

## YES WE CAN TEACH KIDS HOW TO READ AND DO THE OTHER BASIC SKILLS

There is an Education Model and Program that will insure that every student will learn how to read and have the basic knowledge and skills necessary to be an independent and contributing member of society. It is the Objective, Diagnostic, and Prescriptive Education Program. It is based on the Strong's Model and the research and experience learned in the Teacher Development Program.

Why should you look at Strong's Model and Teacher Development Program? After all it was developed in the early 70's. The main reason is that to my knowledge, it is the only major education program with experimental and control groups that has been used and tested in a university, in public schools, and with normal and extremely disadvantage kids. It was also used and tested and with kids that were on juvenile probation. Test results indicated that it was effective with all types of kids, regardless of race or socioeconomic status. It showed that they made significantly better academic achievement than the traditional education program.

Since the present education program isn't working and this one was found to work and to be effective then it should be tried. It is free so there is everything to gain and nothing to lose.

Warning! To be effective the Strong's Model requires: that the teachers be well trained and certified in the use of the diagnostic-prescriptive techniques and that the educational institution has clearly delineated objectives. It requires teachers to have the freedom to decide what a student needs and to use whatever instructional strategies, materials that she feels is best. It is also important that the teachers receive whatever assistance she needs. Unless the institution is willing to make these commitments then do not try to institute the Objective, Diagnostic Prescriptive Program.

Why are you bringing it up now and why wasn't it adopted long ago? I am bringing it up now because I am concerned about the future of the kids and country. I think the reasons why it wasn't adopted in the seventies was that it was considered a radical change from the status quo and not needed. At

that time the United States was the dominate world leader in technology, commerce and education. The country didn't have any real competition, but things have changed. Today the country is facing serious competition from many countries and the United States has been slow to adjust to the changing conditions. Fifty years ago the country led the world in technology, commerce and education. The automobile industry is a good example of the failure to recognize the need for change and as a result Japan has surpassed us and China is rapidly gaining on the country as the world's major economy. The major advantage this country has enjoyed has been our technology. Technology is dependent on well educated people. In the past this country's education system was the best in the world. In the last fifty years the country's public education system has gone from number one to number twenty-five when compared to the other countries. The future of the country as an industrial and economic power depends on our education system producing quality graduates.

When I examined the current education programs I found that there has been little fundamental change, especially in the elementary schools, in the last fifty years. It is like the automobile industry but the danger of not adjusting to the changes that have taken place in the world is much greater. In the interim time there have been great advancements in the field of medicine, communications, data processing, psychology and others which have greatly increased our knowledge about the human brain and learning. Yet I can find little evidence where educators have taken advantage of it. Educators need to be working with authorities in these various areas and using a more scientific approach to education. A more detail discussion of educational changes can be found in Strong's Website "[strongoneducation.com](http://strongoneducation.com)".

To understand Strong's Education Model it is important to know certain basic assumptions and program requirement on which the model was developed.

Assumptions:

Anyone can learn but what and how a person learns

will differ with individuals. Most people want to succeed.

Success is the best motivator and failure is the greatest impediment to a person's action and success.

To be effective and successful there are certain concepts that must be understood and accepted. Some of these are listed.

It is difficult for individuals to learn something which is beyond their skill level and understanding.

Not everyone is going to obtain the same level of achievement or at the same rate.

Most individuals will do their best if they know: what the task is; feel they have the necessary skills and the knowledge and are given the freedom and resources to do the job, and know they will be responsible for the results.

Essential objectives must be measurable and clearly stated.

Teachers must have the skills and knowledge to do the job.

The program is designed to allow the teachers the freedom to determine what the individual student needs and what instructional strategies and materials to use.

The following are some of the program requirements

Whatever the school assumes responsibility for teaching must be clearly delineated.

All essential objectives for which a teacher is held accountable must be specifically stated and be measurable.

In addition to basic teacher education the teacher must be trained or retrained to be competent in diagnostic evaluation techniques and have a broad knowledge of instructional strategies, programs and materials.

