

Life Lessons: exploring the broader life lessons from people’s school days and the lasting impact teachers have: a survey on behalf of Get Into Teaching

Introduction

Kindred Agency commissioned research company Censuswide to carry out a survey on behalf of the *Get Into Teaching* campaign exploring the views of the adult population in England. The purpose of the survey was to gain further insights into people’s broader life lessons from their school days, the meaningful interaction with their teachers, as well as some of the lighter moments they remember.

Findings from the survey were used to inform campaign development and marketing, in particular public relations activity to position teaching as an opportunity for those looking for a fulfilling and rewarding career option. Press releases based on the main survey findings were proactively shared with target national and regional media for publication. These releases included information about how those considering a career in teaching can find out more.

Methodology

The research was conducted by Censuswide in accordance with the [MRS Code of Conduct \(2019\)](#) between 16th March and 21st March 2022. The aim was to gain a representative sample of 2,000 people in England (18+), excluding teachers and trainee teachers. The final response was 2,036. Respondents were asked a set of single answer and multi-answer questions. All responses were gathered using an online survey and individuals were recruited via a random and anonymous sample selection, from an online “double opt-in” panel (where all eligible respondents are required to answer the demographic screening questions again to take part in the survey) of the general public in England.

The Censuswide panel was originally recruited via sampling specialists and since has grown organically. Panellists can opt to answer all surveys but will be filtered out if a survey is not relevant to them. Panellists are also invited to participate in surveys via a newsletter. Censuswide employs members of the [Market Research Society](#) and its research activity abides by the [ESOMAR](#) principles.

The way these surveys were built meant that respondents were asked a number of preliminary screening questions to gather their demographic data, which could be used to analyse the data. This demographic data included age group, gender, work status, city and region.

Questions were based on a range of topics and themes including:

- The kind of life lessons people feel they learnt from their schoolteachers
- The extent to which people reminisce about their school days with friends, including some of the lighter moments
- Whether people wish they had expressed more gratitude to their teachers for their positive impact
- What people would say to their former teachers if they had the opportunity now
- What advice people would give to their teenage selves if they could
- Whether people know someone who they think would make a good teacher

In the survey, we are working with a 3.09% margin of error (and a 95% confidence interval), which means that if the research were to be repeated, we would expect the percentages to differ no more than 3% either way from the current results data.

Summary findings

Respondents were asked to think back to their school days and to what extent they agreed or disagreed with the following statement: *“My teacher/s helped prepare me for the wider world”*: 13% said strongly agree, 30% said agree, 24% said neither agree nor disagree, 22% said disagree, and 12% said strongly disagree.

When asked which, if any, statements about the impact their teacher/s made on their lives applied to them, respondents answered as follows: 21% said my teacher/s motivated me to push myself; 18% said my teacher/s built my confidence and helped me to believe in myself; 17% said my teacher/s encouraged me to question things around me; 17% said my teacher/s guided me through some challenging times; 14% said my teacher/s influenced my life for the better; 14% said my teacher/s brought out the best in me; 14% said my teacher/s broadened my horizons and outlook on the world; 12% said my teacher/s influenced my career choices; 11% said my teacher/s taught me how to exercise patience; 10% my teacher/s helped me to find my voice; 10% said my teacher/s positively shaped the perceptions that I have of myself; and 39% said none of the above.

Asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed with the following statement: *“Reminiscing about our school days is a popular topic of conversation when catching up with old school friends”*: 16% said strongly agree, 35% said agree, 17% said neither agree nor disagree, 8% said somewhat disagree, and 4% said strongly disagree. 20% of respondents stated that they do not catch up with old school friends.

Respondents were asked, when thinking back to their school days, to what extent they agreed or disagreed with the following statement: *“During lessons, I used to enjoy the lighter moments and funny things that would happen in class, alongside the learning”*: 20% said strongly agree, 45% said agree, 20% said neither agree nor disagree, 6% said somewhat disagree, and 4% said strongly disagree. Additionally, 6% of respondents stated they did not remember.

When asked if, on reflection, there were times at school when they wished they had expressed more gratitude for the efforts of their teacher/s and the positive impact they were making, respondents answered as follows: 19% said yes definitely; 36% said yes maybe; 22% said no not really; and 13% said no definitely not. Additionally, 11% of respondents said they didn’t know.

