

**Dr. Graniero's Presentation to All New Haven School
Administrators**

June 2006

"Teaching Does Not Mean Learning"

Notes Compiled by Timothy C. Visel

New Haven Board of Education Teacher Evaluation Process

Dr. Graniero in a second inservice workshop for New Haven Public School Administrators gave a scenario for administrators to consider. Think of one or two of your favorite high school teachers - what you liked about them and so on. Now taking what we know about learning modalities rate your learning style -now compare the two. Statistics tell us that the most liked teacher was the one who taught in the way we liked to learn - nothing new here but talking about it is new. I (Dr. Graniero) have a particular learning style I need to see it, if I can't see it, it doesn't exist. Other students have learning styles that we can categorize or rate. Doesn't it make sense that we should teach students in the way they learn. You bet! Now think about two teachers in high school that you, feel - well not disliked - after all that's the business were in but didn't look forward to their classes. Now think about why you didn't. Statistics tell us (aside from just personal issues) that it wasn't a good learning style match. We like to be taught in the way we learn best. This isn't new either witness the differentiated teaching fad we now have in education. It's a fad if we say we do (teach) to different learning styles and I walk into the classroom and everyone is using the same book, in the same chapter and looking at the same page. Or I look at the classroom and there are no examples of student work, or posters, or a ready project corner. It's just a stark classroom a resource "desert" devoid of enthusiasm. Let's be honest we all see it - you can see it in your buildings even in a wing and you can see it on the student mirror, their faces reflect the educational mirror of instruction - if they look bored the instruction is boring, if they are engaged - the instruction has engaged them, if they are excited about learning the classroom environment is exciting.

I'm not referring to the open classroom movement of the 1960's and 1970's, not structured instruction I'm talking about guided structured instruction, but not rigid cold in personal and devoid of creativity or enthusiasm. We need

teachers to bring enthusiasm into the classroom and be aware that we all don't learn in the same way on the same day. Students should find the instruction engaging and such instruction should yield positive results -if your students like doing posters - have them do posters, if you have a group of applied learners do an integrated project. If you have students who can't sit still allow movement, constant talkers should be public speakers and out loud readers, want to teach English then have them have your students read Shakespeare out loud and revolve discussions about the history of language. Reading for the sake of reading rarely motivates anyone. Ever look at

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a magazine rack, different ones for different interests - now look at the one textbook classroom, what if you picked the wrong magazine! Think about it.

The best thing you can do is look at your classrooms and picture that magazine rack. I have been in thousands of classrooms and I can tell you in about a minute what is going on - and so can you. It's about one to two minutes of your time. Just walk in and look around and listen. Teaching is occurring but how about student learning?

Finally - let's talk about the media world in which we live in - our students are subjected to all forms of media, news, radio, video, interactive and real time messaging. More and more students see school as something apart from the world around them. If school is not part of the real world then it becomes "abstract" unreal or something that is being glued onto the picture rather than the picture itself. If the students feel that education is something that we hope (the adult) will "stick" to them instead of a process of becoming them (the student), we will fail and we should fail. Students register our failure by voting with their feet - they leave. We call them dropouts or in the new terminology non graduates. I'm not talking about those students who dropped out but still remain in the building for them - they have developed a coping strategy - cram for the exam and short term retention. The paint falls off the picture canvas in days - because the paint never really mixed (learned) with the previous layer, it was weak disconnected and just came apart - and when we attempt to reapply it and it falls off again and again and again -- the harder we press the faster falls in opposition. We need to

change how we apply the "paint." It has to be connected to the previous layer, it has to be reinforced so it bonds, it may take several different applications and possibly reapplication instead of one thick glob we threw at the canvas. And people a glob is a glob, bigger globs weighs more and fall off faster than smaller globs. But, all globs will eventually fall, we call that poor retention. That is how we got into trouble with Special Education. We must prepare the old surface to accept the new paint. To do that sometimes we need to change how we feel about learning.

Some educational consultants don't like to see newspapers in the classroom, but used properly, students read them. For some students, newspapers can help prepare the paint, for others it's the color of the paint or the type of paint or the type of preparation for some students prepare. It might be a Q-tip and for others, a power sander.

Teachers know this - you can hear talk about it "that student won't do well in that classroom because" what they are saying is they realize the learning styles and teaching style doesn't match. Perhaps when a Q-tip is needed, a power sander is

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used. Or when a power sander is needed, it broke down years ago and never got fixed or only globs are applied when instead a series of thin (coats) and surface tests are needed assessments (time to dry) between coats. What if the teacher never tests the surface before applying the next glob and the whole thing comes crashing down from the weight of globs. We called that an "f". Or, worse now, the canvas is torn or ripped. Now the canvas itself has to be restored, we call that oppositional behavior. We rely too much on textbooks. A textbook is a tool, but is only one tool that is why I like newspapers.

It's just another tool. If you had only one tool in your toolbox, what if you pulled out the wrong one for the job? Would you continue to use it, even though you realized it wasn't working? Doing the same activity (behavior) and expecting different results is what they call insanity. Wouldn't you simply pick another tool, or the best situation is that you recognized the scope of work and choose the proper tool first? Would it seem plausible that more tools

you have would prepare you for different kinds of jobs? Or would you continue to use the wrong tool even though you realized it wasn't working? What required a light tap with a tack hammer is inappropriate to use a jack hammer. That is what we call appropriate versus in appropriate instruction.

We need to do a better job of testing the paint (formative assessments). If you were going down the wrong road would you like to know within 5 minutes or 6 hours? People seem preoccupied with collecting data but to what end? Instead the data effort should be used not to assess the teaching but assess the learning. Did the students learn and retain it. That is what we should be concerned about. That's what we should do ask the student, do your teachers want to be at the top or bottom of the list. You sat in their seat once did anybody ask you? Think about my opening remarks. I made you think about it when I asked you.

Jerry Graniero has been an educator for more than 35 years, serving in the public, private, and business education sectors. Jerry was recruited to become the new Director of the Southeastern Equity Center - a position he began on July 1, 2002. Prior to joining the staff of the Equity Center, Jerry was Senior Managing Partner of Solutions: Common Sense in Educational Practice, Inc. - a company which he founded several years ago. Through his consulting practice he has worked with districts throughout the eastern and southern states. Each year many thousands of teachers and administrators have listened to and participated in his professional development opportunities which stressed the need for schools

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