

sense of humor

What's one of the funniest things you have heard from a student?

After explaining what a "saying" is and introducing our first one for the year, a sweet second grade student raised her hand and shouted excitedly, "Oh! I get it! I can MAKE one! 'Don't think zebras, think horses.' It means don't jump to conclusions!" - **Ms. Trevino**

I asked the students to save any more comments to tell me at snack time. "It's not a comment, it's not a comment!" one of them assured me. "The new way you showed me to hold my pencil works so well!" - **Ms. Robb**

Teacher: Please complete #1, #3, and #5 on page 27 of your math workbook. Student: What does hashtag 1,3, and 5 mean? Teacher: (while laughing) Before it meant "hashtag" it was an ancient symbol for "number" - **Mr. Sneed.**

First graders say loads of funny things, and they don't even know they are being funny. Earlier this year, one of my students told me that I looked like a grandma! All I could say was "Thank you!" -**Ms. Page**

One afternoon I happened to be standing in the lobby and wished a Kindergarten student a good evening. The next morning with coffee in hand, I stood at the same spot ready to greet students by name, my favorite part of the day. The same Kindergarten student entered the lobby and I enthusiastically greeted him, "Bonjour!" With wide eyes, the scholar asked me, "Madame Fee, did you spend the night here?" Each week a student is assigned the opportunity of greeting guests and teachers that enter their classroom. I enjoy this exchange of greeting each student in French and shaking their hands. Early in the quarter I was taken aback as a new student greeted me, "Bonjour, Madonna Fee, welcome to our class!" Needless to say, I hesitated in correcting her that my title was "Madame" Fee. - **Ms. Fee**

About 6 years ago, I was teaching Kindergarten art and I had the students color a square yellow. Then I had the students color blue on top of the yellow to discover what happens when you put yellow and blue together. One student in particular, when he discovered what happened, fell out of his chair and screamed "YELLOW AND BLUE MAKE BEAANN!!!!" - **Ms. Bryant**

The second day of school at the end of the day a kindergarten girl student came up to me and asked how she could get into the half day kindergarten group? I was feeling her heart too. - **Ms. Roadruck**

I once had a student come up to me and say she thought all grown ups were married. - **Ms. Ray**



sense of humor

What's one of the funniest things you have heard from a student?

I asked the class what humility meant. My brightest student raised her hand. I of course called on her. She proceeded to say that humility is when you humiliate someone. I had not laughed so hard in my life!!

- **Ms. Ajani**

I was pregnant with my daughter Whitney who was due to be born in December. Because of her due date, I decided to substitute teach rather than take on a classroom for the year. I was subbing in a kindergarten classroom in November (8 months pregnant) and handing out snack. One of the students very politely asked, "Teacher, are you going to have snack with us?" I replied, "No, not today." Another student joyfully shouted out, "She doesn't need a snack, look at how fat her stomach is?!?" I chuckled and it was a sweet reminder of the innocence of kindergarteners! - **Ms. Raper**

A student of mine was talking to me and leaning on a small plastic storage cabinet near my desk. I had built this earlier in the year, and it was a little wobbly due to my lack of craftiness in the area. I told him this and urged him not to lean on it. He stood up, looked at it, and remarked, "Hm, you did a pretty good job for not being a genius or an inventor." - **Ms. Diesing**

One student asked what my favorite tv show was growing up, another student asked, "Did they even have TV back then?!" - **Ms. Kwan**

"I don't push people in the hallways. It's just not scholarly." - **Ms. Brennan**

"Beethoven became deaf because his music was so loud he hurt his hearing nerves." - **Ms. Park**

Halfway through the year, about December, we were in the MPR for dismissal and a student, being completely serious, goes "Wait, we eat lunch in here?" - **Ms. Marrufo**

A student carved his first and last name into a desktop and when told there would be a consequence, he wondered how the teacher knew he was the offender! - **Ms. Berger**

Students love to guess their teachers age. Students have guessed me to be any where from 25-60.
- **Ms. Huntley**

When we were presenting "Get To Know Me" bags at the beginning of the year, students were invited to put three items in a paper bag that they would share with the class as a way to introduce themselves. The items could represent where they were from, sports that they played, or things that they liked. One student came up and pulled a piece of paper from his bag. His name was written on it and he explained to the class why he included it by saying, "I like myself so I put me in the bag!" - **Ms. Whittman**



greatful hearts
ANNUAL HOLIDAY GIVING

passion

Can you share a moment you knew teaching was the right fit for you?