Teachers must be able to determine the achievement and functioning levels of a student in any skill or subject they teach.

Teachers must have the freedom to determine what objective a student needs and what instructional strategies and materials they want to use.

Administrators will provide the teachers, as far as

possible, with all the instructional resources, materials and help they need and request.

Teachers will accept accountability for the academic progress of their students. Every organization is developed to achieve certain goals. Public schools are no exception. Society developed the education system to enable the citizens to learn the skills and knowledge necessary for the country.

The following are some of the basic goals and objectives of any education institution.

Schools were created to achieve the goals which the country thinks are important. These goals are usually broad generalizations which give directions and expected outcomes, but to be achieved they must be clarified by measureable objectives. Here is an example: I am in New York City and my goal is to go to San Diego. My goal is clear, but how do I get there? There are many ways, but are my resources and time adequate? Once I know these factors I can work out the specific actions to accomplish my goal. Every action or objective that I take is clearly delineated and can be measured and achievement of my goal can be determined.

It is important to remember that formal education is a selection of skills and content which are considered important by someone or some group. Formal education is usually designed to achieve specific goals.

Without the perpetuation of certain values, knowledge and skills it would be difficult for cultures and governments to exist and continue. Education, especially in public schools, in this country is primarily designed for this purpose.

An examination of Strong's Model will illustrate how this process works or should work. (See diagram of the Model at end of this article).

All societies are composed of a major group and sub-groups. A major group is formed when a majority of the individuals in the group subscribe to a common set of goals and values. Sub-groups often subscribe to most of the values but disagree with some and have other goals and values. In this country goals for public education are determined by the interaction of society, individuals, and knowledge. These goals establish direction and results for public education that the country wants and needs. Goals are usually



broad generalization and must be defined by specific objectives.

The Nation established public schools to achieve these goals and it is the job of public education to create programs which can achieve them. The success or failure of a school to achieve these goals will depend on a program: that has well defined objectives and competent instructors. These teachers must be able to determine the achievement and functioning levels of a student and then have the freedom to develop and implement 3 programs which they think will help the student. This means that the teacher must have the diagnostic skills needed and a broad knowledge of programs and materials necessary to develop the program that is appropriate for the student. It should be emphasized that all students may not have the ability to achieve the desired goals, but all students can master enough skills and knowledge to become independent and contributing members of society.

Once the objectives for the educational institution have been determined it is the responsibility of the

school to achieve them. The objectives can be categorized into skills and content. The first step is to determine which objectives are essential and which are important and desirable but not essential. The next step is to arrange skills on a continuum from simple to complex so that a student's achievement and functioning level can be determined. Essential academic knowledge or content objectives should be specific as to what the learner is to master. In a good education program the essential skills and content shouldn't take up more than **twenty percent of the program**. The rest of the time can be devoted to those skills and content that the teachers and students believe is important but not essential. No objective that cannot be measured should be considered essential as there is no valid way of knowing whether it has been achieved. If this program is followed the dropout rate and discipline problems will be greatly reduced. No student will graduate without the basic skills and knowledge necessary to enable him to be an independent contributing member of society.

## Guidelines for the Model's operation.

The teacher will do a comprehensive diagnostic evaluation of the student's knowledge and performance on the skills and content areas for which the school is assuming responsibility. This will enable the teacher to locate the skill level on the continuum where the student can function and what needs to be done to move him to the next skill level. It is advisable to make this information available to the student and his parents. Also the information should be forwarded with the student if he changes grades or schools.

Once the objective is chosen the teacher will then determine what she thinks is the best strategy to enable the learner to achieve the objective and move on to the next level. At this point the teacher will indicate in the student's log the date the strategy began, the specific objective, the procedure and materials. (See example of a student's log, at end of the article). The strategy or program selected and implemented for the student or students will be described and recorded in the log. This operation might be done by the teacher or

some other person or machine.

