

CLASSROOM PRESENCE

Pocketbook



Develop your presence and persona to transform the atmosphere, behaviour and relationships in all your classes

Rob Salter

Copyright Notice – Please Read

The contents of this electronic book (text and graphics) are protected by international copyright law. All rights reserved.

The copying, reproduction, duplication, storage in a retrieval system, distribution (including by email, fax or other electronic means), publication, modification or transmission of the book are **STRICTLY PROHIBITED** unless otherwise agreed in writing between the purchaser/licensee and Teachers' Pocketbooks.

Depending on the terms of your purchase/licence, you may be entitled to print parts of this electronic book for your personal use only. Multiple printing/photocopying is **STRICTLY PROHIBITED** unless otherwise agreed in writing between the purchaser and Teachers' Pocketbooks.

If you are in any doubt about the permitted use of this electronic book, or believe that it has come into your possession by means that contravene this copyright notice, please contact us.



TEACHERS' POCKETBOOKS

LAUREL HOUSE, STATION APPROACH,
ALRESFORD, HAMPSHIRE SO24 9JH UK

Telephone: +44 (0)1962 735573
Fax: +44 (0)1962 733637
Email: sales@teacherspocketbooks.co.uk
Web: www.teacherspocketbooks.co.uk

Teachers' Pocketbooks is an imprint of Management Pocketbooks Ltd.

Enjoy the read!

To help you move around this e-Pocketbook we have included a full '**Table of Contents**', with links that take you instantly to the chapter or page of your choice. Be sure to reveal the Table of Contents within the navigation pane (sidebar) of your file viewer.

In addition, we have **embedded links** within the book itself, denoted by coloured arrows ► and text that is underlined (or highlighted). These embedded links will get you swiftly from the Contents page to a specific chapter and from **cross-references** to other parts of the book. A link at the foot of the page ◀ will get you back to where you started.

The web browser or document viewer you use to read this e-Pocketbook may well provide further features (e.g. word search, zoom, page view options) to help improve your reading experience.

It is well worth spending some time familiarising yourself with your document viewer in order to get the best from this e-Pocketbook.

Enjoy your reading!

CLASSROOM PRESENCE

Pocketbook



By Rob Salter

Cartoons:
Phil Hailstone

Published by:



Teachers' Pocketbooks

Laurel House, Station Approach,
Alresford, Hampshire SO24 9JH, UK

Tel: +44 (0)1962 735573

Fax: +44 (0)1962 733637

Email: sales@teacherspocketbooks.co.uk

Website: www.teacherspocketbooks.co.uk

*Teachers' Pocketbooks is an imprint of
Management Pocketbooks Ltd.*

Series editor – Linda Edge

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form, or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of the publishers.

© Rob Salter 2016

This edition published 2016

ISBN 978 1 906610 85 2

E-book ISBN 978 1 908284 62 4

British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data
– A catalogue record for this book is available
from the British Library.

Design, artwork and graphics by Efex Ltd.
Printed in UK.

C o n t e n t s

Page



Introduction

The presence problem, teaching presence, linking acting and teaching, presence and persona, from stage to classroom, the skills triad, reading it vs doing it

4 ▶



Status

Improvisation, what do we mean by status?, sample script, high and low status teachers, instant high status, classroom interactions, status lowering situations, raising status under pressure, reading your lesson script, eye contact, be a status expert, high and low status behaviours, status science, the power pose, can playing high status win you an election?

13 ▶



Assertiveness

'Inside-out' not 'outside-in', the assertiveness triangle, a teacher's rights, skills, learning to say 'no', giving and receiving criticism, the 'niceness' problem, dealing with diffidence, the passive/ aggressive mindset, dealing with your own anger, acting angry, moving forward

35 ▶



Rapport

The third ingredient, NLP in a nutshell, defining rapport – mirroring, pacing and leading, teaching all your pupils, listening, pupil distress

53 ▶



Three Circles of Energy

Defining presence, the x-factor, first circle energy, third circle energy, second circle energy, moving between the circles, second circle checklist, what second circle feels like, the 'I' perspective, what's in it for me?, maintaining your passion

63 ▶



Only Connect

The sharpest tools in the box, sensory acuity, behavioural flexibility, framing and reframing, cultural architects, the balancing act, rapport bombing, getting it right – the seating plan, warnings and sanctions, calibration explained, being a role model, self-fulfilling prophecies; embracing growth mindset; conveying high standards

81 ▶



Voice, Costume, Space

What's in your toolbox, breathing and voice, voice training, your natural voice, voice and the 'iron lady', delivering your lines, costume – why it matters, the teacher's costume, power dressing?, school uniform, spatial awareness, the power of the circle, working in a circle, mastering the circle, speaking to the class, last words

101 ▶

The presence problem



We all know teachers who command attention the moment they walk into a room; they have immediate presence that communicates itself to pupils, often without a word having been spoken.

