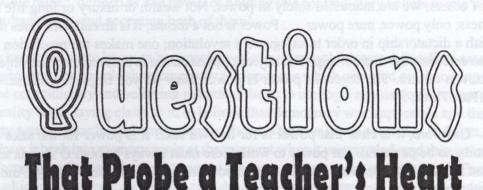
HUMOUR



By Myo Han

An online ELT journal recently carried an article that poses questions that help teachers explore their values, morals and beliefs. As we are expected to set a good example for students, it is of paramount importance to conduct ourselves well. I found some interesting questions that apply to our work. You will see my answers to these questions.

Question: If your student can't take an exam because his relative just died, what

would you do?

Answer: I would give him a make-up exam. I would even consider giving him

some extra marks to lessen his suffering. I shouldn't disturb his time of

mourning by refusing him a make-up exam.

Question: If your student doesn't say a word in his oral test, would you give him a

very low score?

Answer: No. That'd be unbecoming of a helpful teacher. I would let him get through.

It would be better not to hear anything than hear things unintelligible.

Question: One of your students is late for class again. What would you tell him?

I would not even let him in because his late arrival might roust some

punctual students from their slumbers. I would definitely shut him out.

Question: So you wouldn't take action against those who habitually sleep in your

class?

Answer: I wouldn't. As teachers, we should be caring. The kids must be very tired

after their hard work such as playing online games. They need a rest.

Question: Some students are using their native language, instead of English in your

English class. Would you stop them and totally ban the use of their mother

tongue?

Answer:

QUESTIONS THAT PROBE A TEACHER'S HEART

Answer: It seems they don't have enough practice of using their own language. I

would tell them how impressed I am with their fluency in their mother tongue. A teacher shouldn't fail to recognize such a brilliant display of flair in their first language. What would be more important than their

mother tongue?

Question: When a student shows his doubt about your grammar, would you respond

angrily?

Answer: Teachers are not expected to be angry towards their students. They have

had enough of wailing and gnashing of teeth from some teachers. I would politely tell the doubting student that it is not wrong. It is just an alternative

grammatical usage.

Question: You are not a non-native speaker of English. Some students in your English

class are making fun of your English accent. How would you respond?

Answer: I would tell them to get used to my accent. We have seen enough of

people putting on an accent, which is more baffling than impressive. I would encourage them to speak English naturally to maintain their

identity. Nothing is worse than a phony accent.

Question: If your student is complaining about your not being available for advising

in your office, how would you respond to him?

Answer: The student must be ignorant of the fact that we, teachers, are always

busy playing games and looking for things that delight us on the Internet. I would tell the student that all he needs is not advising, but enlightenment

about what teachers do.

Question: Mobile phones are banned in your English class. But some students are

now using them. What would you do?

Answer: I would rather use these students for my telephone conversation lesson

than confiscate their phones. I would have them speak to one another on the phone in English until the end of the class. That would be a truly

authentic language lesson.

Question: A student is cheating in an exam, what would you do?

Answer: In fact, I am to blame. I am expected to prevent him from cheating. But I

failed. So I would turn a blind eye.

Question: If some students are spelling and pronouncing your name wrongly, would

you penalize them?

Answer: To error is human, forgive divine. They have got to spell and pronounce

so many terribly difficult English words. They have had enough.

Question: You are invigilating an exam with some other teachers. Two teachers are taking a nap while the exam is still in progress. Would you report this to the exam supervisor?

Answer: No, I wouldn't. It is better to leave the lethargic invigilators alone. They might talk when they are awake, which will certainly disturb the students.

Now, how do you rate my answers? Joking aside, the everyday life of a teacher is never easy. Teaching is the only profession that keeps the teacher busy with the schoolwork even at home. Teachers are somewhat like football players. They can't rest. They are kept on their toes. And what is more, they can't make mistakes, even a single one, which can cost them dear. They are treading the delicate path that can land them in serious trouble at any time. All the virtuous things they have done throughout will come to nought once they commit a single blunder, like one of the greatest football players in the recent Football World Cup who head butted his opponent. To err is human, forgive divine?

(The writer's note: This column is merely the writer's wild outpouring with no intent to poke fun at the expense of anyone.)

(About the Writer: An MA (TESL) holder with a strong interest in CALL, occasionally writes academic and humor articles. His URL is http://www.freewebs.com/laughatfirstsite.)