#28 Pick Your Battles

The wise teacher knows that the way to accomplish anything is to choose the weakest point and go from there. Do not meet power with power or butt heads - strength to strength.

Choose your battles - the ones about education and which will make a difference. Be blind to all others. Conserve your strength and attack at the weakest point. Here, a student can be “got” and a lifetime of learning/being lit. Do not win battles but win the war.

Everyone has a crack - that’s how the light gets in....

#27 What we have learned is as much what isn’t stored as that which is stored

Teaching is about helping others learn. And people learn both the obvious and that which isn’t obvious and a shadow. When we learn “freedom”, we also learn about what is imprisoned behind the gate. When we learn our ABCs, we also learn about not having letters. When we learn how to make coffee, we learn about our need for coffee.

The teacher must be aware of both the visible curriculum and that which is not visible. We never just teach one thing but should attempt to teach that which is behind both things.

At the Thatched Hall of the Ts’ui Family

It is autumn at the grass hut on Jade Peak
The air is cool and clear.
Temple bells and chimes echo from the canyons.
Fishermen and woodsmen wind over sunset trails.
We fill our plates with chestnuts gathered in the valley and rice grown in the village.
For what, Wang Wei?
Bamboo and pine, silent, locked behind a gate.
— Tu Fu

#26 - What you teach is n...
#26 - What you teach is not only what you teach

A teacher works with human clay - not just knowledge or subject. Every day we encounter the human spirit, the mystery of existence that asks us to participate in some great plan we know not of.

Teachers must remember this. Seek for that which is permanent. Education is what remains after all else is forgotten. Aim for this "green forever" and you will succeed.

"The whole country devasted
only mountains and rivers remain.
In springtime, at the ruined castle,
the grass is always green."
— Tu Fu

If you can’t paint well PAI...

Sep 23, 2009 07:55PM

If you can’t paint well PAINT BIG

thank you for that beautifu...

Sep 16, 2009 11:13PM

thank you for that beautiful reminder. Two full days of student conferences and many conversations have illuminated your point. Sometimes our offices, clothes, and casual comments resonate more than the editing suggestions. Why? Because we are humane teachers, and not just language technicians. Our students want more than just guidance on grammar points.

"If a man’s best friend is a dog, his worst is dogma.”
Leo Rosten

#24 Teaching is not speaki...

Sep 15, 2009 03:16PM

#24 Teaching is not speaking.
"The dog barks, the caravan passes”. Too often we believe teaching is what we say, teaching is what we speak, teaching is made of words. Nothing could be further from the truth. What passes between teacher and student as knowledge, is not passed by way of words or “noise”. Sound is the after effect.

Teaching is about your look. It is about your spirit and about how you stand and “be”. Teaching is about a thousand small things that flow into a moment and then the next moment. It is what can’t be

#25 What you can’t record...

Sep 28, 2009 09:57PM

#25 What you can’t record can still be measured

The wind is everywhere but who can say how much there is? In teaching, we many times think there is no progress. Students don’t get good results, they repeat the same mistakes, they can’t speak a correct sentence, they …..

We grow frustrated. But just because we can’t see or record the growth does not mean it isn’t there. Sometimes, like the lotus, it will all come to bloom in one great swoop of beauty. A river may look still but underneath, there is always a current moving forward. Students are ALWAYS learning - this is a condition of human beings.

Be patient and keep going ahead. With faith, you will one day measure all that which you were unable to record. You will measure it in a student standing before you who knows, knows more than knowledge but how to get knowledge. Those that are impatient and who want to measure what can’t be recorded, will be left at the side of the road.
immediately verified and thus lasts forever.
Learn to teach from your being and not your mouth and you will learn to teach well.

#23 - Never try, it is the ...
Jul 7, 2009 01:53AM

A great teacher doesn’t try - a great teacher does. There is grace and no greed. All that a teacher wants is all that they need. No more, no less. There is no thought about “what if?” or “Suppose?”, only a doing with that at hand. Teaching is the art of managing necessity and necessity is about exigency and not about desire. In our classrooms, we should find that flow which is always there for us to travel with.....we should not bull against and perspire up a hill of our own making.

There is grace in all teaching that passes between a student and a teacher. A grace made of repose and contentment in doing/being and not about getting somewhere and needing some “accomplishment”. The learning which would become a trophy is a learning that is a mirage - Dorian Gray’s face in the pond of time........

How might one do this? Be graceful? It all begins with acceptance. Acceptance of your situation, your task, your students and their comportment/character. Acceptance of everything, unconditionally. From that moment of faith, in that act of faith, the first step in grace can begin.

Never try, it is the trying that gets in the way. Act to create no resistance and be a knife that will always be sharp, always sharp - for it never encounters resistance and always finds the spaces between things.

#22 Keep what you Give.

May 28, 2009 10:22PM

The secret of teaching hinges upon ones ability to keep what you give. Teachers give a lot. We give of ourselves, in time, in emotion, in knowledge and understanding. The trick lies in being able to get energy from this, to be constantly renewed by ones giving. To NOT have energy sucked from oneself but to be constantly reenergized by the act of teaching.

You have to keep what you give. How? In letting go. Just letting go and being immersed in the process. To stop counting what you get and give. To swim in the ALL.