

Passion

John Hattie, the ‘go to guru’ of evidence-based education, believes¹ that **the best teachers are passionate people**. They love what they teach, they love being a teacher, and they love the challenge of helping each of their students learn. Their passion is contagious, and they infect their students with a love of learning. Passion is what drives us to put so much energy into our teaching. It stops us from giving up when things get hard, and it motivates us to learn ways to improve our craft – no matter how good we already are. You cannot be a great teacher without a passion for helping kids learn.



High Expectations

Great teachers expect all of their students to work hard and to learn. They acknowledge that their students are at different stages and have varying levels of ability. However, they believe that all of their students can learn, that all of their students should achieve real progress every year and that all of their students should achieve basic levels of competence in literacy and numeracy.

Great teachers expect every one of their students to work hard and achieve things that haven't mastered before. Their belief in their students leads these teachers to challenge their high achievers, in the same way it leads them to challenge students who struggle. Research² suggests this habitual challenging of students is the single largest factor separating great teachers from the rest of the pack.

“When I treat you as what you are capable of becoming, I help you become that.” Goethe



Ability

All other things being equal, **smart people make the best teachers** – and the smarter the person the better. This may fly in the face of popular belief, but research³ clearly shows that higher levels of intelligence, traditionally known as IQ and now known as general mental ability (g), leads to higher performance in all jobs – including teaching⁴. This is not so surprising when you consider that intelligence is essentially a measure of your ability to grasp the challenge before you and discern the best way to proceed. This ability underpins decision-making and problem-solving, things that teachers must do on a daily basis and things that research² shows great teachers do well.



Knowledge

All teachers need to know the content that **they need to teach, and they need to know the most effective ways of teaching it**. If you haven't done so yet, you can get a 3 minute crash course in the [Top 10 Evidence Based Teaching Strategies](#)

“It is teachers using particular teaching methods that are more likely to have the above-average effects on student achievement.” **John Hattie**

Such knowledge is a prerequisite to effective teaching. However, on its own, this knowledge is not enough to move you from good to great. It is how they use this knowledge that makes some teachers more effective than others². Great teachers help students move from surface knowledge to deeper levels of understanding. They connect new knowledge to students' prior knowledge, including knowledge from other

curriculum areas, and they offer individualized suggestions to help each of their students improve.



Conscientiousness

Great teachers work hard. Teaching is not always fun or easy, and it certainly isn't a 9 to 3 job. While it is possible to focus your efforts on those things that matter most, there is no substitute for hard work. Great teachers are driven to do well, and they understand the link between effort and success.

“Genius is one-percent inspiration, ninety-nine percent perspiration” **Thomas Edison**

Conscientious people are responsible, determined and persistent. They work hard and go the extra mile in order to do the very best job that they can. Therefore, you should not be surprised to learn research⁵ shows that conscientious staff perform better in



Care

Teachers who care about their students have more impact on how well those students do at school⁶. They genuinely *care about them as people* in much the same way that a loving parent would care about their child. Great teachers are warm, respectful and empathetic. They say good morning to students when they walk into school at the start of the day, they ask students about things going on in their lives, and they offer support when students are in need.

You also need to *care about them as students* – that is you need to care when they are just coasting along when they could be doing better. Great teachers are not afraid of tough love. You need to believe in your students and challenge them to excel while simultaneously supporting them to do so.

This caring attitude lays the foundation for classrooms where students:

- Believe in their own capacity to learn
- Are not afraid of having a go or making mistakes
- Are receptive to feedback that will help them learn.



A Problem-Solving Approach to Failure

Great teachers want to help every one of their students to succeed, but sometimes their efforts fail to have the desired effect. They are not afraid of failure. They don't blame themselves, but nor do they excuse the failure as inevitable. Rather, they see the failure as feedback that tells them that what they are currently doing is not working for this student or group of students. **Great teachers then embrace the situation as a challenge to be met or a problem to be solved.**

When faced with the challenge of a student or a group of students not mastering what they are trying to teach, great teachers seek information about alternative approaches,

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EVIDENCE BASED

TEACHING STRATEGIES

1

Be clear about what you want your students to learn

2

Tell your students what they need to know & show them what they need to be able to do

3

Use questions to check that your students understand things

4

Have students summarise new information in a graphical way

5

Give your students plenty of practice spaced out over time

6

Provide your students with feedback so they can refine their efforts

7

Allow time for every child to succeed

8

Get students working together in productive ways

9

Teach students 'strategies' as well as content

10

Nurture metacognition

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