The Emperor’s Club (2002) – This movie is about making a difference, learning from history, and making poor choices. The story takes place at St. Benedict’s School for Boys, which is an Ivy League prep school located on the east coast and is the training ground for the future educational, political, and leaders of the country. Mr. William Hundert (Kevin Kline) is the Western Civilization Classics teacher at St. Benedict and he tries whole heartily to instill in his students character and integrity, virtue, civic duty, morality and ethics. He is fond of telling them things like, “A man’s character is his fate” and “ambition and conquest without contribution are without significance.” Mr. Hundert eventually encounters a student, Sedgewick Bell, who is arrogant, cynical and an academic slacker. After meeting with Sedgewick’s father, who is an influential senator but lacks character and integrity, Mr. Hundert decides to reach out to Sedgewick. In an effort to help Sedgewick achieve academic excellence, Mr. Hundert encourages him to take part in the prestigious Julius Caesar competition. Wanting to reward Sedgewick for his academic turnaround Mr. Hundert changes the grade on his final quiz so that he will rank high enough to be a finalist in the competition. After Mr. Hundert catches Sedgewick cheating during the competition Sedgewick reverts back to his cynical and underachieving ways. Twenty-five years later Sedgewick, now a rich and successful businessman, tries to redeem himself by inviting Mr. Hundert and his classmates to a rematch of the competition.

Patch Adams (1998) – is a based on a true story of a dedicated and unconventional doctor who challenged the traditional wisdom of his teachers and the medical establishment. Hunter “Patch” Adams (Robin Williams) is a very idealistic medical student who believes that doctors should treat the patient as well as the disease. Patch who checked himself into a psychiatric hospital because of his suicidal tendencies soon discovered that he has the talents to help lessen people’s suffering through humor, understanding and compassion. After checking himself out of the hospital Patch enrolls in medical school. This whole movie centers on how Patch transforms the mental health, even if there is nothing that he can do about the physical health, of his terminally ill patients by donning a red nose, which was formerly a enema bulb and clown shoes formerly used as bed pans to entertain them and make them laugh. The moral of the story is that the “humanness” needs to be put back into to human medicine.

Dangerous Minds (1995) – is a movie about an ex-marine who becomes an English teacher at a tough inner city high school in Northern California. On the first day of school LouAnne Johnson (Michelle Pfeiffer) interr a classroom filled with hostile, rejected students who have totally closed their minds to learning. After being mocked and ridiculed on her first day of class by her students LouAnne returns on the second day with a new set of teaching strategies compliments of the Marine Corps instead of the academy. Though a tough yet caring and creative approach to teaching LouAnne soon transforms these lackluster learners into eager beaver scholars. One way that she accomplishes this formidable task is through introducing them to poetry by way of Bob Dylan’s, Mr. Tambourine Man and advancing to works by Thomas Dylan. Dangerous Minds depicts how a teacher can be both mentor and friend and how students who have been labeled underachievers can blossom under the right tutelage.

The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie (1969) – “I am a teacher first, last, and always” is Miss Jean Brodie’s (Maggie Smith) mantra through out this movie. Miss Brodie is a history teacher at a conservative private all girls school in Edinburgh, Scotland in 1932. As a teacher Miss Brodie is full of passion for teaching her students to be aware of all of the possibilities of life, of beauty, courage and of art.
However, her romantic ideas about art and her unconventional teaching methods are often in direct conflict with that of the headmistress’, Miss Mackay. For instances, while her colleagues are having lunch together in the commons, Miss Brodie can be found outside picnicking with her students and teaching them the beauty of poetry. This movie portrays how a brazen teacher unabashedly prides herself in the molding of young minds and on creating the next generation of culturally refine women. This movie also brilliantly illustrates how a mentoring relationship between a teacher and her students can go awry.

**Up the Down Staircase** (1967) – This movie is about Sylvia Barrett’s (Sandy Dennis) first semester as a literature teacher in a New York inner city high school. Despite the fact that Miss Barrett’s class is overcrowded, there is no chalk to write with or books to read, and the administration is mainly concerned with forms, rules and regulation, Miss Barrett reaches many of her students by giving them a voice (through a suggestion box) and by trying to understand who they are as people and as learners. Although this movie has a similar plot to many of the other movies that are centered on teaching, the way that it differs is that it does not portray Miss Barrett as the savior of all of these students. For example, a promising student still drops out of school, a troubled young woman still tries to commit suicide, and a bright but disturbed student misunderstands Miss Barrett’s interest in him.

