



# PART 2—THE STUDENT

Notes



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section *The Student* 2.1, 2.2.

## 2.1 Introduction

Understanding how students think and feel is the best way to apply what we learned in Part 1. They instinctively know how you feel—and whether or not you like or respect them. Never think that your students are stupid! Many times during a presentation or seminar your impact will be determined by how you view the audience. Be confident that they're there to learn and prepare accordingly.

## 2.2 Decision-Making Styles

In reality, you're trying to sell somebody something—in this case, the information you'll be presenting. It starts with having the listeners' interests at heart, a relationship with them, a commitment on your part, and you communicating in a way in which they can relate and feel safe. Realize that success is building a relationship so that you can partner with your students in their learning.

Information must be presented in a manner that persuades the listener to accept your ideas, and to encourage students to want to learn. To do this you need to understand and take into consideration the five decision-making styles as you prepare. Doing so will help you communicate more effectively. People with these decision-making styles will be represented in nearly every group you teach:

- Charismatics
- Thinkers
- Skeptics
- Followers
- Controllers

**Charismatics** get excited about what you're discussing and enjoy new, out-of-the-box ideas. They aren't interested in the details, so keep it simple and straight forward with lots of visual aids—they just want to hear the bottom-line, not all of the details. You must engage charismatics immediately, before they lose interest. Charismatics are visual people so:

- Don't use too much text in slides.
- Set up your slides to illustrate a vision using graphics.

**Thinkers** are open to new ideas, but are careful and methodical. They like hard facts and research information—that’s what convinces them. Never make a statement in your class that you can’t support. Guarded and cautious, they explore every advantage and disadvantage. Thinkers are open to new ideas when they’re supported by facts. They’re rational and use numbers to make their decisions. They might not have the best social skills when quizzing you about the information—they’ll challenge you about the facts. While they’re proactive and do want to win, thinkers use logic and exhaustive analysis to make decisions.

**Skeptics** are distrustful of information that doesn’t fit their view of the world and will challenge every data point right away. They use their “gut” to make a final decision. You must be credible in their eyes before they’ll listen to you, and you need to welcome their challenges. They say what they think without regard to your reaction. While thinkers take in the data to make a decision, skeptics look through the data to find what supports their vision.

Don’t become defensive, and don’t rush a skeptic. They’re unafraid of being wrong so they make bold, risky comments. They’re interested in where you obtained your information, ideas, and recommendations. Be prepared to present the sources of your data. Be careful not to become upset with the skeptic, but try to help them integrate the data into their view. There is; however, a high probability that you won’t change their mind.

**Followers** come across as open and enthusiastic although they want proof supporting the idea being presented. They rely on past decisions, take time to change their opinion, and are politically sensitive. They buy well-known brands and want to protect what they already have. They’re excellent with people and are always aware of how their behavior affects others (political).

**Controllers** are unemotional, analytical, hate uncertainty, and are inclined to follow their own ideas. Highly independent, they like to be in control of the decision-making process. They don’t like to be pushed. Because they see information through their own perspective, it can be difficult to get them to accept information that runs contrary to their point of view. They’re also perfectionists who aren’t very interested in getting along with other people or making others feel comfortable.

Controllers march to their own beat and have a tendency to shoot the messenger. You must maintain control as the instructor, and politely keep them in check. If they won’t conform, there may come a point where you need to be more forceful. Don’t allow them to take control of the class. We’ll talk more about this later.

In working with students, understanding individual decision-making styles can help you better communicate and be able to provide answers to their questions in a way they’ll understand. Work in a manner that fits their style in order to improve the likelihood of them understanding the material.