



Creating an Inspired Learning Environment!

By Peter Reding, Founder

Foundation for Inspired Learning

THE ISSUE:

A consistent message permeating today's education and training systems is that current teaching and learning methodologies do not work for everyone.

History bears this out. Consider, for example, the staggering drop-out rates and the consistent issues we have with so called 'problem' children. There may be various reasons for all of this, however, what we do know for sure is that today's learning systems are based on concepts formulated over one hundred years ago; in particular, that learning should be focused on the teacher or the materials rather than on the learner. This is true of most education and training systems for children or adults.

Even recent attempts to focus on the learner have not generated the kind of results we thought they would. Why not? We believe that is because of a critical, yet simple, missing element, the creation of an inspired learning environment.

THE SOLUTION:

What if there was an easy and effective way to create an inspired learning environment for every learning situation?

The good news is there is. We *already* have the ability to create such a learning environment, namely one where students are honored for their own innate wisdom, where forward progress in mastering a new subject is celebrated, and where both teachers and students experience joy.

At the **Foundation for Inspired Learning** this learning environment is called the **Inspired Learning Model™**. The **Model** flies directly in the face of many traditional teaching practices and learning philosophies that hold, "You must point out where the student or novice did something *incorrectly* in order for them to take corrective action." Regardless of how compassionately or constructively this is intended, this is still criticism and it has the tendency to shut down the full learning potential.

The **Inspired Learning Model™** suggests a bold alternative to further the mastery of any given Subject Matter. In this model, criticism is replaced with positive acknowledgement!

For those of you who have been teaching with practices and philosophies similar to the **Model** and for those curious or willing to explore a fundamentally new learning model, be prepared to be inspired by every learner in your life for the rest of your life. Your own innate love of learning is about to flourish!

THE INSPIRED LEARNING MODEL

The **underlying principle** of the **Model** is that learning takes place when the student is open to learn. For the student to be open to learn, the learning environment needs to be safe. It is primarily the ‘teacher’ who creates that safety. When it is safe to risk new behaviors, skills or expressions, learning flourishes. Without these safeties, learning stops.

Within every student is a source of inspiration. The student’s connection with what most inspires him or her is naturally and easily evoked when he or she perceives the learning environment to be safe. The primary role of the **Inspired Learning Model™ Facilitator** becomes creating the highest quality of safety in the learning environment.

The **Model** is made up of seven elements, each of which focuses on: “How can a totally safe space be created and maintained to effectively support and honor the learner’s connection with what most inspires him or her?”

All seven of the **Model’s** elements exist in one form or another in every learning environment today. What makes the **Inspired Learning Model** unique and powerful is how each of these elements is employed, as discussed below:

1. ***The Facilitator*** – *A facilitator of learning, a subject matter expert, the acknowledger of progressive mastery.* The Facilitator’s primary focus is asking questions of the learner that evoke self-discovery. The Facilitator is much less the provider of content or fountain of knowledge and much more the container and guide for the learner’s self-discovery.
2. ***The Subject Matter*** – *The area of focus organized in a manner that allows constant, positive acknowledgements for observable components or competencies that are pre-articulated.* The Subject Matter is what is being explored. The key is that the Facilitator has pre-articulated all the components or competencies of this Subject Matter’s mastery in order to know when to acknowledge the learner. The learner is acknowledged whenever he or she demonstrates or even begins to demonstrate an understanding of one or more of the competencies.

The underlying philosophy of the **Inspired Learning Model™** that is extremely important here is: *What is focused on expands!* What the Facilitator of learning wants to expand is the Inspired Learner’s abilities, capabilities or understanding of this particular Subject Matter. It is therefore vital that Facilitators know ahead of time what they are looking for or listening for so they, in turn, can acknowledge the Inspired Learner for getting it right or for being on the road to mastery.

3. ***The Physical Environment*** – *a safe, comfortable, uninterrupted area or space in which to learn.* A safe and comfortable space supports the students and Facilitator to carry on the exercises necessary for self-discovery. The environment is free from interruption by all people, media, or events that could sidetrack the physical, intellectual, or emotional exploration that the learner is engaged in.

When any observer (parent, manager, administrator, or student-teacher) has a need to observe the class session, a special permission procedure should be honored.

This special permission procedure will include:

-
- ❑ The entire class gives approval, prior to the admittance of the observer or guest.
 - ❑ The observer agrees to abide by all the guidelines (Standards of Presence) previously agreed to by the class. This is done orally and in front of the class.
 - ❑ The purpose of the observer's presence is clearly stated.
 - ❑ The period of time the observer will be present is clearly stated.
 - ❑ The way in which any information that may be collected will be used is clearly stated.

