

Stereotype Tool

Introduction

The Stereotype Tool is meant as a classroom assignment providing insight for reflection on your own views towards talent in general and talented students in particular.

You will ask your students how they see you in relation to a number of stereotypical descriptions of teachers. Please note that using this tool and entering into dialogue with your students requires you to make yourself vulnerable to the students' opinions. Students should not be forced to fill in the tool, if they do not feel comfortable doing so. Neither should teachers be forced to use the tool.

In this section you will find:

1. The goal
2. Instructions for teachers
3. Instructions for students
4. Descriptions of stereotypes
5. Scientific background

The goal

The goal of this tool is to provide input and structure for a discussion in the classroom about teaching to talented students. The input is provided through a set of eleven stereotypes of teachers in relation to talent. The scores that your students award you in relation to each of the stereotypes, give you clues about what you could focus on to develop yourself as a teacher. A structured dialogue with the students after filling in the tool is necessary to interpret and better understand the students' opinions.

Before using the tool, note the following:

- Familiarise yourself with the stereotypes by reading them carefully. Also try to score yourself in relation to the stereotypes before you start the classroom exercise. This will come in handy when you compare your own views to the students' views.
- If you think that a discussion in your student group on the basis of the stereotypes will be too confronting either for yourself or the students, or if you otherwise think it might not work, you should not use this tool.

Instructions for teachers

Make sure you have at least 45 minutes available with the students, to allow them to fill in the tool and have a meaningful discussion afterwards.

How to use the tool

In your classroom, you can use the tool in three steps:

1. Introducing the tool to the students
2. Students fill in the tool
3. Classroom discussion about the results

Afterwards the teacher (alone or with colleagues) makes the last and crucial step:

4. Self-reflection based on the first three steps

Step 1: Introducing the tool to students

In this step, you tell your students about your motivation for using the tool – i.e. that you want to improve your ability to give students the best opportunity for fulfilling their unique potentials. Then you either tell them about the use of the tool, or you point them to the section “[Instructions for students](#)”

Step 2: Students fill in the survey

You can provide the survey in two different formats:

A survey which can be printed on paper to be distributed in class (see appendix).

or

A survey using Google Docs. The results of the survey will be on your Google-account, and will only be visible to you (and to whom you choose to share it with). This requires that you have a Google account as a teacher, and you need to be able to provide the students with a clickable link. Try it out:

- 1) Log into your Google account
- 2) Click this link: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1LapGO2QQgJVazeyKGkKDodr6Ik_UeRUIABgG-fRlzPA/copy
- 3) Send the form (click “Send” in the upper right-hand corner), choose “link” and copy the link. This is the link you will use for the students.
- 4) If you want, you can try it out yourself:
 - a) Open an incognito window or similar (ctrl+shift+N in windows) and paste the link. Fill out the form. Open another incognito window and fill it out again.
 - b) In the original (non-incognito) window, click the “Answers”-tab to see the answers. This is where the student’s answers will appear.

Step 3: classroom discussion about the results

The survey is meant as a discussion starter, so now it is time to discuss! If possible, quickly review how the students score you on each of the stereotypes.

- The easiest starting point is the question about which stereotype fits you most. Is this a negatively or positively formulated stereotype?

- Ask students why they picked this stereotype. If it is a positive stereotype, then also discuss the negative stereotype that was chosen most (or the other way round).
- Discuss the stereotype(s) you think suits you best.
- You can follow up with questions about your own role or for a more general discussion.

Possible follow-up questions for discussion about your own role:

- What type(s) would you rather want me to be?
- How can I improve my teaching to put more variation in my lessons?
- What do you miss in my teaching and can you find it in the description of one of the stereotypes?
- With what kind of teacher would you feel most comfortable?

