No More Dropouts with True Colors
20-50% of Students in U.S. Drop out of High School

True Colors helps rekindle interest in education among today’s youth

Across the country large numbers of students are dropping out of high school – approximately 20-50% of the students in the U.S. do not complete their high school degree. The drop out rate for the state of California is 32% of the students do not finish high school. In some communities, such as inner cities, and Native American schools, the drop out rate is 85% or even higher.

What can be the cause of this tremendous loss of human talent and ability? Perhaps students are dropping out due to the basic premise that “college is the goal” in our current educational system, and perhaps they are leaving because we are not recognizing different personality styles in the student population. The traditional high school curriculum is currently required to prepare all students to attend college. Yet, only the top 30% of the student body will continue their education beyond high school, and approximately 8% of the total who entered high school will receive a college degree. That leaves 92% of the population who enter the job market without a college degree. Yet, each high school student must complete the requirements and expectations of college entrance, even though the individual may have other goals, or he/she does not have the aptitude for higher educational pursuits and/or lacks the desire to attend college. What happens to those who have never intended to become college bound? Many of the non-college type of people do not learn from books or in a classroom environment. This does not mean people do not learn, rather they learn in different ways from an institutional or mainstream venue. These students become the disenfranchised majority, who in worst cases, sabotage others students’ learning as well as their own.

In an attempt to help train those who are not adapting to the “normal” high school curriculum and are ready to drop out, alternative schools have been created. Even these “last chance” schools experience large drop out rates, since the unique talents and abilities of the students are not often recognized. The results beg the questions: “Should we be learning more about the strengths and talents of each student? Could we help young people discover worthwhile life pursuits that may not include a college degree?”
True Colors helps students and teachers understand themselves and others and appreciate the differences by building self-esteem and enhancing learning skills in grades 1 through 12 and college.

For over 25 years, the True Colors Training Programs have been a major influence in turning around the behavior of students and creating success in alternative schools, as well as entire school districts in a number of cities and states. The True Colors interactive seminars provide faculty and students with a simple, yet in depth, tool they can use to ascertain the strengths and stressors of the four major personality types. True Colors is based on Myers-Briggs and the Keirsey Temperament Theory and is congruent with other teaching/learning modalities used by the teaching profession. By using four colors: Gold, Blue, Green and Orange, with cards that depict the activities of the personality type, a word sort and online personality assessments, students of all ages and adults can determine who they are without having to remember complicated identity indicators.

By determining how each of us relates to the world, we are affirmed and validated as useful to ourselves and to the world at large, thus we can imagine that leading meaningful, productive lives. True Colors helps each person to embrace possibilities and to reach for their potential. This understanding helps to halt the downward spiral of ‘drop outs’ and enables them to ‘drop in’ to the
path of discovering how to best plant their talents and harness personal gifts, irrespective of the institutional ‘pressures’ around them.

In the True Colors spectrum, Gold indicates the more structured, disciplined, organized personality type. Many teachers and administrators are predominately Gold and the schools are organized around a “Gold standard”. Students of the Gold group usually do well in school and follow the rules appropriately. Gold students are comfortable within a highly structured environment.

The color Blue indicates the type of person who often thinks of relationships first and values relationships above all else. This group is primarily people-oriented. Blue students usually adapt well in the “normal” school environment, as long as they have the opportunity to relate to other people. For the Blue personality, relationship is the foundation through which academics filter into their personal space. In the general population 35% are Gold and 15% are Blue.

The other two colors are Green, 15% of the population, and Orange, 35%. Green represents the more fact-oriented person – the student or adult who is usually asking “Why?” Greens question rules, regulations, and although they normally love to learn new information (they are often interested in science and math), they are not usually people or structure-oriented. Greens value teachers, structure and institutions as information repositories and thrives when encouraged in their perpetual pursuit of discovery.

The Orange people love action and have a very difficult time sitting still for long periods of time. They don’t like rules and much prefer initiating spontaneous activities in the moment without a lot of planning. Orange people can be quick to learn and are often very intelligent, but they are usually not very well adapted to the standard school environment. They prefer hands on discovery and learn through action and movement. They may have excellent mechanical skills and are often great at sports, drama, music, art, and other active, creative, competitive pursuits.

The Orange and Green students are the most likely to be considered “reluctant learners”, dropping out of high schools and attending alternative schools. The institutional environment stifles them. They prefer to create and discover or act to find knowledge.