When the class does not have the power to deny the special permission, they need to be told that this observer is mandatory. Modify the above special 'permission' procedures, as appropriate and then allow each student to choose to participate, or not participate, in the learning activities while this observer is present.

4. ***The Inspired Learner*** – *The student who is innately wise and primarily responsible for his or her own learning.* The Inspired Learner's role is a very active one. It is the student who takes responsibility for his or her own learning process, with all students honoring their own innate authority to know what interests them and what most serves them to fully express their life purpose. Do not underestimate the ability of the human spirit, at any age, to know exactly what best serves it!
5. ***The Standards of Presence*** – *Ten guidelines that create the way students in the learning group, class, workshop, family, etc., agree to conduct themselves while together in the learning environment.* The Standards of Presence offer guidelines on how the students and the Facilitator are going to interact during their time together. These guidelines emphasize the honoring of each individual learner to be seen, heard, and acknowledged as magnificent, *no matter what!*

A fundamental guideline primarily established through these Standards of Presence is to have everyone in the class or learning group agree to look for 'what is right' as defined by the Subject Matter's components and competencies. This creates an atmosphere of celebration and joy that consistently invites further discovery and deeper inquiry by all students.

6. ***The Integration*** – *A planned and honoring format for experiential repetition of each of the pre-articulated components or competencies of the Subject Matter until each is learned.* The Integration element allows for the repetition of practicing, honing and mastering the new Subject Matter and puts this new learning into the context of each student's life. Little or nothing is mastered after the first exposure to any Subject Matter. The entire **Model** and philosophy (i.e., acknowledge that which you want to expand within a specific Subject Matter) is practiced throughout, from initial Subject Matter exposure to mastery and certification.
7. ***Inspiration*** – *The magic, the unexplained, the spark of genius – for some, the Divine! This element allows openness for inspiration to enter the learning environment.* The Inspiration element opens the Facilitator as well as the student to the unexpected. This element is the unexplained genius that flows through us all, the quiet voice of ancient wisdom. When we are in a safe, quiet and honoring environment, inspiration leaps out of us. Under the conditions of the **Model**, it won't be kept inside.

The components of self-mastery are also explored within this element of the **Model**. Indeed, the **Model** takes a stand for the importance of self-care, self-knowledge and self-love as vital

to the Facilitators' self-mastery. These components permeate their lives and the learning environments they create. Learners and Facilitators alike reap the benefits.

THE RESULTS

When all seven elements of the **Model** are fully honored, Inspired Learning is guaranteed!

- ❑ Students learn more.
- ❑ Students learn faster.
- ❑ The learning process itself is inspiring to students.
- ❑ Students and teachers are joyous and derive a deep sense of personal fulfillment from the learning process.

Every educator of every type – parent, teacher, trainer, professor, minister, mentor, instructor, manager, leader – knows this feeling. Most educators haven't felt it on a regular basis in recent years. Some, sadly, have all but forgotten they ever did feel this deep joy and fulfillment.

The **Foundation for Inspired Learning** is the world's leading advocate for the **Inspired Learning Model™**. The Foundation's vision is for every learning environment in the world to use the **Model**. This includes public and private schools at all levels, universities, corporations, churches, prisons, families, continuing adult education programs, personal development training firms, etc.

Here is what those introduced to the **Model** have to say:

“After 44 years in education and serving as a public school superintendent I have used and experienced what I thought was every learning theory available. Inspired Learning is by far the most powerful learning theory that I have ever experienced.”

Award-winning public school superintendent, CA

“I have been in education and the higher education of educators my entire adult life. Inspired Learning is the highest form of higher education.”

Ed.D., Former dean at a major East Coast teachers college

“So far the Inspired Learning Model has done just that...inspired me. It has inspired me to use it in my daily life. My youngest daughter is in grade one and her teacher uses an Inspired Learning approach that is similar to that of the Inspired Learning Model, and I have seen such an accelerated rate of learning with her over the last several months. It is truly wonderful to witness.”

A parent

“For me, the Inspired Learning Model has literally transformed my personal and professional relationships. I am particularly amazed that, after all these years, I now have a positive relationship with my mother where each of us ends every telephone conversation with “I love you.” I have finally learned how to talk to her in a way that benefits us both.”

If you wish to learn more about the Inspired Learning Model or the Foundation, please contact us at www.inspiredlearning.org. We would also like to invite you to join us in a volunteer capacity or as an annual supporter at www.inspiredlearning.org

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Peter Reding lives in Phoenix and Maui
He can be reached through the
Foundation for Inspired Learning
www.inspiredlearning.org
info@inspiredlearning.org

FURTHER READING:

The Inspired Learning Model™ Handbook
www.inspiredlearning.org/bookstore.htm