Respondents were asked if they had the opportunity to say something to their favourite teacher/s, what would they be more likely to say (top five answers): 18% said I'm grateful for you having such a good sense of humour with us / the pupils; 18% said I should have paid more attention to what you said; 16% said I admired what you did; 15% said you helped me realise I'm capable of more than I thought; 15% said I'm grateful you continued to believe in me; 14% said I'm still using skills you taught me; 13% said you saw something in me that I didn't see in myself; 12% said I've never forgotten a piece of advice/guidance you gave me; 12% said you helped me realise I'm more resilient than I ever thought I could be; 12% said I'm sorry I/we acted up on occasions; 11% said I'm sorry for how cheeky I used to be; 9% said you made me feel like anything is possible; 9% you opened my eyes to my full potential; and 9% said I wouldn't be where I am now without you. Additionally, 21% said they didn't or don't have a favourite teacher; 7% said they would say nothing; 3% said they were unsure and less than 1% said "other".

Asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed with the following statement: *"Thinking about the person I have become, there are many meaningful life lessons that I learnt from my schoolteachers that go way beyond the classroom"*: 12% said strongly agree, 31% said agree, 32% said neither agree nor disagree, 14% said disagree, and 12% said strongly disagree.

Respondents were asked which, if any, meaningful life lessons they learnt from their schoolteachers and from a range of statements answered as follows: 23% said "mistakes provide valuable learning opportunities"; 21% said "you can achieve and become anything you set your mind to"; 20% said "you have to make the most of each opportunity that presents itself to you"; 20% said "trust in your instinct and remain true to yourself"; 20% said the importance of being loyal and honest was something their teacher left them with; 18% said "we all have the potential to make differences in the lives of those around us"; 17% said "there are aspects of life that are beyond our control"; and 15% said "differences should be embraced". Additionally, 32% said they had not learned any from the options above, and less than 1% said "other".

Respondents were asked what things, if anything, can they now reflect on about their teachers and from a range of statements answered: 29% said my teachers were just trying to do the best for me and my classmates; 23% said my teachers put in a lot of thought, time and effort into every lesson; 22% said having a laugh from time to time with my teachers in the classroom really helped to strengthen my relationship with them; 21% said my teachers have feelings, and I should have been more considerate of this; 21% said my teachers helped lots of other people around me too; 20% said my teachers were just pushing me to do my best; 17% said my teachers were a great source of knowledge and prepared me for life beyond the classroom; 16% said my teachers put the students first during the school day; and 13% said my teachers actually didn't want to be telling me off. Additionally, 26% said none of the statements applied to them, and less than 1% said "other".

Respondents were asked what, if any, advice would they give if they had the opportunity to write a letter to their teenage selves, and from a range of statements answered as follows: 30% said school years are some of the best years of your life – enjoy it; 27% school years set you up with the foundations for life – pay attention; 26% make the most of the support and guidance from your teachers; 25% don't waste this opportunity for your teacher/s to help you to achieve; 25% be considerate to your teachers, they want the best for you; 24% said remember to thank your teachers, you'll appreciate everything they are doing to support you; 20% said ask your teacher how they are, they're human too; 17% said don't wind up your teachers – they have a job to do. In addition, 23% said none, and 2% said "other".

Finally, respondents were asked if they knew someone who they think would make a great teacher, but isn't doing it as a career at the moment, and answered as follows: 23% said yes, definitely; 26% said yes, maybe; and 51% said no.

