

Ty Ankrom's Here's What I Think ...

I saw an interesting post on Facebook recently that listed a number of qualities that can't be measured by tests.



Among the qualities listed were creativity, compassion, curiosity, humility, motivation and persistence.

To me, these are qualities – if possessed – that will give one a leg up toward a successful career and a rewarding life.

These qualities provide a person with a foundation that can help him or her face challenges and overcome failures.

In *Targeted Leadership*, authors Tracey Ballas and Christopher Novak explain that there is a difference between skills and traits.

"Skills are often tangible, visible and readily identifiable and can be taught or learned over time with practice and training. They are the mechanics – the how-to for any task or responsibility – and can be objectively evaluated.

"Traits tend to be innate – you have them or you don't."

The qualities listed (see box) are definitely traits.

Personal qualities not measured by tests

civic-mindedness
compassion
courage
creativity
critical thinking
curiosity
empathy
endurance
enthusiasm
humility
humor
inquisitiveness
leadership
motivation
persistence
reliability
resilience
resourcefulness
self-awareness
self-discipline
sense of beauty
sense of wonder
spontaneity

While they may not be able to be quantified through a test, they can be embraced and encouraged.

The best teachers, I think, recognize all qualities that students have – the skills and the traits.

A student who has a gift for learning and plans to study medicine will have to prove his or her aptitude repeatedly.

But a student who has an innate sense of compassion and goes out of his or her way to help others will be equally as valu-



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able to society.

The great thing about these qualities – be it enthusiasm, leadership or persistence – is that they will enhance the skills that students can learn.

Steve Jobs was an amazing man. He thought up ideas that changed how we use technology. But anyone who knew him said he lacked humility and compassion.

While it didn't diminish his greatness, imagine a Steve Jobs-type person with humility and compassion.

As educators, we may not be able to enhance the traits but we can encourage the skills that would be improved with those innate traits.

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