



## The Pursuit of Christian Education: Overflow and the not so Inspiring Spanish Teacher.

In my first few years of teaching, I taught Spanish. I was not a good Spanish teacher, and my students knew it. It was the kind of teaching where the teacher said things and students did activities, but learning was minimal.

I could not speak Spanish. I had never been to Spain or any Spanish-speaking countries. I did not know or understand the Spanish culture and I could not even name a football player from Spain. However, I had a book and a cassette that was provided by my school and the day before I taught a lesson, I positioned the tape to the correct 'count' on the tape deck and listened to the lesson I would lead the next day and go through the teaching guide. I was not an inspiring teacher of Spanish.

All things 'Spanish' occurred during the half-hour compulsory 'second language learning' time that my students were required to participate in. They were visually represented on a small corner classroom display with a few Spanish words and their English equivalents. I do not believe any of my students fell in love with the Spanish language or culture because of my feeble, uncharismatic attempt to 'do' the compulsory Spanish lessons.

It is easy to imagine a better Spanish teacher.

Imagine a teacher who LOVES the Spanish culture and language. Someone passionate and experienced with fiesta and siesta. Someone who oozes all that is Spanish. It is their overflow. It is a discharge from the heart, and not just a transaction from the brain. In their class, not only will they have a passion-driven half-hour compulsory lesson where the language is brought to life, but the whole class will be illuminated through a Spanish lens. English words with Spanish origins will be presented with pride, that they come from the great land of Spain and not only have an English meaning, but that they mean so much more in Spanish. Seasons of Fiesta will be brought to life in the class, and food will be an essential part of the Spanish saturated environment.

There is a significant difference between teaching something and bringing something to life in the classroom.

In Christian education, there are both inspiring and uninspiring Spanish teachers, but they are teaching something that has an eternal significance. All teachers, in fact, all 'big' people in Christian schools, model through action and word what it means to live sold out for Christ, what it means to be a Christian, and how the Bible, prayer, forgiveness and more are central to that journey.

A teacher in a Christian school does not need to hold a degree in divinity, but they need love and overflow all that it is to be Christian. As the inspiring Spanish teacher saturates their classroom with all things Spanish, the teacher in a Christian School must saturate their classroom with who God is, and His Word should always be on our tongue. All that we teach should be marinated in who He is and who He has created us to be.

So how does a teacher overflow? It begins with filling. Filling our lives with all He is. And there is no substitute for a Christian teacher spending time in prayer and His Word.

Here are some starter sentences that could help release the overflow of who God is and what we are learning in His Word to our students...

- Before we start today, I have to share this verse I read this morning with you all....
- Last night, when I was praying for this class, I had a real sense that...
- I have been thinking about [insert Biblical character name] recently and it reminds me to...
- Isn't it interesting that this is also what the Bible has been telling us for years?
- In our school, one of the Scriptures they memorise is John 3:30, 'He must increase, and I must decrease'... and I have been thinking about that lately...

In Christian education, our calling is not fulfilled in just telling our students about the goodness of God, but in modelling a life sold out to all He is and all He has called us to be. Overflow is the natural consequence of all we fill ourselves with. Overflow is authentic, intentional and spontaneous. Overflow reassures and models to students that prayer and the Scriptures are relevant and important. Overflow results in students wanting to mimic the teacher's behaviour.

There is a difference between a teacher who teaches in a Christian School and a Christian educator; overflow is a big part of that difference.

So, if overflow is important in Christian education and if overflow is a consequence of continuous filling, how are you filling your life with the goodness of God?

Blessings for your pursuit of authentic and intentional Christian Education.

Brooker.