

# Nothing but the Truth

## Aims

- To engage students in discussion about different types of education.
- To discuss student and teacher conduct at school.

1 Put students into groups of four. Ask them to make a list of as many different types of school as they can think of. Call for suggestions and make a list on the board. Ask students about each type of school – who they are for and how they are different from each other.

**Possible answers:** nursery school, primary/junior/elementary school, infants school, middle school, secondary school, public/private school, state school, private language school, day school, boarding school, international school

2 If they have included international school and have already talked about what it is, circle it on the board and say this is what the story is about. If they haven't included it, write it up on the board and ask them what they know about it.

**Information:** An international school is a school which provides education for the children of parents of different nationalities who are working abroad. Most major cities in the world have one or more, and they follow different syllabuses – a British or American system, or one leading to the International Baccalaureate, for example. The schools usually teach in English but there are also French and German international schools. The schools are private, often expensive, but many children have their education paid for by the company that their parents work for.

3 Ask students to stay in their groups and discuss the advantages and disadvantages for a foreign national of going to an international school rather than a local state school.

**Possible answers:** Advantages – they get a high-quality education; they follow a system and get qualifications which make further study back home easier; they spend their time with other students in a similar situation to themselves, so don't feel alienated; they don't have to adjust to a new system every time their parents move. Disadvantages – they don't mix with local children; they don't learn the local language and culture well; they often have to travel a long way across the city rather than walk to a nearby school; it costs a lot of money if the parents are paying themselves.

4 Write these phrases on the board: 'jealousy between pupils'; 'fights between pupils'; 'co-operation between pupils'. Ask the groups to discuss and give some examples from their own experience of the three types of behaviour.

**Possible answers:** jealousy because one student always gets better marks, gets a position of responsibility in the school or always has new clothes; fights because students insult each other or make personal comments; co-operation on projects, helping when a friend has personal problems or doing homework together

5 Ask students to read Extracts 1–3 from *Nothing but the truth* and decide which of the three types of behaviour they illustrate. Explain that the action takes place at the Bangkok International Academy. Call for the answers from the whole class. Ask for the cause of the situations.

**Answers:** 1 – co-operation (Hu and John agree to help each other with school subjects); 2 – jealousy (Melanie is jealous because Hu has been given the lead part in *The Wizard of Oz*); 3 – fighting (Sean and Thomas almost fight after insulting each other's parents)

6 Tell students that at school there are sometimes problems between students and teachers. Ask students to work in groups to make a list of how such problems might arise.

**Possible answers:** a teacher keeps picking on one student so that they become aggressive or depressed; a student is constantly rude to a teacher, so the teacher has to keep disciplining the student; a teacher is regularly unfair to a student, giving lower grades and making them look stupid in class; a student never participates in class and doesn't do homework; an older student and a young teacher are attracted to each other, and maybe start a relationship

7 Call for suggestions from the class, and note them on the board. Ask the groups to decide how the teacher, the pupil and perhaps the school might deal with the problems listed.

**Possible answers:** discussion of whether punishment (and of what kind?) is a suitable solution if students are consistently problematic in class; parents can be brought in; social services (e.g. educational psychologists) can be invited to meet problem students and their parents; counselling from school pastoral care teachers; meetings of students and parents with the headteacher and other staff and governors of the school; staff meetings to discuss a particular problem student

8 Tell the students that in *Nothing but the Truth* there is a problem teacher. Ask them to read Extract 4. In groups they discuss what the teacher does. Elicit from the whole class that Stanyer gives pretty girls bad marks, suggests they need private lessons to catch up, then tries to get them to come back to his apartment. Thus he gets money and hopes to have a relationship, both of which are unprofessional, if not illegal.

9 Ask the groups to answer Hu's final question. Call for suggestions from the whole class.

**Possible answers:** confront the teacher concerned directly; tell her parents; tell the pastoral care teacher; tell another teacher with whom the student has a good relationship; tell the headteacher

10 Ask the groups to discuss the difficulties for a student in this situation.

**Possible answers:** afraid to confront the teacher concerned directly (they'll give the student bad marks, or make their school life difficult in general); afraid that other teachers will side with the teacher and not believe the student; afraid that the blame will be put on the student him/herself

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11 Ask the students to read Extract 5 and decide what Mr Riding (the student counsellor) is suggesting.

**Answer:** He suggests that probably Hu is attracted to Mr Stanyer, but doesn't understand her own feelings and so tries to suggest that it is Hu who is causing the situation.

12 In groups, discuss what you think should happen to a teacher who abuses their position to take advantage of the students s/he is teaching? What usually happens in your country?

## Extract 1

'I've been thinking. Maybe I can help. You show me some more of your work and we can look at it together.'

