



THE ABCS OF MINDING YOUR PS AND Qs – HOW TO BE A STAR PUPIL OR AN EXCELLENT TEACHER!

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Student or teacher, we've all been both, be it in the academic world of education as a young person or in the rug hooking world at any age. Workshops, guild meetings, weekend retreats, and one-on-one instruction all offer a tremendous opportunity to learn or teach a new skill.

Teaching Pre-K through high school as well as all ages of rug hookers, I have learned many valuable lessons over the past 25 years. As a new school year begins, I thought I would share a few of those ABCs to help you become a model student or excellent instructor.

Always Be Careful in Communication

Everyone's been a beginner at one point. If you're the teacher, realize a student may be anxious about everything from choosing a pattern to selecting just the right colors of wool to learning a technique. Always remember to put yourself in her shoes. As a student, flexibility and humility in trying something new offers a realm of possibilities. Just because you've always done something one way doesn't mean you cannot try a new approach. It can be exciting! Communication

is a wonderful thing in expressing yourself as the student or listening as the teacher.

Delight in Every New Friend

One of my most cherished positives of the rug hooking community is the wonderful friendships I have made along the way. While not every teacher or fellow classmate is bound to be your next best texting buddy, be open to what these folks have to offer. Time spent in fellowship with others broadens our horizons, helps us explore different ideas, and is quite frankly fun! I once heard a speaker remark that everyone has an invisible message on her forehead that reads "Make Me Feel Important." No one likes coming away from a class in which she's felt ignored, dismissed, or wondering why she signed up to attend. Neither does a teacher feel apt to return to a venue where the participants were too chatty to listen, unwilling to consider any of her recommendations, or consistently late to class. Friendliness is contagious.

Grace Helps Immensely

Show grace. It can be extremely intimidating to teach a classroom full of seasoned rug hookers.

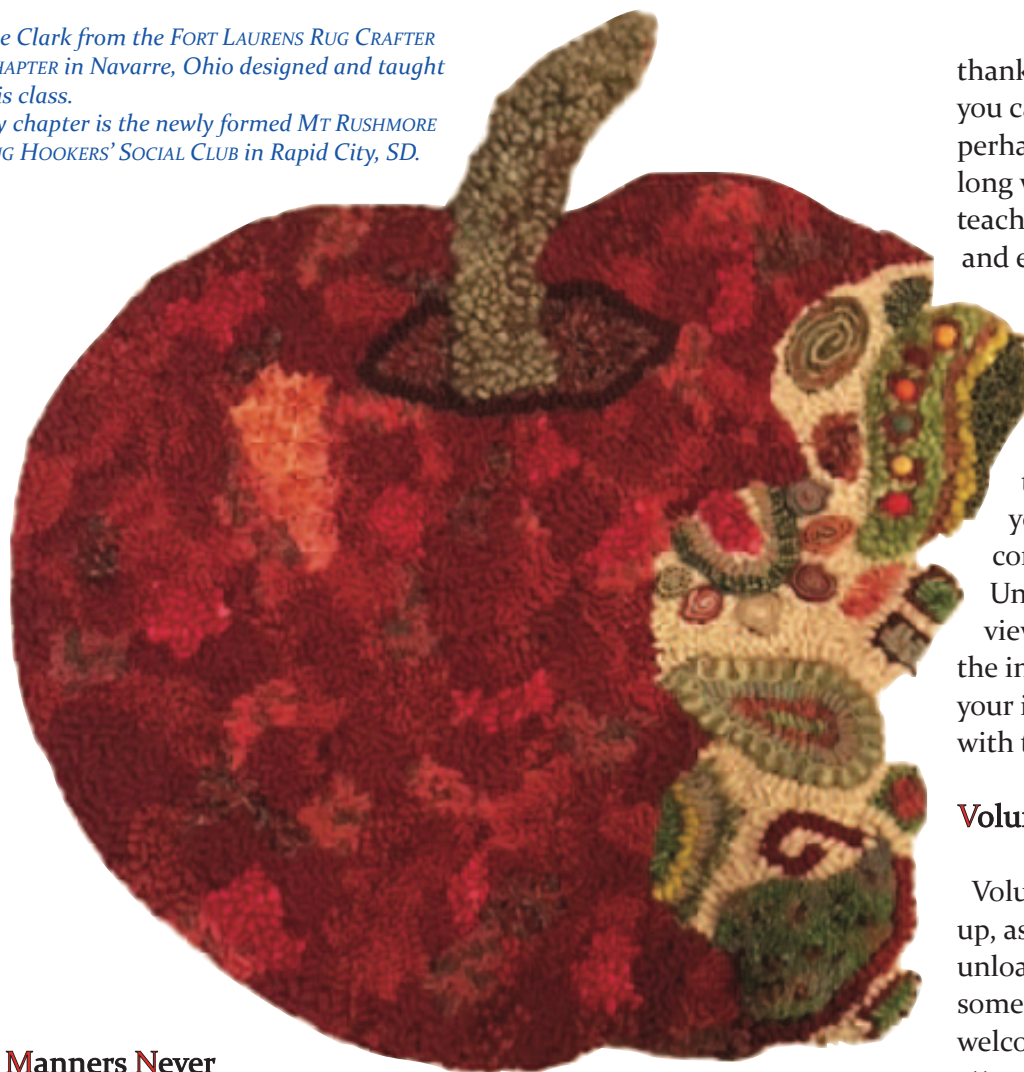
Remember that the teacher has worked long hours preparing the presentation, perhaps dyeing specific wool for you, and loading it all up to bring to the venue. She might be tired before she even arrives! You may also be in a similar position, having made plans to leave family and responsibilities at home. Being gracious to one another is invaluable.