When each individual, whether they be a student, faculty, administrator, parent, business person, professional, politician, etc., understands their True Colors and has a grasp of the colors (personalities) of others, a more harmonious, productive and effective environment can be created. Teachers are able to present information that can be received by each personality type. Students better understand their teachers, their friends and family. They learn about their strengths and how to communicate with others. And by recognizing and embracing differences, they learn to work together effectively. Thus, True Colors has spread to hundreds of schools, colleges, universities, corporations, government and non-profit organizations across the U.S. and Canada and around the world.
**SUCCESS IN THE SCHOOLS**

**Helping students enjoy the educational experience with True Colors in the Alvord Unified School District, Riverside, CA**

Having served as teacher and principal in all levels of grades 1 through 12, as well as teaching college courses, Dr. Bill Behrens is an expert in True Colors. The True Colors concept of personality has become the basis for his life’s work of helping people to understand themselves and others and to appreciate the differences. Dr. Behrens has been presenting seminars, training facilitators, and writing and approving books and courses for True Colors since 1987. As one of the original creators of the True Colors Training Programs, Dr. Behrens, who is currently Director of Training for True Colors, Inc. and Principal of Orrenmaa Elementary School in Alvord Unified School District, Riverside, CA, has experienced a variety of positive results presenting True Colors in countless schools, as well as hundreds of other organizations.

“I believe we can no longer have a myopic view of how we present information to students,” explains Dr. Behrens. “We need to understand that individuals receive and understand from different vantage points. True Colors creates a healthy learning environment in each school and organization. I believe it is our job to help students enjoy the educational experience, and True Colors provides that opportunity.”

Dr. Behrens has had a number of professional successes, including helping to create a “California Distinguished School”, designated for providing “outstanding educational opportunities for all students”. True Colors was part of the turn-around program for Spring View Middle School in the Ocean View School District of Southern California. Serving as Principal, Dr. Behrens was able to increase collaboration in a diverse staff of new and veteran teachers. He trained the teachers, staff and students in True Colors and changed the instructional patterns of the school resulting in a more harmonious environment.

The next challenge came in the form 20,000 students in the Alvord Unified School District in Riverside, CA. Dr. Behrens became Administrator for the Personnel Division, charged with setting up the first “Staff Development Program” for 700 classified employees, including secretaries,
custodians, etc., all members of the California School Employees Association. Through his program, which included True Colors, the atmosphere of the schools changed immediately. Four years ago, he became Principal of Orrenmaa Elementary School with 1000 students. His orientation program included True Colors. The first year, he introduced the True Colors Basic Awareness Seminar in the first half of the “in-service” day. The second year he presented a refresher course. Last year he presented True Colors Teambuilding, and this year he will introduce True Colors Teaching/Learning Styles.

Each year Dr. Behrens gives each teacher and staff member his list of “Certificated Expectations”. When viewing the list, it becomes evident that each person needs to have an understanding of different personality types, and thus True Colors. He considers safety to be number one on the list, followed by “knowing your kids, and treat them like your own.” He expects teachers to plan lessons that address all temperaments. He requires that they use a variety of teaching techniques/strategies, and create an enlivened environment.

“I truly believe we are educating the people who hold the keys to the future of the world. It is extremely important that we understand our responsibility and work with the students to create the best possible future for them as individuals and for the community.”

**Changing the alternative school environment in Elma, Washington and creating trust using True Colors**

A great example of a person meeting challenges head on is Steve Bridge, who is Athletic Director for Elma High School in Washington. Approximately 9 years ago an alternative school, Grays Harbor High School, was established in his district. Many people in the community did not perceive the creation of this school as positive. They thought of it as an “easy way out” for kids who didn’t do well in regular school. Six years ago, Steve Bridge was appointed Administrator of the new school. His job was to work with the faculty and help with curriculum.

To begin with, Steve needed to change the overall climate of the new school and to find a way to keep kids actively involved, so they could graduate. When he began administrating, approximately 25% of the students were “contracting” to business – working outside of school.

“Many of the students only attended school one day per week,” explains Bridge. “This didn’t give the kids enough time to be involved in their studies. So, we reduced the contracting to virtually nothing. We discovered that the kids really wanted to be in school, and we felt that the faculty must do everything possible to keep them in class.” Bridge had attended a True Colors Seminar and decided to use the True Colors Training Program as part of his efforts to build self-esteem and create a better understanding of the students. He wanted to determine what students needed and to help them understand their own strengths, stressors, and communications styles, as well as the personality types of their fellow students and teachers.
“In the past, nearly 30% or more of the students dropped out of the alternative school,” says Bridge. “These kids have had a rough go in their home lives and in the school environment. This past year, of the 75 kids that went through the program using True Colors, only three dropped out. We had four short-term suspensions and one expulsion. I know that True Colors was a contributing factor to keeping the remaining students and changing the disciplinary needs in school.”

Graduation time at Grays Harbor High School is heart rending. “I’ve never seen so many grown men and women cry as when they see their sons and daughters receive their diploma,” remembers Bridge. “As the students come off the stage, they pick up two roses and present one to each of their parents. It is wonderful. We are truly making a difference.”

