

Illinois Teacher of the Year-September 2009

Linda Smerge's Top Ten List

- 10 COLLEGIALITY
 - Know your school secretary and custodian
 - Know your strengths and your colleagues' strengths
 - Find common ground and work together
- 9 FLEXIBILITY
 - Be willing and able to make changes
 - Know the hierarchy of the school administration & personnel
 - Complete paperwork on time
- 8 EMPATHY
 - Embrace your school population and cultures
 - Show interest in student activities
 - "Even on your worst day, you're a student's best hope." Larry Bell
- 7 RESPECT
 - Show the respect you expect
 - Find ways to communicate and connect to parents
 - Find ways to connect to students
 - Find special ways for getting each students' attention
- 6 PATIENCE
 - Students hardest to love need your love the most
 - Keep your "power" in perspective
- 5 TEAM SPORT
 - Do not isolate yourself in your classroom (quickest way to burn out)
 - Set worthy goals for yourself and as a grade level
- 4 CREATIVITY
 - Explore new resources regularly
 - Seek professional opportunities
- 3 SENSE OF HUMOR
 - Be able to laugh at yourself
 - Find appropriate jokes
- 2 AMNESIA
 - "Let it Go!"
- 1 SELF CARE
 - Know your needs and make sure they are met
 - Find a hobby
 - AND give yourself permission to enjoy it

During Linda Smerge's speech, she stressed the importance of creating a functional library. She referred to Debbie Diller's work:

- Use the three calming colors
- Look at the perimeter of the room, you can't move things that are attached.
- Decide where your large group instruction will take place.
- Next decide where your library corner will be.
- Where will you have small group instruction?
- Where will you put your Word Wall?
- Put the writing center near the Word Wall.
- Then decide where the students' desks will go.