**Goodbye, Mr. Chips** (1939) – This movie spans sixty-three years of Charles (Mr. Chips) Chippings’ teaching career at a private and prestigious all boys’ boarding school in England. When Mr. Chips arrives at Brookfield in 1870 as a Latin teacher he is inexperienced and too meek to control his unruly students. Trying to gain control over his classroom Mr. Chips becomes a strict disciplinarian and as a result is the most disliked teacher at the school and is passed over for the promotion of housemaster because that position requires the housemaster to have a good rapport with the students. However, through a love interest that Mr. Chips finds along the way he is transformed into a wonderful teacher by learning to use humor in his teaching and by becoming less rigid and authoritarian when interacting with the boys. After many years of teaching Mr. Chips is asked by the headmaster to retire because his teaching methods have fallen out of fashion, Mr. Chips replies “Give a boy a sense of humor and a sense of proportion, and he’ll stand to do anything.” Although *Goodbye, Mr. Chips* is a very dated film, it is a heart-warming story of a man who has dedicated his life to the nurturing and development of several generations of young men. In fact, while Mr. Chips is lying on his deathbed he overhears someone say that he never had any children and Mr. Chips responses is, “…but you are wrong, I have had thousands of them, all boys.”

**To Sir, With Love** (1966) - Mark Thackeray (Sidney Poitier) is an out of work engineer who takes a job teaching at a high school were the students are considered to be the educational system’s “rejects.” The students who come from working class families pride themselves on being able to break the spirit of those who have come to teach them. After a series of pranks and shenanigans Mr. Thackeray finally looses his temper with the students and storms out of the classroom. However, shortly thereafter he has an epiphany as to how to reach his students. What Mr. Thackeray discovers is that instead of treating his students like kids he needed to treat them like the young adults they were soon going to be and instead of teaching them textbook knowledge he needed to teach them how to survive and be successful in the real world. *To Sir, With Love* is a story about how a teacher gives his students a different perspective on learning and on life.

**Mr. Holland’s Opus** (1995) – Glenn Holland (Richard Dryfuss) is an aspiring music composer whose only desire is to compose the great American symphony. However, in order to make ends meet and to keep his family fed, Mr. Holland decides to take a temporary job for a year or two at John F. Kennedy
High School as a music teacher. Well, a year or two turns into thirty and a temporary job turns into a lifelong career. The beauty of this movie is it spans thirty years and we are able to see how Mr. Holland evolves from a novice to an expert teacher and how his dedication to his students and his love for music inspires three generations of high school students.

**Dead Poet’s Society** (1989) – This movie takes place in 1959 at the very posh Welton Academy prep school for boys. English teacher, John Keating (Robin Williams), returns to Welton after having been a student there some years before. Prior to Mr. Keating arrival as a teacher, the teaching tradition at Welton appears to have always been mindless conformity. However, Keating unorthodox teaching philosophy changes all that for five of the boys in his English class. Mr. Keating encourages his students to abandon conformity and to begin to think for themselves and to make their own decisions. *Dead Poet’s Society* is a story of how a group of boys mature through education both inside and outside of the class under the influence of a very passionate teacher.

**Music of the Heart** (1999) – Is a true story of how a women, Roberta Guaspari (Meryl Streep), turns batches of unruly, disinterested elementary students from East Harlem who has no interest, value, or talent for music into “little” violinist. This movie illustrates how a teacher’s persistence, dedication, and hard work can pay off even in a public school. In addition to having to work with disinterested students, Roberta also has to contend with and fight against the apathy of the parents and the suspicions of her colleagues. Since this movie spans ten years it is clear to see how Roberta ends up gaining the respect from her students, parents and colleagues through her commitment to music education. Roberta was also responsible for pulling together the world-renowned East Harlem Children’s Choir.

**The Man Without a Face** (1993) – Is a story about a 13 year-old boy, Chuck Norstadt (Nick Stahl) and the mentoring type relationship he develops one summer with the facially disfigured recluse Justin McLeod (Mel Gibson). In a desperate attempt to flee his dysfunctional family Chuck is in search of someone to tutor him so that he can pass an entrance exam to get into a military boarding school. The “someone” ends up being McLeod who was a prep school Latin teacher before his horrific accident left him disfigured. This movie illustrates how a student-teacher relationship can be equally beneficial to both parties. What McLeod gives to Chuck is the knowledge he needs to pass the entrance exam so that he can make his escape and what Chuck gives to McLeod is what was striped from him after the accident—the need to be needed and the opportunity to teach.