

An African Teaching in a British School



I still remember when I first started teaching. If anyone told me I would have been doing it for almost 5 years (as at the time of writing this book), I would have laughed them off. Or maybe just politely smiled in silent denial.

I seriously did not think I could make it to the end of one year, talk more of five years, without losing my job or getting a record because I smacked a kid who was being naughty. Speaking to my fellow African friends on being a teacher in the UK, they usually let me know it is a job they would never do for this same reason. They might be jailed for hitting a child. And you too probably have heard some stories of parents going to jail or the police being called for smacking their own children! Or even children calling the police on their parents to protest their apparent innocence.

Some of my British friends have told me before, “I’d never touch teaching with a barge pole.” Or, “I’d never teach for a

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gold coin.” Me neither. Not sure how those two have anything to do with each other.

Anyway.

Let me tell you a story of a near miss I had in my first year of teaching. I had one of my classes do an end of topic test. And if you are in the know, tests can be a way of getting respite from talking and managing behaviour while keeping the kids in the classroom and not wandering on the corridors.

Well, some children seemed to not understand the conditions under which tests should be done. Whether or not the tests mattered to their end of year grades or reports was irrelevant. Test and exam conditions of absolute silence needed to be upheld! Even at gunpoint!!

I had told this one child to be quiet so many times, I was getting frustrated. I could feel my blood pressure rising. And so, my *Africanness* kicked in. Before my brain could fully process what I was about to do, my body had gotten out of my seat with my right hand leading the way to do only what a typical African person knows needs to be done to reinforce earlier instructions. And reset a wayward child’s brain.

But God is good. He sped up the process for my conscious mind to catch up with my body and tell it to go back and sit down. Thankfully for this child and for me if I might add, he was on the opposite side of the classroom. So, I had enough time to catch myself and do a 180-degree about-turn and push my behind back to my seat.

~~Headline of the day:~~ UK kid saved from African teacher by mere inches!