



Guiding Principals

At Sylvan Prep Academy we are committed to the *All Kinds of Minds* guiding principles that govern our practice.

1. The idea that students are entitled to learn in a community committed to the educational care of their minds and the nurturing of their strengths and affinities
2. The idea that students are vulnerable to long term underachievement and unhappiness when their minds are misunderstood
3. The importance of the ongoing support and education of the adults who are the providers of educational care for all students
4. A positive view of neurodevelopmental diversity
5. A policy of describing specific strengths and weaknesses that comprise student learning profiles rather than labeling students
6. The value of observable phenomena as data to support understanding students' learning profiles
7. Striving for specificity in understanding and acknowledging individuality among students
8. Collaboration between professionals, parents and children
9. The value of demystification of learning to empower students, educators and families
10. Supporting a common language for communicating and thinking about differences in learning
11. A consistent effort to help learners about learning
12. The idea that the best educational care entails management by learning profile as a means of helping students find success
13. The goal of instilling a positive view of the future for students with all kinds of minds



Student Learning Profile Summary

A Student Learning Profile Summary is one outcome of a process of observation and analysis called Attuning a Student, which is taught in our school's program. A set of data collection tools support the process, including an online analysis of the classroom teacher's observations, the Teacher's View, of student learning behaviors. A Parent's View, a Student View, and Student Work Analysis are also collected, analyzed and incorporated into the Profile Summary.

The completed Profile Summary is then linked to student performance strengths and weaknesses. Those links inform the development of a management plan to impact student success, which is shared with the student through a "demystification" conversation that explains the student's neurodevelopmental strengths and weaknesses and infuses optimism for the future. Follow-up implementation conversations "fine-tune" the management plan, deepen understanding of the student's profile, and continue to support the student in achieving academic success.

We cannot emphasize enough the importance of children understanding themselves. When they are unable to perceive the casual relationship between their specific academic weaknesses and strengths, they tend to fantasize about themselves. This also causes them to suffer a serious loss of motivation.

Demystification is a process which provides students with more accurate personal insight. They are then able to put borders around their weaknesses and begin playing more to their strengths. Very importantly, they learn the vocabulary of their problem or what it is that hinder them from reaching their true potential.

Demystification can take place at any age. Different forms of demystification can occur in various settings and under specific circumstances. One-to-one demystification should consist of five steps:

- 1. Introduction.** Children should learn the importance of understanding themselves. They should be reassured that everyone, even students who get all A's, have parts of their minds that need to be worked on.
- 2. Discussion of strengths.** The child needs to be told about his or her areas of competency. Specific concrete examples should always be cited. They may feel that the adults they know have low expectations for them, and this perception can become a self-fulfilling prophecy.
- 3. Discussion of weaknesses.** These should be explained in plain language. After describing the weaknesses to these children, they should be asked if they feel these are right.
- 4. Induction of optimism.** Children should be helped to see that they can improve, that their weaknesses can be worked on, and that their strengths can keep getting stronger.
- 5. Alliance formation.** The child should be reassured that everyone needs help in life, that no one can be completely independent.