Possible follow-ups for a more general discussion:

- Start a discussion about teachers in general. What stereotypes do they see most in other teachers; and what stereotype would they like to see more often and why?
- Is there a stereotype missing or one which they do not recognize at all?
- Broaden the discussion towards handling talent in classroom situations. Ask your students to think of a situation in which teachers have positively recognized their talents. How could this situation be transferred to other situations?
- Ask your students to think of a classroom situation in which the teacher has to handle a talented student. Ask them to write out different reactions, choosing three or four of the stereotypes (including both positively and negatively formulated ones)
- Start a general discussion about the use of stereotypes. Many people dislike stereotypes, because they are an exaggeration of reality. What do you think about the use of stereotypes in general, and in this specific situation?

Reflecting on the results

Step 1. Carefully analyse your students' scores and the following discussion. Is it what you expected?

Step 2. Link the results to pedagogical theory to see where you can develop (see 'Scientific background' below). The three pillars of honors pedagogies can form the basis of a successful talent development program in higher education. The stereotypes are loosely related to the pillars.

Now look back at the scores that your students gave you. Relate your results to the three pillars of honors pedagogies. What is your strong point and what could be further developed?

Instructions for students

Step 1: Introduction of the tool

How does your teacher deal with talented students? Often teachers are not fully aware of their own views towards talent. This exercise, called Stereotype Tool, is meant to make teachers more aware of this. It was developed by a group of European teachers, students and researchers.

The Tool consists of a set of stereotypes of teachers. These stereotypes are exaggerated descriptions of how teachers act in class. Having a discussion about these stereotypes could help teachers realize how they view talent.

We now ask your help. Please think about the teacher, who has given you this assignment and note to what extent he/she resembles the following 11 stereotypes. Keep in mind that your teacher can resemble more than one stereotype.

Step 2: Fill in the survey

Your teacher will provide you with a survey, either in print or electronically. The survey is anonymous, but your teacher will be able to see the results as they come in. Your teacher has asked for your participation in order to improve his/her teaching.

Step 3: classroom discussion about the results

The survey is meant as a discussion starter, so now it is time to discuss!

Your teacher will start discussing the scores and may ask questions about his/her own role, or introduce a general discussion.

Descriptions of stereotypes

The set includes eleven stereotypes of teachers in relation to talent:

1. Course concentrator
This teacher is focused on the content of his/her course, and thinks all students should be able to get through the course by working in a focused way.
2. Dreaming discoverer
This teacher is focused on letting students explore new things outside their comfort zone, in order to find new talents they might not have thought about before.
3. Equality emphasize

This teacher is focused on equality between students. Everyone should have the same opportunities.

4. Excellence exceptionalist

This teacher is focused on students who have performed excellent in their studies or in other domains such as sports or arts, and is willing to make exceptions for them.

5. Formality focuser

This teacher is focused on making sure that governmental and institutional rules are met while delivering the course.

6. Freedom fighter

This teacher is focused on letting students experience as much freedom as possible and encourages them to explore new pathways.

7. Groupwork guru

This teacher is focused on excellence in group work, with each student finding the role which suits his/her talents best in relation to the task that lies ahead.

8. Hierarchy hacker

This teacher is focused on breaking up traditional student-teacher hierarchy and treats students as fellow researchers or colleagues.

9. Negative neglecter

This teacher has a negative and neglecting attitude towards teaching in general and is not really paying attention to the students. In research universities this would be an 'I-only-care-about-my-research-and-not-about-your-education' teacher.

10. Practice connector

This teacher is focused on preparing students for 'the real world', always relating teaching to practice.

11. Problem provider

This teacher is focused on stimulating complex thoughts, by providing students with difficult problems to solve.

Scientific background

The three pillars of honors pedagogies

Wolfensberger (2012) identified three pillars of honors pedagogies. They are:

- Creating community, concerning teaching strategies 'that create rapport and connectedness between teachers and students and among students; and that create a learning community'

- Enhancing academic competence, concerning teaching strategies ‘that enhance the depth and scope of students’ academic knowledge, understanding and skills’
- Offering freedom, concerning teaching strategies ‘that give students space for experimentation, risk-taking, personal initiatives and pursuit of their interests’

For each of the pillars, Wolfensberger identified clusters of strategies and behavior.

