Let’s Go to the Movies and Learn about Teaching!

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Introduction
Major motion pictures can entertain us, frighten us, make us laugh and even cry, but they can also offer a glimpse into the realities and false impressions of teaching. Join us as we sit back, relax, and enjoy the show offered by some great movie star teacher as we examine teaching styles, stereotypes, hurdles and triumphs in the classroom through some of the biggest blockbuster hits.

Icebreaker Discussion Points
What’s your favorite movie that has some kind of “teaching” theme or moment in it?

How would you define your role as a teacher in a SINGLE word?

If you were serving on a “Teacher of the Year” award committee, what kinds of actions that you saw teachers taking would make you want to give them an award?

Formal Discussion Points
Discussion, sequenced with movie clips, about what the best teachers do, and what makes them effective at what they do, centers around the following points:

TEN TRAITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE TEACHERS
By Elaine K. McEwan

1. Mission-driven and Passionate
2. Positive and Real
3. A Teacher-leader
4. With-it-Ness
5. Style
6. Motivational Expertise
7. Instructional Effectiveness
8. Book Learning
9. Street Smarts
10. A Mental Life
Additional Discussion Points from Movie Clips:
Teaching Styles
Stereotypes associated with the teaching profession
Obstacles teachers must face in the classroom
Choices that teachers have to make in their position

*WHAT THE BEST COLLEGE TEACHERS DO: AN ADDITIONAL ANALYSIS*
*By L. Dee Fink*

The Three Areas of “Additional Analysis:”

**Attitudes & Perspectives**
1. Intense Desire to Continue Learning
2. Positive Attitudes Towards Students
3. Used Teacher Evaluations to Improve
4. Viewed Their Teaching as Part of a Larger Context

**Decisions About Course Design**
1. Identified Big Questions and Stories
2. Fully Used the First Day of the Course
3. Formulated Good Learning Goals
4. Used Good Learning Activities
5. Responded to Student Characteristics
6. Used Good Assessment Activities
7. Created a High Level of Course Integration

**Their Interactions With Students**
1. They Showed Students They Cared
2. They Knew How to Motivate Students
3. They Had Dynamic Communication Skills
4. They Were Trustworthy and Fair To All

*TWELVE CHARACTERISTICS OF AN EFFECTIVE TEACHER*
*By Robert J. Walker*

Twelve Characteristics
1. Prepared
2. Positive
3. Hold High Expectations
4. Creative
5. Fair
6. Display a Personal Touch
7. Cultivate a Sense of Belonging
8. Compassionate
9. Have a Sense of Humor
10. Respect Students
11. Forgiving
12. Admit Mistakes
SEVEN PRINCIPLES FOR GOOD PRACTICE IN UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION
By Chickering & Gamson

Good practice in undergraduate education:

1. encourages contact between students and faculty,
2. develops reciprocity and cooperation among students,
3. encourages active learning,
4. gives prompt feedback,
5. emphasizes time on task,
6. communicates high expectations, and
7. respects diverse talents and ways of learning

WHAT THE BEST COLLEGE TEACHERS DO
By Ken Bain

Unifying Principles

1. Create a natural critical learning environment
2. Get their attention and keep it
3. Start with the students rather than the discipline
4. Seek commitments
5. Help students learn outside of class
6. Engage students in disciplinary thinking
7. Create diverse learning experiences

Teachers and Teaching
The following discussion questions help for a teaching practitioner to self-reflect and evaluate:

BECOMING A CRITICALLY REFLECTIVE TEACHER
By Stephen D. Brookfield

Reflective Inventory

1. What am I proudest of in my work as a teacher?
2. What would I like my students to say about me when I’m out of the room?
3. What do I most need to learn about in my teaching?
4. What do I worry most about in my work as a teacher?
5. When do I know I’ve done good work?
6. What’s the mistake I’ve made that I’ve learned the most from?
Personal Assumptions Inventory

1. I know I’ve done good work when…
2. I know I’ve done bad work when…
3. I feel best about my work when…
4. I feel worst about my work when…
5. The last time I saw really good teaching was when…
6. The best learning experience I’ve ever seen students involved in was when…

The Blueberry Story: The teacher gives the businessman a lesson
By Jamie Robert Vollmer

Can a school be run like a business?

Movie Clips
10 Things I Hate About You (1999)  Heath Ledger, Julia Stiles
A Beautiful Mind (2001)  Jennifer Connelly, Russell Crowe
Big (1988)  Tom Hanks
Catch Me If You Can (2002)  Leonardo DiCaprio, Tom Hanks
Dangerous Minds (1995)  Michelle Pfeiffer
Dead Poets Society (1989)  Robin Williams
Ferris Bueller’s Day Off (1986)  Matthew Broderick
Freedom Writers (2007)  Hillary Swank, Patrick Dempsey
Good Will Hunting (1998)  Robin Williams, Matt Damon, Ben Affleck
The Help (2011)  Viola Davis Octavia Spencer, Emma Stone
Kindergarten Cop (1990)  Arnold Schwarzenegger, Penelope Ann Miller
Lean On Me (1989)  Morgan Freeman
Mean Girls (2004)  Lindsay Lohan, Tina Fey
The Mirror Has Two Faces (1996)  Barbara Streisand, Jeff Bridges
Mr. Holland’s Opus (1996)  Richard Dreyfus
The Nutty Professor (1996)  Eddie Murphy
School of Rock (2003)  Jack Black
To Sir With Love (1967)  Sydney Poitier
Bibliography


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