

Celebrate World Teachers' Day—26 October 2012

Teachers Inspire... Michael Gerard Bauer

Do you remember a teacher from your schooling who inspired you?

When I was young I was very nervous about speaking in public—a lot like the character Ishmael from my book *Don't Call Me Ishmael!* One teacher I had was very understanding and encouraging and she helped me overcome my fear and find my confidence and my voice. Very important for anyone—but particularly for a writer. Teachers like her are life-changing in ways they probably don't even realise.

What do you feel makes a good teacher?

A good teacher knows and loves what they teach—but they know and love who they teach even more.

What role do you think a teacher plays in developing a lifelong love of reading?

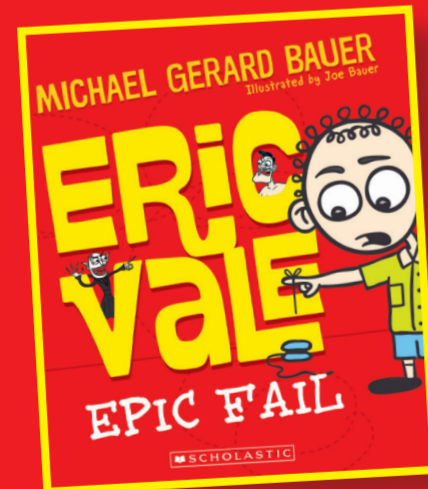
Teachers who love reading and who share that passion with their students, give them something much more than knowledge. They give them a wonderful gift—a treasure trove of ideas, thoughts, stories and experiences that they will discover and enjoy and learn from for the rest of their lives. Good teachers inspire us and prepare us for our lifelong quest to understand our world and ourselves. They teach us much more than what can be found in any textbooks.

About Michael Gerard Bauer

For most of my life I lived in the beautiful Brisbane suburb of Ashgrove, in a house only a few streets away from the hospital where I was born. It is the suburb in which I grew up, went to school, spent a number of years teaching, met my wife and where we brought up our own children, Meg and Joe (who illustrated *Eric Vale — Epic Fail!*). Naturally enough, Ashgrove was the setting for my first novel.

I have taught English and Economics in a number of secondary schools in the Brisbane-Ipswich area. From 2000 I managed regular breaks from teaching in order to pursue my writing dreams, thanks mainly to the generosity of my wife Adriana (also a teacher). Today I am amazed to find myself a full-time writer.

I have always been interested in writing and over the years have dabbled in song lyrics, short stories and poetry with no real thought of ever being published. For quite a few years I kept diaries where I would write about my experiences and innermost feelings in verse heavily disguised by symbols and images. Looking back I think this was probably a good way of developing and improving without realising it.



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CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

Teachers Who Inspire

- Discuss with students the meaning of the word 'inspire'. How have they been inspired to achieve things in their life and who has provided the inspiration? Relate to students the impact your teachers had on you and your life. Perhaps you could also invite other members of the school community to share their stories with students.
- Challenge students to write an acrostic poem using the word 'inspire'.

What is a Teacher?

- Discuss books and television programs the students have read or seen about school and teachers. Have students choose a fictional teacher and complete the *Character Profile* blackline master on the Teacher Toolkit. Some books students may be familiar with include *The Magic School Bus* series, *The Naughtiest Girl* series, *The Worst Witch* series and the *Harry Potter* series.
- Have students elect a classmate to become teacher for a lesson. After their 'lesson', have them describe what it felt like to teach, what was hard and whether they would like to be a teacher one day. Take the opportunity to discuss preparation and planning, assessment and other behind-the-scenes work a teacher performs. Ask students to compare this to another job they know about—perhaps that of a parent or friend.

Teachers in History

- Encourage students to plan and host an event such as a morning tea, special assembly or school picnic. Ask teachers to invite their own school teachers or older community members to speak to students about the changes that have taken place in schools and the teaching profession.
- Challenge students to discover some famous teachers in history. How do they compare to the fictional teachers they researched in the section above?

Teachers in the Future

- Ask students if they think teachers will ever be replaced by robots or computers. Have students collaborate on a story-writing piece about a robot who takes their class while you are on holiday. Ask them to think about what could go wrong and what they might enjoy. Students could work in groups to dramatise and record their stories for the rest of the class. Perhaps their 'movies' could premiere in the staffroom as part of World Teachers' Day celebrations.

Teachers Around the World

- Ask students to use the internet to discover how teachers are recognised and celebrated in other countries. Wikipedia has a table students may find useful for getting started at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Teachers%27_Day. Download the *Teachers Around the World* blackline master from the Teacher Toolkit for students to complete as they research.

Teachers to Celebrate

- Have students survey the school population. How many languages are represented at the school? Challenge students to learn to say thank you in each language and then thank teachers they have regular contact with on World Teachers' Day. Download the *Translations* blackline master for students to record their findings on.
- Work with school staff, the local community, and perhaps the local historical society to stage an exhibition of schooling through the ages. Old uniforms, textbooks, work samples, photos and the like could be displayed by the students. Invite staff to attend the opening as part of a student-hosted afternoon tea to celebrate World Teachers' Day at your school.

Other People Who Help Us

- Ask students to list jobs that get done either at home or in the classroom. How are tasks allocated? Do students think the system is fair? Ask them to imagine what would happen if someone did not do their allotted tasks—eg no-one went to buy food or household rubbish was not removed. Challenge students to write a story about the consequences of everyone not doing their share.
- Challenge students to think about the job they may have one day. Ask them to investigate how they would become qualified for the job, where they would work, special tools and equipment required and the sort of tasks they would perform. Students could prepare multimedia presentations on their chosen professions. Have them write invitations to people working in these professions. Depending on accessibility, students could invite them to speak to the class, ask if students could visit their workplace or ask specific questions they would like answered by mail.
- Discuss safety at work and look at pieces of safety equipment from a variety of workplaces. Challenge students to think of an imaginary or futuristic profession and to design safety equipment and clothing for it. Ask students to present their designs and justify their choices.
- View the video at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kvf29R7nXIM> which shows the high-tech production line required to manufacture a memory card. Discuss with students the roles of both machines and people in the process. Do students think that production could occur without either the machines or the people? Challenge them to justify their answers. Can students visualise a time when machines will do everything that humans find too difficult or boring? Students could complete a piece of creative writing which describes such a world and the consequences for people—both positive and negative.
- Discuss the important role that volunteers play in our community. Have students look at some of the volunteering websites online. Why do these organisations need volunteers instead of employing people to do the work? What would happen if no-one volunteered in their community? Challenge students to think of things they could volunteer to do for the local community.

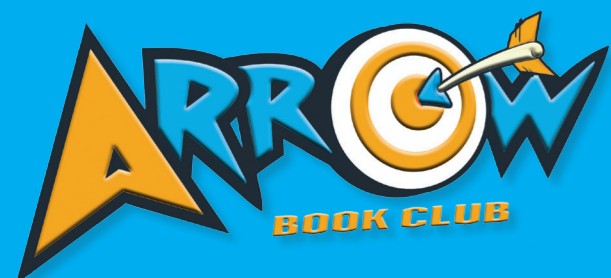


Resources available in School Essentials

- *Behind the News Atlas Pack + CD*, page 205
- *Kids Inspirational Posters*, page 253
- *Character Traits Mini Posters*, page 254

Free Teacher Toolkit Resources available at www.scholastic.co.nz/toolkit

- *Character Profile* blackline master
- *Teachers Around the World* blackline master
- *Translations* blackline master



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