While I was working as an apprentice teacher, I had the opportunity to tutor students privately in math. I never imagined myself as a math teacher, but working with those students showed me that I could help students walk out of confusion and into understanding. The creativity required to do this is something that gives me life! - **Ms. Lefaive**

The moment i knew teaching was right for me was when i knew i could make a difference in a child that was struggling. Being able to learn each child and create specific bonds is so important to me. - **Ms. Sloane**

A couple of years ago, I remember reading through Princess and the Goblin with my fourth graders and thinking about how much I loved sharing that beautiful/"great" text with the students. Being able to read and discuss the language used in that story and others within our Literature and Histories especially was amazing! - **Mr. Buckley**

There is not one moment, in which I knew that teaching was the right fit for me, but many. I simply knew I enjoyed working with children. There is something unique about children - their natural curiosity, their warm affection towards others, their strength in the face of challenge. I find working with children is a wonderful reminder of what it means to be human. - **Ms. Herr**

I have always enjoyed working with kids, why not teach them and see them grow. - **Ms. Alexander**

One example of a moment when I realized teaching was for me: In history class, we were discussing a moment in which a soldier was killed for disobeying unjust orders. Suddenly, one of my students raised her hand. When I called on her, she slammed her fist on the table and with tears in her eyes said: "That's just not fair. How could they do that? That is so wrong!" That passion--that realization of injustice and the need to speak courageously against it--that is the moral striving I hope to cultivate in all of my students. That is why I teach. - **Mr. Cain**

Honestly, when I signed up for my second year. Teaching is the hardest undertaking I have ever done, and this is the reason: your success as a teacher is directly proportionate to the amount you are willing to give. However, my Sophomore year teacher, Claire McWilliams, taught me that selfless service is the key to a fulfilling, joyful life. Knowing that teaching requires me to grow into the person my students need me to be--someone who pursues Truth, Goodness, and Beauty no matter the cost--makes it hard for me to imagine doing anything else. - **Mr. Hamilton**

I have one of those moments every time I pull aside a student struggling with math. Whenever I try to explain a concept a different way individually, and they have that visible "aha!" moment, I feel that I am where I belong. - **Mr. Barton**



greatful hearts
ANNUAL HOLIDAY GIVING

celebration of learning

Can you please share any special stories about a student understanding a concept for the first time?

After many Spalding lessons in which we review the phonograms, a scholar, during reading groups, was so excited when he saw the phonogram "ough" in a word. He exclaimed to me " Oh, Mrs. Bebow, there is the phonogram "ough" in the word through! Isn't that great!" Many times after that he continued to "oh and ahh" over that phonogram. It gave me great pleasure to see that the work I am doing, even though it may seem mundane, can touch a child. - **Mrs. Bebow**

Last year, I was blessed to be an Assistant teacher in 2nd grade. As the school year continued, it was decided that one boy needed a one on one. Unfortunately, both the Assistant Teacher and One on Ones were unable to stay and help this boy. Seeing a need being unmet, I gravitated towards the boy. I had never met an Autistic person before, what did I know? I just knew there was a boy who needed someone to believe and understand him. Over time, I became his one on one and it changed my life forever. Taking the time to look outside myself and truly see a child for who they were and not what people saw on the outside. This boy did not only belong at this school but he began to thrive. His academic ability was at the top of his class, but because of social awkwardness and misunderstandings he was looked as not belonging or incapable. Teaching is not only about us giving these precious beings about academia but about forming our souls together, as students, teachers, parents, or admin. Pushing our boundaries to farther than what we have dimmed possible. It's a part of a bigger more beautiful plan! - **Ms. Fleming**

A student new to Great Hearts began the year struggling in math. Over the weeks, it has been a joy to see her understanding grow through tutoring and in-class work. Last week, she understood for the first time how to check a subtraction answer by using addition, and more generally the concept of parts/whole and how those work together. Her confidence has increased, and she is now participating eagerly in class. It has been wonderful to watch her grow both in math and as a person in such a short time. - **Ms. Smith**

I had a student tell me that he never understood decimals before. I was thanked at the end of class for "finally getting me to understand how to calculate using decimals". - **Mr. Martin**



celebration of learning

Can you please share any special stories about a student understanding a concept for the first time?

