

# Introduction

Teaching has always been a part of a spirited debate leading to transformation. Teaching is arguably more than imparting information; however, that wasn't always the case. In 1904 a Nobel Prize was awarded to Pavlov for his discovery of conditioned reflexes. Educators jumped at that idea as a useful model for teaching.

A question was the stimulus and a rote response was elicited and rewarded.

Three years later, Maria Montessori opened her Children's House to inculcate more than rote memorization. She stressed social interaction as a crucial part of education.

In 1909 John Dewey published his seminal theory 'How We Think,' but the truth is that we still do not know how we think. Perhaps we all think differently and that is not such a bad idea at all. A year later, Lewis Turman wrote 'The Measurement of Intelligence.' Today we still do not know how to measure intelligence. Perhaps there are various forms of intelligence. How do we measure creativity in a youngster? Is creativity a form of intelligence? Remember that Albert Einstein, a Nobel Prize winner in 1921, didn't fit in properly and dropped out of high school, only to change the world years later. Teaching is a living, changing art. It is not a one-size-fits-all endeavor.

In 1942 I was a mere toddler. That year Anne Frank was forced to leave school and go into hiding. She was not the only one. People yearned for an education, but were denied one based on religion and race. Imagine how she would have welcomed an open and free education. I was starting school when she was scrounging around for food while hiding from government-approved goons. My own parents managed to get a single year of schooling before they had to run and dodge, successfully I might add, the Nazi horror machine. They always remembered and referred to their teacher and the kindness she managed to bring to the classroom despite the political

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terror and savagery all around her. Education was appreciated. Teachers were given respect. Today, the tide has turned in many schools. Well-intentioned teachers often face student apathy and lack of respect. This complicates the job immensely.

Such students divert precious time and resources from those students who come to class prepared to learn. Students who resist teachers' efforts, who consider schooling an annoying sidebar, and who disrupt the class require intervention from school psychologists, counselors, tutors, mentors and other specialists. Educators reach out to such students and try to bring them into the mainstream, but often efforts fail. These students cannot be abandoned since doing so will sentence them to a life of lost opportunities. This, I believe, is one of the major challenges confronting educators.

In 1994 the U.S. Congress passed the Educate America Act. It was designed to set goals and objectives to be achieved by the year 2000. Most of the stated goals were never achieved. Abraham Lincoln once said that saying a goat has five legs doesn't make it so. That applies to the goals set forth in the Act—i.e., by the year 2000, U.S. students will be first in the world in mathematics and science achievement. Okay, if you say so.

One achievable goal that should have been included is that all teachers will start each school day by reading one funny cartoon and have a good chuckle before they go to class. It's a stress buster, and to that end I offer this cartoon collection.

—Aaron Bacall