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<b>Abstract</b>	<p>Teachers are the forlorn hope of the culture of Western modernity. I use the expression in the original sixteenth-century Dutch sense (<i>verloren hoop</i>) of an assault party sent out on some dangerous offensive mission in advance of the main forces, as well as its later English sense of an enterprise on whose success we have to depend, but which is in fact bound to fail. For the mission with which contemporary teachers are entrusted is both essential and impossible (Alasdair MacIntyre, 1987, p. 16).</p> <p>There is no creature whose inward being is so strong, that it is not greatly determined by what lies outside it (George Eliot, 1985 [1871–2], p. 896).</p>