



My moments...

Award-winning teacher Nicki Bovey shares some career defining classroom episodes...

THE MOMENT I...

...chose to become a teacher

At school the careers advisor said I had the skills to become a prison officer or a social worker – I thought 'teacher' ticked both those boxes! But seriously, it was in my second year of my chemistry degree, when I realised that I loved the subject and had spent a lot of time teaching others: coaching my mum for her GCSE maths; supporting a friend's daughter with her French; and helping out at various youth clubs. Therefore, teaching seemed the obvious choice. My dad was a teacher and did try to dissuade me, so perhaps it was a little rebellion as well!

...knew I'd reached a previously unreachable pupil

It took a crane and a fire engine – but we got there eventually! In my second year I had a real battle with a student who spent a lot of her time outside my classroom due to poor behaviour. When she found out I was leaving, she came up to me in tears, saying that I couldn't go, because although I often sent her out of the classroom, I was the only teacher that at least wanted her back in again!

...first got positive feedback from students

This was when my Y10 tutor group in my first school said I had lasted the longest out of any tutor they had had (I had been in the role for less than half a year and I was their seventh...) I felt quite proud that I had survived longer than many.

FACT FILE

NAME: NICKI BOVEY
AGE: 37
JOB TITLE: HEAD OF CHEMISTRY
SCHOOL: SALTASH.NET COMMUNITY SCHOOL

THE BEST BIT:

WORKING WITH STUDENTS WHO DON'T ALREADY HAVE PRECONCEIVED IDEAS ABOUT HOW EVERYTHING SHOULD BE; WATCHING THEM 'GET' A CONCEPT AND FEEL REALLY PLEASED WITH THEMSELVES.

THE WORST BIT:

THAT THOSE WITHOUT ANY TEACHING EXPERIENCE CAN BE PUT IN CHARGE OF OUR EDUCATION SYSTEM.

NICKI BOVEY
 WAS NAMED SCIENCE TEACHER OF THE YEAR AT THE 2011 PEARSON TEACHING AWARDS.
 FIND OUT MORE AT TEACHINGAWARDS.COM

... considered giving it all up

This used to happen regularly! During my first year I would often cry on my way in or home from work, due to the challenging behaviour and feeling such a failure. However, it did teach me some great behaviour strategies. My current school is very different. Now, I only consider giving it all up, when I hear another announcement is on the way from a certain education minister...

...got so lost in a lesson, time ceased to exist

I quite often get totally caught up in whatever I'm teaching. In fact, I am thankful we do have bells, otherwise I would regularly eat into break time. It normally involves a chemical reaction, but the last lesson that overran was one where we ended up discussing thalidomide, which is a drug that contains an optical isomer.

... found myself being taught by the class

The students regularly remind me to laugh at myself and not to take life too seriously. However with the Internet and TV providing such great information and interesting, well-researched programmes, almost every lesson I teach, I find that pupils are bringing me new information and asking some brilliant questions.

...learned to watch my language!

As a student teacher in a rural school, I found a group of Y10 rugby lads were not getting on with the practical I'd set them. So I told them in a stern voice, 'Come on boys, get your equipment out!' To which, as I should have predicted, they replied, grinning, 'Alright, Miss, if you insist!' Whilst pretending to unzip their trousers. I of course went bright red – and I haven't used the phrase since...