



Passion Profiles

Adapted from Gene Thompson-Grove's, "Student Profiles," by Pedro R. Bermudez, Belkis Cabrera, and Linda Emm.

Passion 1: The Child

You became a teacher primarily because you wanted to make a difference in the life of a child. Perhaps you were one of those kids whose life was changed by a committed, caring teacher and you decided to become a teacher so that you could do that for other children. You are always curious about particular students whose work and/or behavior just doesn't seem to be in sync with the rest of the students in your class. You often wonder about how peer interactions seem to affect a student's likelihood to complete assignments, or what enabled one of you ELL students to make such remarkable progress seemingly over night, or how to motivate a particular student to get into the habit of writing. You believe that understanding the unique qualities that each student brings to your class is the key to unlocking their full potential as learners.

Passion 2: The Curriculum

You are one of those teachers who are always "tinkering" with the curriculum in order to enrich the learning opportunities for your students. You have a thorough understanding of your content area. You attend conferences, and subscribe to journals that help you to stay up on current trends affecting the curriculum that you teach. Although you are often dissatisfied with "what is" with respect to the prescribed curriculum in your school or district, you are almost always sure that you could do it better than the frameworks. You are always critiquing the existing curriculum and finding ways to make it better for the kids you teach — especially when you have a strong hunch that "there is a better way to do this."

Passion 3: Content Knowledge

You are at your best in the classroom when you have a thorough understanding of the content and/or topic you are teaching. Having to teach something you don't know much about, makes you uncomfortable and always motivates you to hone up this area of your teaching knowledge base. You realize that what you know about what you are teaching will influence how you can get it across to your students in a developmentally appropriate way. You spend a considerable amount of your personal time — both during the school year and in the summer — looking for books, material, workshops, and courses you can take that will strengthen your content knowledge.

Passion 4: Teaching Strategies and Techniques

You are motivated most as a teacher by a desire to improve on and experiment with teaching strategies and techniques. You have experienced and understand the value of particular strategies to engage students in powerful learning and want to get really good at this stuff. Although you have become really comfortable with using cooperative learning with your students, there are many others strategies and techniques that interest you and that you want to incorporate into your teaching repertoire.

Passion 5: The Relationship between Beliefs and Professional Practice

You sense a “disconnect” between what you believe and what actually happens in your classroom and/or school. For example, you believe that a major purpose of schools is to produce citizens capable of contributing to and sustaining a democratic society, however, students in your class seldom get an opportunity to discuss controversial issues because you fear that the students you teach may not be ready and/or capable of this and you are concerned about losing control of the class.

Passion 6: The Intersection between Your Personal and Professional Identities

You came into teaching from a previous career and often sense that your previous professional identity may be in conflict with your new identity as an educator. You feel ineffective and frustrated when your students or colleagues don't approach a particular task that is second nature to you because of your previous identity — writer, actor, artist, researcher, etc. — in the same way that you do. What keeps you up at night is how to use the knowledge, skills, and experiences you bring from your previous life to make powerful teaching and learning happen in your classroom and/or school.

Passion 7: Advocating Equity and Social Justice

You became an educator to change the world — to help create a more just, equitable, democratic, and peaceful planet. You are constantly thinking of ways to integrate issues of race, class, disability, power, etc. into your teaching; however, your global concerns for equity and social justice sometimes get in the way of your effectiveness as an educator — like the parent backlash that resulted from the time you showed *Schindler's List* to your 6th Grade class. You know there are more developmentally appropriate ways to infuse difficult and complex issues into your teaching and want to learn more about how to do this with your students.

Passion 8: Context Matters

What keeps you up at night is how to keep students focused on learning despite the many disruptions that go on in your classroom/building on a daily basis. It seems that the school context conspires against everything that you know about teaching and learning — adults who don't model the behaviors they want to see reflected in the students; policies that are in conflict with the school's mission, and above all, a high stakes testing environment that tends to restrain the kind of teaching and learning that you know really works for the students you teach.