The city-based statistical variations report:

City-based data	Birmingham	Bradford	Brighton	Bristol	Hull	Leeds	Leicester	Liverpool	Manchester	Newcastle	Norwich	Nottingham	Oxford	Plymouth	Sheffield	Southampton
Number of respondents per city in the overall sample	172	101	103	100	101	101	100	101	148	101	101	102	100	100	100	101
Respondents who wish* they had expressed more gratitude to their teacher/s for the positive impact they were making	46%	69%	39%	45%	81%	52%	71%	56%	46%	52%	55%	54%	69%	52%	53%	46%
Respondents who agree** that reminiscing about their school days is a popular topic of conversation when catching up with old school friends	41%	61%	46%	46%	74%	44%	70%	58%	39%	48%	41%	50%	63%	42%	47%	52%
Respondents who agree** that, when thinking about the person they have become, there are many meaningful life lessons they learnt from their schoolteachers that go way beyond the classroom	35%	60%	34%	38%	69%	39%	64%	47%	34%	44%	36%	41%	51%	32%	36%	38%
Respondents who cited a life lesson they learnt from their teacher/s as: <i>You can achieve and become anything you set your mind to</i>	22%	20%	14%	19%	19%	20%	25%	25%	22%	22%	22%	23%	28%	21%	13%	21%

Respondents who cited a life lesson they learnt from their teacher/s as: <i>Trust in your instinct and remain true to yourself</i>	16%	29%	14%	13%	30%	17%	20%	23%	18%	23%	20%	19%	23%	18%	18%	19%
Respondents who agree ** that their teacher/s helped prepare them for the wider world	37%	58%	41%	36%	70%	38%	59%	32%	36%	42%	39%	41%	61%	32%	34%	34%
Respondents who when asked about impact answered: <i>My teacher/s motivated me to push myself</i>	17%	28%	14%	21%	25%	26%	23%	20%	18%	17%	25%	16%	21%	22%	27%	25%
Respondents who when asked about impact answered: <i>My teacher/s built my confidence and helped me to believe in myself</i>	18%	22%	17%	15%	22%	15%	25%	23%	15%	21%	17%	19%	20%	12%	20%	11%
Respondents who when asked about impact answered: <i>My teacher/s guided me through some challenging times</i>	12%	24%	11%	15%	24%	13%	24%	19%	14%	17%	17%	12%	21%	21%	19%	13%
Respondents who agree** that, thinking back to lessons, they used to enjoy the lighter moments and funny things that would happen in class, alongside the learning	56%	77%	65%	58%	63%	62%	62%	76%	58%	66%	61%	66%	70%	70%	63%	69%

The regional statistical variations report:

Regional-based data	East of England	Greater London	East Midlands	West Midlands	North East	North West	South East	South West	Yorkshire and the Humber
<i>Number of respondents per region in the overall sample</i>	189	115	237	189	101	231	372	234	375
Respondents who wish* they had expressed more gratitude to their teacher/s for the positive impact they were making	51%	50%	59%	46%	53%	51%	55%	50%	66%
Respondents who agree** that reminiscing about their school days is a popular topic of conversation when catching up with old school friends	44%	54%	53%	44%	49%	47%	54%	44%	58%
Respondents who agree** that, when thinking about the person they have become, there are many meaningful life lessons they learnt from their schoolteachers that go way beyond the classroom	37%	44%	46%	40%	44%	39%	40%	35%	53%
Respondents who cited a life lesson they learnt from their teacher/s as: <i>You can achieve and become anything you set your mind to</i>	22%	15%	20%	25%	21%	21%	21%	22%	19%
Respondents who cited a life lesson they learnt from their teacher/s as: <i>Trust in your instinct and remain true to yourself</i>	21%	20%	15%	17%	24%	19%	19%	16%	25%

Respondents who agree ** that their teacher/s helped prepare them for the wider world	35%	56%	43%	38%	44%	34%	46%	33%	53%
Respondents who when asked about impact answered: <i>My teacher/s motivated me to push myself</i>	25%	14%	18%	19%	18%	18%	19%	21%	27%
Respondents who when asked about impact answered: <i>My teacher/s built my confidence and helped me to believe in myself</i>	16%	12%	20%	20%	21%	16%	17%	13%	21%
Respondents who when asked about impact answered: <i>My teacher/s guided me through some challenging times</i>	17%	10%	15%	14%	17%	15%	18%	16%	21%
Respondents who agree** that, thinking back to lessons, they used to enjoy the lighter moments and funny things that would happen in class, alongside the learning	63%	55%	62%	56%	65%	67%	71%	63%	68%

*This finding combines respondents who said ‘yes, definitely’ or ‘yes, maybe’

** This finding combines respondents who said ‘strongly agree’ or ‘agree’