But pupils don't sit in class thinking: *'I respect this teacher; they have great presence'*. It's an unconscious process. Children and teenagers 'read' their teachers and respond on an emotional level, depending on what they look and sound like; what kind of example they set and how they carry themselves.

It can be hard to get useful feedback from lesson observations about the kind of impact you make on your class. Occasionally, teachers may get the comment that they 'lack presence' in the classroom. This is a euphemism for 'poor behaviour management' and is rarely accompanied by any ideas about how to increase that elusive presence.

Your classes, however, are full of children who have no such inhibitions concerning feedback and who will, if you learn to look for and interpret it, provide you with limitless feedback about your level of presence in the classroom – every hour of every day!

Presence is taught in other contexts



As teachers we are used both to reflecting on unconscious or sub-conscious processes and to teaching about them. We do it when we show pupils how to infer or how to analyse the subtext in a novel or play, for instance. Yet, when it comes to teacher training and development, learning about and exploiting this level of communication barely features.

Business people, politicians and actors – all professionals who need to command an audience – are routinely trained in how to increase their presence and become more effective and compelling communicators. So why not teachers?

Competence in this area is a key indicator in how effectively we manage our classes and provide quality teaching over the span of a career.



Linking acting and teaching



It was when working with PGCE students who were struggling to assert themselves in the classroom that I first saw how useful they would find the acting techniques I was teaching my 'A' Level Drama students.

Later in my career I became a teaching and learning coach and over the years developed the eclectic approach to establishing effective classroom presence that I will be outlining in this book. I now regularly work with teachers to:

- Interpret feedback that students are giving them
- Understand the subtext and implications of their reactions to events in class
- Maximise the power of body and voice
- Understand how to use space in the classroom effectively
- Show how assertiveness, rapport and status can be a transformational triad
- Conquer their demons, eg if you struggle to say 'no' in life, you may well struggle in the classroom

Presence and persona



The first key to understanding is this:

Presence is the effect created by your teacher persona

So, what is a teacher persona and how do you create one?

There are various ways to think about this question, but the most fun is to go and see some stand-up comedy. In most theatre performances, the actors have to ignore the audience to draw them into the world of the play. Comedians, on the other hand have, to work *with* their audience, whose response is crucial to the entertainment. They have to engage with and control hecklers and they have to make the audience like them; otherwise, they get no laughs and die the death of a thousand cuts. Not that different from the classroom...

Persona



Knock, knock?

Get off!

Rubbish!



Remember: **Persona** is the vehicle;
presence is the effect.

From stage to classroom



Of course, there are differences between a stand-up comic's job and a teacher's, but the similarities are clear. Any good stand up will have a likeable persona but will also be sufficiently dominant and assertive not to be victimised by their audience or by hecklers. Remember how, apparently effortlessly, your favourite teachers managed to inspire, entertain and control you? It's the same thing.

On walking into their classrooms, many successful teachers seem to put on an old, familiar coat – their teaching persona. The minute they enter the room their voice, tone, posture and attitude transform. This professional persona is not 'who they are'; it is 'who they are in the classroom', a construct that helps them to do their job.

New teachers, especially, balk at the idea that they cannot 'be themselves' in front of a class. Only after bitter experience, do they start to 'wear the coat' (or suit of armour in some cases!) that helps them to survive. One of the things you'll learn from this Pocketbook is a set of complementary skills to help you create a winning persona.



Surely you need more than just presence?



All good teachers are willing and able to use school discipline systems when necessary, it's just that the best ones rarely seem to need to. They have managed to transcend the need for sanctions in all but the most difficult situations.

In fact, all teachers, with enough awareness and practice, can reach that level of competence and influence, developing a truly powerful presence in the classroom.

Working nowadays with teachers at various stages of their careers, I teach a **triad of skills** which, combined, create this powerful presence and allow you as a teacher to back up your persona with confidence, based on the ability to be **assertive**, to create **rapport** and to understand how to switch **status** at will.

As well as the skill triad, other areas I'll be covering in this book include ways to build relationships and to connect with your students using techniques from NLP, psychology and acting.