The requirements that Bridge feels are necessary for a program of change in an Alternative School are as follows:

- The professional staff of the school must buy into the program.
- The school needs to be seen as a safe place.
- A welcoming climate needs to be established, so students like coming to school.

“The Process to create a more effective Alternative School begins with the staff, says Steve. “We have three full time teachers, one full time aid, one part-time teacher and one person (10-15% of the time) who served as an overseer. The majority of the students (60-65%) are the color Orange. The next largest group of students at the school were Green. There were a smattering of Blue and very few Gold.

Bridge presents an introductory True Colors Basic Awareness Seminars for 1½ to 2 hours for groups of 30-35 students. They are taught how to relate to the staff and to each other. True Colors is also being presented to each of his athletic teams in the regular high school. Bridge holds a barbecue, and the team members go through their True Colors card sort and learn about each other’s personalities. Each person then writes about their own color spectrum, and how they feel about their team. The papers are posted in the locker, and the team members can refer to them throughout the season.

“The students ‘Get It!’” exclaims Bridge. “They learn about themselves and others and begin to appreciate the differences. Often the students wonder why no one ever taught them anything like this. They never learned to trust adults…especially teachers. They learn to trust themselves. The great thing about True Colors,” says Bridge, “is that True Colors facilitates trust! A whole new world opens to both the faculty and students as they learn how to value each other.”
True Colors was introduced in the Arlington Public Schools District in 1999. They currently have over 15 Certified True Colors Basic Awareness Facilitators and plan to train 6 to 10 more during the summer of 2006. The True Colors method of working with different personality types has been infused into every aspect of the school district, including personnel practices, instruction, communication, school climate, and supervision. There are 5522 students with 13% ethnic diversity in 11 Schools, which include 5 elementary schools, 2 middle schools, 1 high school, 1 alternative high school, 1 freshman academy and 1 home school program. Employees include 346 Certificated Staff, 271 Classified Staff, and 22% free & reduced.

In personal practices, True Colors is used in interviews and the selection process, orientation of new employees, team formation, staff development and supervision. “An interviewer meets with each candidate to give an overview of True Colors and how we use this as a communication tool in our district,” explains Warren Hopkins, Deputy Superintendent of Arlington Public Schools District. “We are looking for the best candidate, and thus we do not make a judgment about the person only based upon what we think is the ‘best color’ for the job, but it is helpful.”

Instruction in the classroom is influenced by the teacher and the students knowing their True Colors. All staff in the district have experienced a True Colors Basic Awareness Seminar, and a data system for student achievement is integrated into instructional strategies. Students are taught True Colors concepts at Weston HS, Freshman Foundations, and selected elementary schools. True Colors is a required class for all freshmen and is used as a pre-vocational class, which includes study skills, employability portfolio, and a career search paper.

Examples of students describing themselves using True Colors are as follows:

“My two brightest colors were Green followed closely by Blue. I am not only a knowledgeable and harmonious person, I also possess some of the Gold and Orange characteristics in my personality, which makes up the rainbow-of-a-person I am. These colors are good to consider when I choose a career.”

“To be honest, I would say that my results with True Colors were pretty accurate. As a Blue, I learn best when working with a group of people where everyone can express their ideas about the subject. I think it is a lot more fun and easier to learn if I am communicating with other people.”

“My primary color is gold while my secondary color is blue. The characteristics for gold would be accountable, responsible, organized, predictable, ready, loyal, giving, useful, practical, and finally sensible. The characteristics of blue are friendliness, harmony, expressive, important, caring, and having meaning in life. As a person who knows True Colors it is a great tool to figure out a little about who you are.”
True Colors is used in the Arlington School District for communication when supervising the staff, working with the administrative team, in our school newsletters and on our webpage, as well as when meeting with the School Board, and in labor relations.

"We used True Colors as the foundation of our ‘Respect Summit’" says Dr. Hopkins, "and adopted the slogan, ‘Students Making a Difference’. It has been an important tool in building relationships, understanding personalities, recognizing teaching and learning styles, increasing motivation and self-esteem, and enhancing communication skills."

**Paso Robles School District Uses True Colors**

To Affirm, Stretch, and Empower Students

Bob Bourgault, Principal of Liberty High School in Paso Robles and former Counseling Coordinator for the Learning Academy, has studied nearly every form of learning and teaching modality and finds that True Colors is applicable and can serve as the background for the models that have been working effectively. He has trained teachers, staff and administrators and set up model programs in the Paso Robles High School, the Learning Academy, the Alternative school (he calls it the “Options School”), the community day school, and independent study program over the past two years. He plans to now take True Colors district wide.

The goals/strategies outlined for the school were to 1) Affirm and stretch all temperament types and intelligences; 2) Provide educators with outstanding teaching and learning training; 3) Prepare young people for the workplace of the Paso Robles community by modifying the existing curriculum so that it focuses on the work skills needed for local businesses and California standards; 4) Showcase student work with a graduation interview/portfolio; 5) Partner with local businesses to create reality-based educational experiences.