'But John, that's too kind.'

'Not at all,' said John, smiling. 'Let's do a deal. I have to start Thai lessons, and you already speak Thai...'

'I'm not very good,' said Hu.

'Better than me!' said John. 'I'm a complete beginner. I have to wait after school with Mary until my mother has finished. We can study together in here some days.'

## Extract 2

'You can have the part of Dorothy,' said Mrs Patel when it was Hu's turn.

'But? But, Dorothy's an American farm girl. I don't look right. I don't look like an American girl. I don't speak like an American. Melanie looks more like Dorothy... I...'

'Please, Hu!' said Mrs Patel, laughing. 'You sing beautifully. And American girls look just like you and me.' ...

'My mother helped me learn to sing, she studied opera,' Hu said ...

'I think Melanie can be your understudy,' said Mrs Patel, at last.

'Understudy?' Hu didn't understand.

'Yes, someone who can take your place if you are ill ... There are plenty of other parts for Melanie.' ...

As Melanie left the main hall she turned suddenly and looked Hu in the eyes. Melanie had clearly been crying. Her face was white with anger.

'You! Dorothy!' Melanie laughed. She laughed too loud. 'Hu Jian Ming, I know what you're doing! Just you wait! You'll see! I'll get you!' She was shouting, almost screaming.

## Extract 3

'Must, must, always must! Who makes you the boss? Just because your father's a policeman,' shouted Sean.

Thomas was much shorter than Sean, but that didn't stop him. He threw himself at Sean.

Sean easily held him off. Thomas was kicking and shouting in German.

'My father is Chief Police Officer at the German Embassy,' shouted Thomas breathing heavily. 'At least he's not a barman. And he didn't marry a "dancer" from a bar!'

Sean's face went white. He held Thomas very tightly by the arms, and lifted him off the ground.

'Listen, Kuhlauf,' said Sean in a low angry voice. 'My father owns a chain of restaurants in Bangkok, Hua Hin and Rayong.' Sean was breathing very heavily. Thomas was suddenly very frightened. 'My mother owned and managed one of the restaurants when my father bought it. Now she's company accountant.'

Sean put his face very close to Thomas' face and said slowly and angrily, 'Don't you ever repeat that rubbish again!'

There was a moment of total silence. Suddenly he dropped Thomas. John quickly held Thomas from behind. Sean and Thomas were both breathing heavily, staring at each other angrily.

## Extract 4

[Hu and Sean are talking about the behaviour of their English teacher, Declan Stanyer.]

'I just wanted to explain. I don't believe this stuff about Declan Stanyer. I know his game.' Sean sat closer to her.

'Noroko Ito. Ilse Sphenson. Fatima Rashid. Darunee Phalavadhana. It's a long list. He's being doing this since he came to the school.'

'Doing what?' asked Hu.

'His game. Girls. His "private lesson" game. Rich girls. Pretty girls.'

'I'm not rich, Sean,' said Hu. She could sense him smiling.

'Maybe not. But he thinks you are. First you get the bad results, then he says you need extra private lessons. You don't tell your parents, do you?'

'No. But Sean, how do you know?'

'He tried it with my sister. She told me, and I, er, spoke to him. He didn't like that one little bit.' Sean paused. 'Did he invite you back to his apartment to be "more comfortable"? No?'

'Yes, he did. I said no,' said Hu. 'He does this to other students?'

Sean nodded.

Hu thought for a moment.

'Sean, what can I do?'

## Extract 5

[Mr Riding, the student counsellor, is talking to Hu in his room.]

'I understand you've been seeing a lot of Mr Stanyer recently.'

'He's been giving me extra classes,' said Hu.

'Look at me, Hu.' Hu tried. 'Do you like Mr Stanyer?'

'No!' shouted Hu, looking straight at Mr Riding.

'Relax!' said Mr Riding, with a false laugh. He paused.

'It's not so unusual for a young woman of your age to be ... to be attracted to an older man, a man in an ... an important position.' Mr Riding smiled to himself.

Hu couldn't breathe she was so angry. She decided not to speak.

'Uh huh,' said Mr Riding, standing up again and walking towards the window. 'Does your father know about these, er, "extra lessons", Hu?'

'No, I ...'

'Hu,' said Mr Riding, 'are you scared of your father? Does he shout at you? Has he ever hit you?'

That was when Hu could no longer keep her anger inside. Suddenly she started crying, and could not stop. Somehow she told Mr Riding the whole story ...

'What you've said is very serious. These are very serious things to say about a teacher.' Hu tried to move away from him ...

'And I'm not sure you completely understand your own feelings about this man, Hu.' He smiled.