. In this way the attributes of the other temperaments besides the one that predominates can be developed. The result of only the main temperament developing can be just as disastrous as the main temperament developing in an unbalanced way.