Upon completing the exercise or program the teacher will evaluate the student's performance. The evaluation procedure the author recommends is to give the student three problems which require the particular skill to solve. If the student gets all three of the problems correct the teacher will then select a new objective for the student and proceed as before. If one problem or question is missed repeat the test with another set of problem as most likely the student made a clerical type error. If two problems are missed it would indicate that student needs additional review or work on the objective. If all three problems are missed then the teacher will select a new strategy and repeat the instructional process until the student has achieved the objective. If the student has failed to master the objective and the teacher has tried all of the instructional strategies that she knows she will take the student's log, with all the information of what she has done and the results, to the administrator. The administrator working with the teacher will utilize all the resources available in the school, district and community to

assist the teacher. If all these elements are unsuccessful in helping the student achieve the objective then the school must concede that it has done everything professionally possible to help the student.

Again let me emphasize that for the Model to be effective the educational institution must be sure all essential objectives are measurable and clearly delineated so they are available to anyone.

Furthermore the objectives should be arranged in the order they are to be learned, proceeding from simple to complex. (See example at the end of the article). Once the objectives have been formulated in the skills and content areas it will require teachers who are competent in the use of the diagnostic-prescriptive techniques and have a broad knowledge of the subject matter. These teachers must have the freedom to determine the level of a student's achievement in the various subjects they teach; be able to determine what objective the student needs to work on; and be able to select and implement whatever strategy and materials they want to use

## Advantages of the Strong's Model.

It ensures that every student will progress as far and as fast as his ability will take him. There is no limit to what the academically talented students can achieve. It is ideal for schools with year around programs and has a constant change of students as it enables a teacher to determine the achievement and functioning levels of the student and work with him at that level.

It makes it possible to objectively evaluate teachers and at the same time provide maximum protection to teachers who are doing a good job.

It makes it easy to allow schools and teachers to involve ancillary personnel and other institutions to assist in the education programs.

Most important is that it insures that every student, that is capable, will be able to read and have the skills and knowledge to be an independent and contributing member of society.

## Recommendations for implementing The Objective, Diagnostic, Prescriptive Program.

Large city school systems planning on using the Strong's Model or The Objective, Diagnostic,

Prescriptive Program select at least one school in a disadvantaged area and one in the suburban area. If the district is in a small town or rural area then one school is sufficient. These would be pilot schools to test the effectiveness of the program and train teachers to expand the Program to other schools. It is extremely important that the teachers used in the Program are trained or retrained in the diagnostic-prescriptive techniques of teaching. The Teacher Program found that to develop or retrain teachers to be competent in diagnosing and using the Strong's Model takes about a year and half. A summer session was used to teach the participants the diagnostic and computer skills and how to use them. They were also shown the many instructional programs and materials available and how to use them. Once they have achieved the required competency levels of skills and knowledge then they had to work in a school with a normal class load. This was necessary to enable them to learn how to use their expertise and convince them that it could be done in traditional school. This must be done under the supervision of the training team. Also they must learn how to work on a team and

how to delegate and supervise ancillary personnel. (Go to [strongoneducation.com](http://strongoneducation.com) and click on “The Teacher Development Program”), for a program that was used to retrain teachers. It is important that the school do a pre and posttest using a standardized achievement test to compare the achievement of the students in the schools using the Strong’s Model with the students in schools using the traditional program.

These test results will enable the administration to compare the two approaches and to compare how the classes and the school’s program compare to the national norms. This analysis may be used to indicate how effective the program is for various categories of students and provide a bench mark of achievement for various groups of students in the school. Examples: students from low socio-economic areas, different IQ groups, different sexes, and different races. The results will probably be more accurate the second year of the program than the first year. The evaluation of a teacher should be based on the achievement of the essential objectives by each student. If the school has other criteria, such as following policy, this must



be clearly indicated that these are the factors on which the teacher's evaluation is based.

Caution is necessary when interpreting the teachers and school's performance in the content area with the national norms as they may be measuring different things. A teacher's performance must be based on the essential objectives of the school's program.

Additional information may be found in "strongoneducation.com.net".