Because I now teach in Special Education, I am privileged to see my students succeed nearly every day! What might seem of little significance to a typically performing student, for my students, each and every accomplishment is magnified! We celebrate these moments with exuberance, cheering and clapping when they overcome a challenge of understand a new concept! One student who I had previously tutored was really struggling with reading. I worked with him for about a year, followed by intensive tutoring during one summer. Now, 2 years later, he has made such amazing progress, reading well above grade level! He will sometimes thank me for helping him. I remind him that he is responsible for all that he's achieved because of his dedication, diligence, and perseverance! He is the kindest and most caring student, and is so humble, but I've had the honor of watching it all unfold! Many times I have been brought to tears with an overwhelming feeling of joy when I am able to see how far a student has progressed. On any given day, my students are working harder than most just to keep up, to appear to be just like the other students in their class. They just want to belong and to have the same experiences as their peers. If I can play a part in their sense of accomplishment, even the most difficult days give me a reason to smile! - **Ms. Mineer**

When I taught junior high English at a previous school, I remember a student who didn't particularly like reading or writing. However, I managed to find a novel that interested him, and it was a challenging novel! It was big, and it was probably a little bit above his reading level. He loved reading it, though, and I kept encouraging him to persevere. The time came for him to write an essay on the book, and the minimum number of required pages was 1 1/2. He turned in his essay, and he had written three pages. He looked at me with surprise and said "I didn't know I had so much to say!" He was always a reminder for me that students can do hard things if they are engaged, they persevere, and they get some encouragement. - **Ms. van Leeuwen**

Last year during this campaign a young man in 6th grade wrote to me and told me he appreciated how I teach. He said, "thank you for pushing me farther than I ever thought I could go." It made me tear up. That's my heart - to help teach students the value of hard work, and if I can, to help them not make some of the mistakes I made growing up. - **Coach Waugh**



greatful hearts
ANNUAL HOLIDAY GIVING

personal influences

Recall a teacher that changed your life.

What made that educator so special to you?

My senior year in high school, I had a wonderful world literature teacher named Don Englebrecht. Growing up on the west side of Phoenix in a relatively uneducated family, I had not experienced very much in life at the time or even thought much about the world outside of Phoenix. Mr. Englebrecht exposed us to the wide world through the great literature we studied together and even more so through his fantastic story telling about his own life and travels. He inspired me to open up my mind to other ideas and places and people. He changed the course of my life and I am forever grateful to him and think of him fondly often. - **Mr. Golich**

My fifth grade teacher was incredibly influential in my life. During 5th grade, I began becoming much more self aware and conscientious. This teacher went out of her way to not only make learning more of a wonder, but she also treated us like our own independent people. I would argue that she helped me begin to develop self-efficacy. - **Ms. Wingo**

My junior and senior English and Spanish teacher (it was a small school, with many teachers wearing many hats) is still impacting my life to this day. I remember that during my junior year, she read Persuasion by Jane Austen just because it was my favorite book and in spite of the fact that she didn't really like Jane Austen. Because she saw how special it was to me, she gave it a chance. In that and in so many other small gestures, she showed me deep respect and a trust in my judgement and abilities that I wouldn't have in myself for many years to come. This is the teacher who led our Spanish Club trip to Europe the summer before my junior year. She showed us around three countries and told us stories about her own solo trip to London when she was 18. The memory of that trip and of tales of her travels as a young high school graduate gave me the courage later in life to move to Scotland by myself and pursue graduate school. If Miss Madison could do it, then I could do it, too. It was always clear that she saw and loved all of her students. That regard persists today; I know she's still cheering me on. - **Ms. Layton**

My favorite teacher was my high school English teacher, Mrs. Nupson. I was a shy teenager and she saw something in me that I didn't see. She used my love language of encouraging words to help me see my potential. - **Ms. Baines**

It has to be a tie between my drama and choir teachers in high school. They both helped me to come out of my shell and be able to speak (and act and sing) in front of others, which would have scared me stiff prior to that. Now I make my living in front of people (and still perform on the side). - **Mr. Jefferson**



greatful hearts
ANNUAL HOLIDAY GIVING

personal influences

Recall a teacher that changed your life.

What made that educator so special to you?

My music teacher was amazing on both skill and heart but what I'll always remember about him was that he believed that all his students could be great. He never gave up on any one and spent many of his after school hours working with struggling students with joy. - **Ms. Nahar**

Many teachers throughout my education have changed my life, however the teacher that changed my life most was my 6th grade Math teacher. He took extra time to challenge me with added responsibility, care, and patience as I was growing up. He was the first teacher who made me feel like I could undoubtedly accomplish anything I put my mind to. - **Ms. Nelson**

My flute professor in college changed my life. She invested in me as a musician and student just as much as her performance and Doctoral students. She built me up, yet had strict and high standards. She wouldn't let me do less than my best. - **Ms. Hamilton**

Mrs. Manning, my Third Grade Teacher taught me the importance of organization and working to perfection. - **Mr. Messana**

My 6th grade teacher was the one who introduced philosophy and logical thinking to me. Upon hearing this, my life's trajectory was in place! - **Ms. Mueller**

My Computer Science Teacher Ms. Krishna Veni who taught me to be positive and believed and guided students in their area of interest and strength. - **Ms. Sundaresan**



greatful hearts
ANNUAL HOLIDAY GIVING