“Education is my passion. It should be our national mission to be number one in the world in education. We cannot continue in the modern world with a situation where so many people [in the UK] have got no qualifications... In education as we encourage higher aspirations there will be more opportunity for all who work hard and make the effort...Both a strong economy and an inclusive society require a fully numerate population. This is why, some eight years after we introduced the national numeracy strategy, I believe the time is now right fundamentally to review how we teach numeracy and to set out a plan for ensuring that every child is numerate by the time they leave primary school.”

Gordon Brown, British Prime Minister, July 2007 - present

“In my statement to Parliament, I said we would renew our focus on school standards, putting standards before structures. We do children no favours if we are anything less than rigorous about standards in English and Maths. We must back the professional judgement of teachers to empower them to instil good behaviour in the classroom – so the education of the many is not disrupted by a minority of disruptive pupils. Promoting excellence in teaching and tackling disadvantage demands we personalise teaching and learning and back strong, innovative leadership in schools... As all the best schools know, you cannot raise standards and close achievement gaps without focusing on all the needs of every child and tackling every obstacle to their learning.”

Ed Balls, Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families July 2007 - present
"I have visited many schools before, and since becoming education minister and I aim to visit more. I have been struck by the numerous examples of the excellent work of dedicated teachers. I can honestly say that we have much to be proud of in our schools, and in the work of our teachers. We must pool our expertise together to help create an education system where every school is a good school and children leave the education system creative, confident and articulate ready to face higher education or the world of work."

Northern Ireland Education Minister, May 2007 - present

"The truth is - and it isn't always popular to say this - that there are good schools and not-so-good schools and the same is true of teachers. The beginning of getting this whole system right is to recognise that. If we are going to give children a first class education, we can't just give out money to schools and say: 'Spend it as you will.' By appraising how schools are doing, you make it clear that there are standards we expect, that it's a deal, that if there is extra money coming in it's tied to people doing better than just average and getting their performance up."

Tony Blair, British Prime Minister, 1997 - 2007

"Communicating well with children and young people is a real talent and a key part of the success that challenges young minds and unlocks potential. Every good teacher has this talent - and more - in abundance and those who truly connect with their young students are rarely forgotten."

Alan Johnston, UK Secretary of State for Education and Skills, 2006-2007
“Teachers are in all respects the lifeblood of education... their work has unique and demonstrable outcomes on the health, wealth and welfare of every person in this country. My belief is that education is the one key driver in enabling people to fulfil their potential, and therefore the sole means by which we can hope to deliver equality and social justice... Our future and that of every child in the planet, rests on our ability to invest every scrap of time and resource we have into building the type of educated global society of which we can be proud. Teachers make their own contribution to that objective every day of their working lives. As a nation we should be fantastically proud of them.”

Lord David Puttnam, CBE, Oscar Winning Film Producer, President of UNICEF UK and Chairman of the Teaching Awards.

"Education is the great engine of personal development. It is through education that the daughter of a peasant can become a doctor, that the son of a mineworker can become the head of the mine, that a child of farm workers can become the president of a great nation. It is what we make out of what we have, not what we are given, that separates one person from another."

Nelson Mandela, First Democratically Elected President of South Africa

“Modern cynics and sceptics... see no harm in paying those to whom they entrust the minds of their children a smaller wage than is paid to those to whom they entrust the care of their plumbing.

John F. Kennedy, American President (1917-1963)
"You cannot have a learning organization without a shared vision... A shared vision provides a compass to keep learning on course when stress develops."

Peter M. Senge, Author, Researcher & Educator based at Massachusetts Institute of Technology

"We've got to do fewer things in school. The greatest enemy of understanding is coverage... You've got to take enough time to get kids deeply involved in something so they can think about it in lots of different ways and apply it."

Howard Gardner, Professor of Cognition and Education at Harvard Graduate School of Education.

"Schools must enquire deeper into their own practices, explore new ways to motivate their learners, make use of learning styles, introduce multiple intelligences, integrate learning, and teach thinking, and in the process discover the passion and moral purpose that makes teaching exciting and effective. It is what teachers think, what teachers do, and what teachers are at the level of the classroom that ultimately shapes the kind of learning that young people get."

