

What makes a good teacher? I have had a lot of good teachers, and all of them had different teaching styles and methods. However, they all had one thing in common. They were good communicators. I believe that a person must have good communication skills if they want to be a successful teacher. The only problem is you cannot grade communication in a classroom. You cannot tell if someone has good communication skills by looking at test grades. The only way to tell if someone can communicate well is by watching them. The same thing applies for teachers. The only way to know if someone is a good teacher is to watch them teach. Malcolm Gladwell's proposal of how to select and keep good teachers is a good idea.

Most successful teachers form relationships with their kids. When a teacher forms a relationship with his or her students, the students become more open to what their teacher has to say. Successful teachers form relationships, and successful relationships come from good communication. Being able to communicate well with others is very important, and vital to the learning process. A person that communicates well is more respected than a person who does not. A person who communicates well can present things clearly to other people. Students learn better when they can communicate with their teacher. Unfortunately, it is hard to learn good communication skills in the classroom. You cannot tell if a person has good communication skills by looking at standardized test scores. The same applies for degrees or certifications. Just because a person has a teaching degree or certification does not mean that they will be good at teaching. It just means they took classes on it. There are some skills that can only be learned outside of the classroom. Some people have them and some do not. In Malcolm Gladwell's article, the people who possessed these skills were said to have "withitness." The only way to observe if someone has good communication skills is to watch them communicate. Therefore, the only way to know if someone will be good at teaching is to watch them teach.

To find good teachers, there needs to be a large pool of teachers to observe and evaluate. The best teachers can then be picked out of the pool. However, there is a problem with this idea. The standards that are set for teachers are very high. With standards that are so high, how can you go about hiring a lot of teachers? These standards also cause another problem. What if there is a person out there who is a great communicator but does not score well on standardized tests? In our current system, that person would be ruled out as a possibility. But if we are looking for effective teachers, that person should be given a chance. The way to fix this problem is to lower some of the standards for teachers. This would create a larger pool of teachers to observe.

People who oppose the idea of hiring more teachers to find better teachers say that it is just too expensive. Where is the money for hiring more teachers going to come from? The answer is the taxpayers. A lot of people do not want to pay more money to hire more teachers. A solution to this problem is to pay teachers that have proven themselves as effective more, and pay teachers that have not proven themselves less. This would require our current system of paying teachers to change. Teachers are paid based on the numbers of years they have been working and their education level. Pay is not based on performance. Teacher Unions would be reluctant to change the current pay system. They think that our current system is working fine. I disagree. According to Eric Hanushek, an economist at Stanford, the United States is below average in academic performance. Can we really say that our education system is

working just fine when we are below average? Can the United States be a world leader and have a below average education system at the same time? The answer is no. Something needs to change. Finding better teachers is a way to improve this problem. Mr. Hanushek believes that the United States can improve its academic performance ranking by finding teachers that are closer to our average. He says that a student will learn about a half a years worth of material from a bad teacher, and about a year and a half worth of material from a good teacher. Mr. Hanushek believes that by finding more teachers that are closer to average, the United States can greatly improve its academic performance ranking.

There are some skills that you can not learn in a book. These skills can not be graded in a classroom or hung on an office wall in a frame. These skills need to be observed if you want to find out if somebody has them. If you want to know if somebody is a good teacher, watch them teach. Hiring a lot of teachers and observing them is a good way to find good teachers.