



HOW GENEROUS ARE YOU?

BY RICA BOLIPATA-SANTOS

One of the greatest challenges of teaching is generosity, which is probably why many people think it is a vocation rather than a profession. See whether you demonstrate this trait!

1. At the beginning of a teaching day, you are found...

- A)** In the library doing extra research
- B)** At your desk preparing the day's lessons and visual aids
- C)** In your classroom, in case students wish to talk to you
- D)** Along the corridors having fun with students

2. At the end of a teaching day, you are most likely...

- A)** Packing your things so you can leave early and rest
- B)** At your desk preparing the next day's lessons or checking papers
- C)** Staying in the classroom for some extra moments to talk to students
- D)** Watching or supervising extra-curricular activities

3. Do you make yourself available for one-on-one sessions with students?

- A)** You try to avoid situations like this and pass them on to

- the guidance counselor
- B)** Only by appointment
- C)** During lunch breaks and recess
- D)** You make yourself free anytime for students who need you

4. In dealing with problematic students (failing or lazy), which statement best represents your philosophy?

- A)** Let them talk to their guidance counselor.
- B)** Let them approach me since they should be aware that they're in trouble.
- C)** Let me talk to them. I'm sure I can help.
- D)** Let me talk to the parents. They might be able to help.

5. When students come to see you during a break, what do you do?

- A)** Ask them what it's about before you decide to sit with them.
- B)** Ask them to set an

- appointment for another day.
- C)** Tell them to talk to you after school.
- D)** Ask them to sit and proceed to listen.

6. How do you make yourself available to students outside of class hours?

- A)** Class time is enough for the needs of the subject.
- B)** Consultations after class hours, if necessary and appropriate.
- C)** Hanging out with them during your free time, even on weekends.
- D)** You visit them at home or they visit you in your own home.

7. At the end of the school year, what goes through your head?

- A)** It was a good year but I wish I had done more for the students.
- B)** I'm proud that I was able to accomplish my syllabus.



- C)** I'm so exhausted from dealing with all my students!
- D)** Why am I a teacher?!? I feel like I'm carrying the weight of the world!

RICA BOLIPATA-SANTOS holds an MA degree from Ateneo de Manila University in English Literature. She is currently pursuing her PhD in Creative Writing at the University of the Philippines. She teaches at the English, Interdisciplinary Studies and Fine Arts departments of the Ateneo. She has been a teacher for 13 years and deems it her first true love.

RESULTS:

If your answers are mostly **A** and **B**, chances are your concerns center around your students' cognitive abilities. That is, you are primarily a **content teacher**. Your concern is to cover and teach all the necessary information to your students. Your focus is commendable! This should definitely be every teacher's goal. You probably have very good, disciplined students who often do well in academics. But at the same time,

your focus might sometimes act as blinders that don't allow you to see the whole picture. In your drive to finish a module or make sure your class does well in the next exam, you might miss one student's distress signal.

This doesn't mean you're not generous. You could actually be spending more time than others doing your lesson plans or checking papers. But what this might deprive you of is the gift of being a friend and a mentor to young souls, which

is another aspect of teaching. Consider that your effectivity might be even greater if other teaching-related qualities come to the fore, such as empathy and sensitivity.

On the other hand, if your answers are mostly **C** and **D**, you are a **compassionate teacher**. Your generosity must be appreciated greatly by your class. However, it's possible to be too generous at times. Your students might take advantage of you, asking for easy quizzes or no homework. Also, if you think only about

others and never about yourself, this might lead to year-end burnout.

What teachers often forget, because of their great love for the profession, is that they need to be generous to themselves as well. The outpouring of giving necessitates an amount of taking some time out: to rest, breathe, get energized, respond authentically, and more importantly, taking time for the student to figure it out for herself. Remember this simple equation: **Give and Take=A Healthy Relationship with your students!**



DEAR TITA LITA

Angelita L. Sta. Ana, Ed.D. is the English Schools Division Supervisor of the City of Marikina. She has been an educator for the past 20 years and also does editorial consulting. Through the years, she has inspired and helped many young teachers to grow professionally and personally.

What can I do about faculty room gossip?

Dear Tita Lita,

Even in the faculty room, there's *chismisan* and *inggitan* between teachers. And of course, there's always the temptation to join in. But whenever I step back and think about it, I feel bad that there's gossip and backbiting even among us, who are supposed to set the example for students. Do you think there's anything I can do without seeming like a killjoy?

In most Filipino settings, gossip is one vice that tempts everyone. Even in the faculty room, gossip sometimes helps teachers relax and feel less stressed. But like you, I feel that it's unprofessional and unproductive. It also has a way of turning around and biting those who indulge in it. It's easy for words to be misinterpreted or to reach the wrong ears.

This doesn't mean that you need to distance yourself from your more "loquacious" co-teachers. It's still important to establish fair, sincere, and friendly relationships with all your colleagues. One thing you can do, when a *chismis* session starts up, is to simply proceed with your work and pretend you hear nothing. Or you can go to the library or some other quiet place to attend to paperwork.

Here are some suggestions to make the environment in your faculty room more pleasant and conducive to good relationships:

- 1 Put up a reading corner where books, magazines, journals, and newspapers are available to read.
- 2 See if your principal can provide your faculty room with some computer units, so teachers can use their time to prepare instructional materials or even learn to be more computer literate.
- 3 Bring in some board games that teachers can play during break time, such as Scrabble, Chess, or Checkers. You can even have tournaments! Busy minds will have less time for envy and backbiting.

DO YOU HAVE A PROBLEM?

Write to Tita Lita! Send your letter to:
Star Teacher c/o Sa Aklat Sisikat Foundation, 35/F Petron Mega Plaza, Sen. Gil Puyat Ave. Makati City • Fax 889-8135 • Cell 0927-437-8395 • Email: teachers@readerstransform.com

HOW CAN I STAY NATURAL DURING CLASSROOM OBSERVATION?

Dear Tita Lita,

Do you have any advice for teachers like me who get really tense when supervisors do classroom observation? Knowing that someone's watching me makes me so nervous that my teaching style is affected. The class also notices how stiff I am, and this just makes things worse. I'm so frustrated because I feel that I'm a good teacher when I'm not being observed.

You're not alone! There are many teachers who, like you, are overwhelmed by classroom observation. However, there are also those who regard the matter as a chance to learn more, to improve the day-to-day teaching-learning process, and to do better up to the point of excellence. Since class supervision is one of the major functions of principals and subject area supervisors, teachers are enjoined to recognize it as one of the strategies to achieve good results in classroom interaction.

Here are some tips that may help.

- 1 Come to school ready with your lesson plan and colorful visual aids. At least one day before class, study very well the procedures and strategies you plan to employ with your students.
- 2 Be in proper attire. Follow the school's dress code, and do make an effort to look nice. If you look good on the outside, it's easier to feel confident and comfortable inside.
- 3 Act naturally. Pretend that no one is watching. Focus on your students and their responses. Remember that a supervisor or principal's main goal is to observe teaching and learning activities. He or she is there to help you improve, not to punish you.
- 4 Incorporate three important factors in gaining the students' attention: enjoyable activities, good command of the language, and a sense of humor. These will help you perform successfully in class.
- 5 Remember that whenever you dare to try something worthwhile, whether you succeed or not, you haven't failed. Never stop trying!

