Part of what I do as a faculty member is to act as our college’s liaison for the College Achievement Program, the dual credit program where high school juniors and seniors can earn college credit. Many students take either Medical Terminology or Healthcare Systems, and I visit about a dozen regional high schools where these courses are offered. It was on a recent visit to one of these schools that I began to watch and reflect on what these educators are all about. I began to notice that each of these teachers have innumerable leadership traits and skills, many of which could apply to any healthcare setting. For example, effective teachers have:

1. **An aura.** The key to successfully manage his/her classroom, teachers have a “presence” that is nearly palpable. The teacher may not have all the answers but he/she does command attention to the “meeting” of the class. *As healthcare leaders, we should have that “presence.”*

2. **An agenda.** It is generally posted in a large, easily seen and easily read format on a whiteboard. It is sometimes by day, sometimes by week, or sometimes by chapter and page number, but it is always, without fail, a part of the effective teacher’s tools. *An agenda is essential to help keep a group on track and moving forward.*

3. **Both an audio and visual approach.** We have long recognized that there is a continuum of learning styles and good teachers/leaders speak to their entire audience, making sure that they see it, hear it, read it, and write it. The teacher knows there is no excuse for missing material when it is presented so thoroughly. *At a business meeting, we need to present our material so that it is understood by all in attendance, regardless of learning style.*

4. **Transparency.** I see teachers reviewing material with their students, reinforcing yesterday’s learning and perhaps presenting the statistics on a recent test. Students know how they compare to their peers and know what needs to be done prior to the next exam. *As healthcare administrators, we must offer transparency to our internal and external “customers.”*

5. **Time to answer questions and ask for input.** They encourage their students to think outside the box. *We should ask our employees to offer input, and we must listen to them.*

6. **New ideas.** I see teachers trying new ideas, such as the use of the “flipped classroom,” online games, or yes, dissecting pickles (I participated in that one) in order to present the topic in a new and engaging way. *In the healthcare arena, we must embrace change and new ideas to stay on top of best practices.*

7. **An “open door” policy.** Teachers offer to help students, discuss a grade or review a concept. They offer extra sessions over lunch periods and tutoring during study halls. There are no ivory towers at the high school level! *As healthcare leaders and administrators, we must be available and visible.*

8. **Ability to admit they made a mistake.** I see teachers who are not afraid to admit mistakes, and they are willing to find an answer if they do not know off-hand. They give explanations as needed and appropriate to their students’ learning. They ask what their students need. *In order to promote a culture of excellence and high morale, we must be willing to work “hand in hand” with our employees to provide the best possible care for our patients.*

9. **Awareness.** Teachers have a gift to perceive group dynamics in their classes. I see teachers who notice when a student or group of students is struggling, whether from illness or other personal issues. These teachers “know” their kids. *Likewise, our employees need to know we care about them.*

10. **Passion and positive attitude.** This is on the faces of the teachers I observe. They’re not perfect: even the best teachers have bad days, and they have their own “issues.” But overall, they love their students, and they’d jump in again in a heartbeat! *It is our duty to encourage our employees to keep the passion that brought them to healthcare in the first place.*

So why am I telling you all this? Because I think it is important to remember that there are lessons to be learned everywhere we go. We just have to be on the lookout for them and take them into our roles as healthcare leaders.