Just Kindly Listen

If your student is uncomfortable with a color choice and wants to change course, don't get your panties in a wad! It's her rug, after all, and she's the one who will be living with it when she returns home. Listen to what she is expressing as her concern and perhaps come to an understanding without getting your feelings hurt. That being said, as a student, be mindful when a teacher is offering various ideas. Recognize those color choices may have included many hours of dyeing wool on her part, and she was acting in your best interest. Most of all, whenever a teacher is presenting to the group, kindly listen!

There's nothing more disheartening to have cell phones ringing, chattering, and distractions when one is trying to teach.

Sue Clark from the FORT LAURENS RUG CRAFTER CHAPTER in Navarre, Ohio designed and taught this class. My chapter is the newly formed MT RUSHMORE RUG HOOKERS' SOCIAL CLUB in Rapid City, SD.



Manners Never Obfuscate

Good manners never muddy the waters in the classroom. They are a pathway to a successful experience for all parties. I always bring an extra project in my bag at open workshops so that I can happily work while waiting for my turn with the teacher. No need to get cranky or impatient! As a teacher, I have varied my process of working with students, be it a numbered token drawn from a basket or a note hidden in the student package. I do my best to meet with each student prior to lunch, even if that time is minimal. Keeping a timer handy helps immensely. Communicating this process at the beginning of class makes for smooth sailing!

Praise, Question, Relax

A little bit of praise goes a long way. Find something in every student to compliment: her pattern choice, her technique, or even what she's wearing. Those little words of encouragement may be just what she needs that day. Asking open ended questions also strengthens the student-teacher relationship and builds rapport. Most of all relax! Rug hooking is supposed to be an enjoyable and creative outlet. While your investment of time and money is important, it shouldn't render you uptight for the week!

Share, Thank, Understand

Share your ideas with your teacher, and vice versa. Don't be stingy! Be

thankful! If so led, offering a thank you card for the group to sign, perhaps with a tip at the end of a long week is a kind gesture to the teacher. As the teacher, be grateful and express your gratitude that students signed up to take your class, no matter how much wool they did or did not purchase. Understand that if you're the student, be the student. Avoid counseling your next door neighbor or contradicting the teacher. Understand that it can be viewed as rude to interrupt. As the instructor, be cognizant that your ideas may not coincide exactly with the student's vision.

Volunteering is Welcomed

Volunteer to help unload, clean up, assist others. Loading and unloading all our "stuff" is a task sometimes! These gestures are welcoming to newcomers or those attending alone. It's one more way to get to know your teacher or fellow classmate. Invite others to join your circle of friends at lunch or dinner.

Excitement Yields Zestfulness

Your excitement and love of the art of rug hooking is contagious. We are blessed to have a community that is amazingly creative, open to sharing, and enthusiastic in learning. Minding our Ps and Qs while we are blessed to participate in a myriad of opportunities adds a bit of zest not only to our lives but those around us. Enjoy being an excellent teacher or model student when you venture out to your next event!