Relating pillars and stereotypes

The model presupposes a basic interest in teaching. If this is not the case, the corresponding stereotype is the negative neglecter.

The remaining ten stereotypes are linked to the pillars and clusters in the table below. For the three remaining ‘negative’ stereotypes a loose connection is made on the level of the pillars only. For the seven ‘positive’ stereotypes, the connection to Wolfensberger’s work is made at the level of clusters of strategies and behavior. Some stereotypes are linked to several clusters.

Table. Linking pillars, clusters and stereotypes

Pillar	Negatively related to stereotype	Clusters of strategies and behavior	Positively related to stereotype
Creating Community	Equality emphasize	Interaction, (peer) feedback, active learning	Groupwork guru, practice connector
		Encouragement, joy, inspiration	Dreaming discoverer
		Availability, interest in students, commitment	Excellence exceptionalist, practice connector
Enhancing Academic Competence	Course concentrator	Multi- and interdisciplinary thinking, multiple perspectives	Problem provider, freedom fighter
		Scholarly teaching, academic depth, involvement in research	Hierarchy hacker, problem provider
		Challenging learning tasks, difficulty, and acceleration	Excellence exceptionalist
Offering freedom	Formality focuser	Flexibility, allowing for self-regulation, openness	Freedom fighter
		Innovative teaching, experimentation, fun	Dreaming discoverer
		Professionalism, novice relationship, challenge	Hierarchy hacker, problem provider

Source pillars and clusters: Wolfensberger, 2012, p. 38

Relate your results to the three pillars of honors pedagogies. Which of the pillars features most prominently, and what could you develop more?

Next steps

Do you need more input from others to see how they view you in relation to talent? Then consider giving this exercise to more people (for example colleagues) or use the [classroom situations](#). Do you think you need to further analyse where your views come from? Then consider using the [Roadmap tool](#). Do you want more insight into the characteristics of your teaching? Then use the [Characteristics tool](#).

Visit the [e-library](#) to find tools to help you to work with talent in the classroom.

Please fill in the table below

For each of the stereotypes, relate your answer to the following statement:
'My teacher resembles this stereotype'.

		Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1	<u>Course concentrator</u> This teacher is focused on the content of his/her course, and thinks all students should be able to get through the course by working in a focused way.					
2	<u>Dreaming discoverer</u> This teacher is focused on letting students explore new things outside their comfort zone, in order to find new talents they might not have thought about before.					
3	<u>Equality emphasize</u> This teacher is focused on equality between students. Everyone should have the same opportunities.					
4	<u>Excellence exceptionalist</u> This teacher is focused on students who have performed excellent in their studies or in other domains such as sports or arts, and is willing to make exceptions for them.					
5	<u>Formality focuser</u> This teacher is focused on making sure that governmental and institutional rules are met while delivering the course.					
6	<u>Freedom fighter</u> This teacher is focused on letting students experience as much freedom as possible and encourages them to explore new pathways.					
7	<u>Groupwork guru</u> This teacher is focused on excellence in group work, with each student finding the role which suits his/her talents best in relation to the task that lies ahead.					
8	<u>Hierarchy hacker</u> This teacher is focused on breaking up traditional <u>student-teacher</u> hierarchy and treats students as fellow researchers or colleagues.					
9	<u>Negative neglecter</u> This teacher has a negative and neglecting attitude towards teaching in general and is not really paying attention to the students. In research universities this would be an 'I-only-care-about-my-research-and-not-about-your-education' teacher.					
10	<u>Practice connector</u> This teacher is focused on preparing students for 'the real world', always relating teaching to practice.					
11	<u>Problem provider</u> This teacher is focused on stimulating complex thoughts, by providing students with difficult problems to solve.					

Final question:

Your teacher could resemble several stereotypes. However, if you have to choose one, which fits your teacher most, which one would it be?