Michael Fullan, Dean of Ontario Institute for Studies in Education and Teacher Development and Andy Hargreaves, Chair in Education, Boston College
"The guts of teaching is simple ... it is the relationship between a teacher and a group of kids."

Professor Howard Wilson, Physicist, University of York

"Learning is finding out what you already know. Doing is demonstrating that you know it. Teaching is reminding others that they know just as well as you. You are all learners, doers, teachers ..."

Richard Bach, American Author

"Teachers are well respected because everyone remembers a favourite teacher. There is nothing more important than helping young people learn."

Caroline Evans, Chief Executive of the Teaching Awards

"I was massively influenced by my teachers at school and I have three cousins who are teachers so I know how hard they work"

Mark Ramprakesh, English Cricketer
“I had two favourite teachers and they both gave me a sense of purpose and really helped me through a rocky period when I was a teenager. Teachers can have an enormous impact, and I’m extremely grateful to mine.”

Mariella Frostrup, Broadcaster

“I enjoyed teaching very much. I taught from 11 up to 18. I taught Drama and English. However, I have absolutely no training as an actress—as is blatantly obvious.”

Dawn French, British Actress/Comedienne

“Teaching is so enjoyable it is almost a sin, but yet a sin that raises and educates the next generation.”

Melanie Griffith, American Actress

“The more children know that you value them, that you consider them extraordinary people, the more willing they will be to listen to you and afford you the same esteem. And the more appropriate your teaching, based on your knowledge of them, the more eager your children will be to learn from you. And the more they learn, the more extraordinary they will become.”

“There can be no significant innovation in education that does not have at its centre the attitudes of the teachers. The beliefs, assumptions, feelings of teachers are the air of the learning environment; they determine the quality of life within it.”


I saw as a teacher how, if you take that spark of learning that those children have, and you ignite it, you can take a child from any background to a lifetime of creativity and accomplishment.

Paul Wellstone, American Senator and Educator, 1944-2002

“The principle goal of education is to create men and women who are capable of doing new things, not simply repeating what other generations have done; men and women who are creative, inventive, and discoverers, who can be critical and verify, and not accept, everything they are offered.

Jean Piaget, French Psychologist (1896-1980)
"It must be remembered that the purpose of education is not to fill the minds of students with facts ... it is to teach them to think, and always to think for themselves."

Robert Hutchins, American Educational Philosopher, (1899-1977)

"The art of teaching is the art of assisting discovery."

Mark van Doren, American Writer and Educator (1894 - 1972)

"It is the supreme art of the teacher to awaken joy in creative expressions and knowledge."

"Teaching should be such that what is offered is perceived as a valuable gift and not as a hard duty."

Albert Einstein, German born Physicist and Nobel Prize winner (1879-1955)
"The greatest sign of success for a teacher... is to be able to say, "The children are now working as if I did not exist.""

Maria Montessori, Italian Physician and Educator (1870-1952)

"To me the sole hope of human salvation lies in teaching."

George Bernard Shaw, Irish Playwright (1856-1950)

"Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire."

William Butler Yeats, Nobel Prize Winning Irish Dramatist, Author and Poet (1865-1939)

"The teacher must orient his work not on yesterday's development in the child but on tomorrow's."

Lev Vygotsky, Russian Psychologist (1896-1934)
“A teacher effects eternity; he can never tell where his influence stops.”

Henry Books Adams, American Historian and Academic, 1848-1927

“Teachers must ... regard every imperfection in the pupils not as a defect ... but as a deficit in his or her own instruction, and endeavour to develop... the ability to discover a new method of teaching.”

Leo Tolstoy, Russian novelist, Educational Reformer and Philosopher, (1828-1910)

“A teacher who can arouse a feeling for one good action, for one single good poem, accomplishes more than he who fills our memory with rows and rows of natural objects, classified with name and form.”

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, German Author, Poet and Philosopher (1749-1832)

“Let the main object be ... to seek and to find a method of instruction, by which teachers may teach less, but learners learn more.”

Jan Amos Comenius, Czech Educator and Writer (1592-1670)