"We have developed P.A.V.E., which stands for Personal, Academic, and Vocational Empowerment," explains Bourgault. "Within this program we Affirm, Stretch and Empower students. We start with the True Colors Basic Awareness Seminar to ‘Affirm’ their intelligence and temperament and to help the individual get in touch with their strengths. We then work on Stretching the student’s ability to reach the next level of their achievement. We encourage them to strengthen other aspects of their personality, such as brightening the Gold, which might include developing better study habits and organization, and increasing the Blue, thus being able to create better interaction with others. The next step is Empowering experiences. We have set up opportunities for the students to apply their knowledge in meaningful ways, including helping students enter into competition through organizations such as Skills USA."

Paso Robles School District is now a Mega Chapter and the largest chapter in the State of California participating in Skills USA with their school advisor, John Stokes having been elected as one of 4 National Advisors of the Year for Skills. Over 14,000 students compete in a National
Convention, and in 2005 Paso Robles had 70 students who won gold medals in the regional competition, 45 who won gold on the state level. They had 11 medals winners in the national competition with 2 Gold Medal winners and 5 of the top 20 students in the nation.

Pennsylvania School District Uses True Colors® to Manage Communications & Discipline Problems

It was a tragic act of violence at the Red Lion Area School District in Pennsylvania, which ended in loss of life that spurred the District to form a Security Committee to research and find strategies and on-going programs that would avert such incidents in the future. They began looking for a program that would build more effective connections and communications between administrative staff, teachers, and students. The intention was to improve and maintain high levels of attendance, improve student’s self esteem and academic achievement, and build a positive climate on the high school campus and throughout the district.

The result of that search was the introduction of True Colors personality assessment and the presentation of interactive Basic Awareness Seminars, designed to facilitate communications, team-building, conflict resolution, and teaching/learning styles.

“The True Colors methodology is an easy-to-use program that has helped teachers and administrators to better understand and honor their own individual personalities and temperament,” explains Dr. Frank Herron, Assistant Superintendent for Red Lion Area School District. “Teachers could quickly grasp and understand the four personality types and temperament styles and carry that knowledge back into their classrooms. They were able to be proactive and could make more effective and collaborative connections with their students.”

An example of the positive feedback Dr. Herron receives from teachers:

“I can easily identify the student’s gold, orange, blue and green personalities, which allows me to more easily engage that student.”

“In the classroom setting, I can quickly see when a student exhibits more of one color than another, and then I can talk more effectively to that temperament. The result creates an opportunity for a more open and productive communication between us.”

According to Dr. Herron, “The results of the True Colors program are a heightened level of sensitivity, awareness, and understanding of how personality and temperaments impact our reactions to student behavior. True Colors has helped communication on all levels.”

True Colors helps create responsible citizens and leaders with self esteem and the desire to keep learning

There are many more heart-warming stories about the success of True Colors as a powerful, memorable and easy-to-use tool that can increase understanding for individuals and enhance relationships in schools across the country. True Colors is often introduced first to Administrators,
faculty and staff in the form of Basic Awareness Seminars. We have found that a great way to present the True Colors concepts to the students is with an exciting Edutainment Event. Each person in the audience receives their own Casting Kit; and in the midst of this entertaining live show with 4 actors playing the different personality styles, the people in the audience begin to recognize their own behavior and that of their teachers, friends and family. Some schools have created their own student cast and performed the show to rave reviews.

Setting up a True Colors Program in a school or district usually entails assigning one or more teachers, trainers, or human resource people to attend the 2½ day True Colors Basic Awareness Seminar (BAS) Certification Training to become BAS facilitator. That person then serves as the True Colors Coordinator and Facilitator for the school.

Basic Awareness Facilitators can be further trained in Advanced Applications, which include True Communication, Teambuilding, Teaching/Learning Styles, Career Development, Conflict Resolution, Wellness, and Stress Reduction. A new program, True Parenting, helps to involve the parents more directly in the educational process, so that they may use the same language to describe and work effectively with their children's personalities. Another new program, True Directions, by Bonnie Watts, explores the details of the Colors in terms of the Native American tradition.

True Colors was developed on the premise that each individual will thrive if they are able to express their true identity. With the True Colors model of understanding personality styles, we have the tools necessary to develop a variety of methods to help students explore and express their identities through all areas of study, including math, science, art, music, sports, etc.

To learn more about True Colors and to register for the True Colors Certification Training programs, please call Connie Jennings at True Colors®: 1-800-422-4686, Fax: 866-374-8958, email connie@true-colors.com or write to True Colors, Inc., 3605 W. MacArthur Blvd., Suite 702, Santa Ana, CA 92704, www.true-colors.com.

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