



Which Passion Describes You Best?

Teaching is an expression of identity and a craft of passion. We teach who we are. Let's take a few minutes and think more deeply about why are passionate about the work we do.

1. Read the "Passion Profiles" below.
2. As you read, make notes and underline language that strongly resonates with you.
3. After you read, reflect on your notes and decide which passion describes you best.
4. During the time remaining, think of specific interactions and experiences that exemplify this passion in your work. These moments may have happened in or out of the classroom and may be either uplifting or discouraging. Above all, they are moments that you remember vividly and still matter to you today.

Passion 1: The Gardener

You became a teacher because you want to make a positive difference in the lives of each of your students. You view the individuals in your room as people first and students second. It's important to you to cultivate positive relationships with as many of your individual students as you can, and you are deeply troubled when you aren't able to connect with some students. You believe that knowing the unique qualities and understanding the life experiences each student brings to your class are the keys to unlocking your full potential as their teacher. You pay attention to the body language of each student in your room. If a student seems troubled, you make a deliberate point to connect with them. You see the value in classes like "advisory" and enjoy helping your students grow as people and citizens who strive to be their best. A metaphor that might describe you is that of a "gardener" who is invested in making sure all their "plants" have what they need to thrive.

Passion 2: The Novelist

You became a teacher because you are passionate about curriculum design and authoring a year long learning experience for your students that consists of cohesive units of study that fit together to form one long story. You have a thorough understanding of your content area and strive to learn more by attending conferences, reading journals, and staying current with the latest ideas. You want your curriculum to make a coherent story for your students, and you become frustrated when you have to teach content in a way that doesn't fit together logically. You are bothered by curriculum that presents your content as a sequence of disjointed facts because you want your students to make conceptual connections between ideas in your curriculum and to topics in other disciplines. You embrace the opportunities to teach interdisciplinary units and enjoy thinking flexibly about your content to make it more meaningful for your students. You want your students to love and appreciate your content as much as you do (and you might be frustrated most when you fail at this). You value student understanding of the big ideas, rather than student mastery of isolated skills. A metaphor that might describe you best is a "novelist" who authors a curriculum that is a coherent story arc throughout the year.

This document borrows heavily from [NSRF's Passion Profile](#) document.
While much of this text is original, a few sentences and phrases in this document are direct excerpts.



Passion 3: The Conductor

You became a teacher because you love working with young people in groups. You embrace the collective differences in your students as an opportunity and not an obstacle for your teaching. You're inspired most when your lessons have students wondering, inspired, and asking questions. Learning is dynamic in your classroom and is evident in your lesson plans. You value student engagement and curiosity most and you may feel frustrated when other mandates of your job work against these values. You want your students to make meaning for themselves and to talk about it with each other. You value teamwork and having everyone involved. You are a teacher that "gets kids" and keeps current on new memes, technologies, and fads in youth culture because you want to stay relevant to their life experiences. You are a teacher that enjoys working with students outside of the classroom and maybe you coach sports, plan field trips, or coordinate after school activities. A metaphor that might describe you best is that of a musical "conductor" who passionately plans inspiring lessons and orchestrates learning opportunities for your students.

Passion 4: The Artist

For you, quality teaching is an artistic performance. You are a risk-taker, have no qualms about trying something new, and embrace professional failure as an opportunity to grow. You can take almost any lesson plan and make it entertaining and meaningful for your students. You are adept at a variety of roles as an instructor. During lessons, you can be the lead actor (or actress), the director, the producer, the writer, a supporting actor (or actress), or take on a more hidden "Wizard of Oz" type of role creatively creating the classroom environment you want for your students. You like dressing up in costumes, making funny voices, and finding other ways to express yourself creatively to get students laughing while they're learning. You like to keep your students on their toes and enjoy orchestrating surprises. You share stories and find humorous metaphors to help students stay engaged. You want your students to look forward to your class and to talk about it with each other after class is over. You value creative expression from your students and invite them to be goofy and playful, but with a focus on learning, cooperation, and being vulnerable in a safe classroom environment. You honor self-assessment, reflection, and journaling in your lessons and seek ways to make these classroom routines. A metaphor that might describe you best is a performance "artist" who knows that creating a sense of joy is the key to a productive classroom.

Passion 5: The Activist

For you, teaching is a political act of social justice. You became a teacher because you want to make this world a more just, equitable, democratic, and peaceful place. You integrate issues of race, class, power, and identity into your teaching because you want your students to be empowered with the critical thinking skills necessary to make sense of the unfairness and injustices in this world. You are not afraid of pushing the boundaries of what students are ready to learn and hold space for difficult conversations in your classrooms with your students and in the faculty lounge with your colleagues. It deeply bothers you that some schools are better than others and that many students do not have access to quality teaching in quality schools with the necessary resources to live healthy and productive lives. You recognize that many of your students have experienced or continue to experience trauma in their daily lives and create classroom environments where they can be safe and learn how to learn. A metaphor that might describe you best is an "activist" fighting for a more just world.

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