



## SPOTLIGHT ON STAFF:

# HANNAH YOUNG

My A-Level English Literature teacher, Mr Oliver, is the reason I became a teacher. I looked forward to his engaging lessons which provided a direct contrast to those of my terrifying French teacher. His pedagogy centred around a metre rule that would often land that bit too close to my head. In fact, of the thousands of lessons and lectures I have experienced, I only have strong connections to those that made me feel something. What I didn't realise at the time was that all of these experiences have ultimately shaped the teacher that I have become. Now, 18 years into my teaching career, I have continued to learn by studying Terrorism at the University of St Andrews and Educational Leadership at the University of Leicester. In 2020 I became a Chartered Teacher of History and was then admitted into the College of Chartered Teachers as a Fellow. I believe that, to be effective in any industry, lifelong learning is essential, whether that be reading, growing your network, taking on further study or getting involved in new activities. Lifelong learning has enriched both my life and career leading me to publish books, create online learning experiences and even become a milliner.

After teaching for almost a decade at George Watson's College in Edinburgh, I decided to make a move to a more rural area to teach and to raise my young family. It was a risk to leave the life that my husband and I had created in the city, but we have never looked back. Living and working in Dollar has opened up so many new opportunities for us and, despite its relatively small size, village life has been a source of contentment for us. I was able to build an art studio in my back garden from which I could continue my passion for millinery. I had previously designed millinery collections for L.K. Bennett on George Street in Edinburgh, launching three collections under my own label each year. I met many interesting people and developed business, design and communication skills; these led to my work being featured in *Tatler* and to opportunities to produce bespoke creations for the clients of the personal shopping department in Harvey Nichols. I can still remember how I felt when I walked past the windows of the shops that stocked my hats: I let out a little yelp in the street and, despite the strange looks from passers-by, nothing could take away the elation—mixed with the fear that no one would buy my designs. But the collections sold out, and I realised that worrying about



things that might not happen is a total waste of time and energy. Having the courage to put yourself out there can have wonderful and unexpected consequences that teach you what you are capable of. As Dr Brené Brown would testify: you have to have skin in the game to get anywhere in life. You have got to work towards feeling comfortable with being uncomfortable and vulnerable. You have to be brave because growth rarely, if ever, happens in your comfort zone.

The common theme throughout my life and career so far has been my near obsession with creating something from seemingly nothing. I enjoy the challenge and the process. This approach led me to create an online Higher Politics course that would be rolled out as part of the Dollar Discovers initiative. During the pandemic I was able to upskill to develop my understanding of online teaching by attending a monthlong course at the Harvard Graduate School of Education and embarking on an MSc in Educational Technology and Instructional Design. The open-source Higher Politics course saw over 40 external pupils sign up to learn online with me over the course of an academic year. The building of relationships and supporting others are central to teaching, either in person or online, and I am confident that I





am a much better teacher in this regard because of the pandemic. What I have learned from building online courses and communities from scratch is that, when you are driven by what author Simon Sinek calls your 'Just Cause' or your 'why', you can advance on your journey. Being open, ambitious, inclusive and service-oriented is what drives the Dollar Discovers journey, and this has made me feel excited about education, helping me to navigate through the challenge of the multiple lockdowns. Identifying and embracing my 'why' has helped to keep me on a purposeful and meaningful path and stay focused and buoyant in the face of adversity and negativity.

As a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts, I try to align my actions and thoughts with the values of the organisation: being open, optimistic, pioneering, rigorous and enabling. Having compass points like these has helped me to re-focus when feeling unsure of what to do next. I am also mindful of these values when facilitating the discussions in the weekly Politics and International Relations Society which I have run for six years. It is a joy to observe pupils from all year groups start to challenge ideas, make connections, develop their curiosity about the world and carry these traits and skills through to university. Using systems-thinking

principles, these pupils have been able to recognise the interconnected nature of the world. This gives me hope for the future.

I wish that I had been able to reconnect with Mr Oliver and thank him for, probably unwittingly, putting me on this path. I remember lines from the plays and poetry that he led us through with his amusing voices and affectations; in his class, my love of the writing of Alan Bennett began. Mr

Oliver won't know how he shaped my life, led me to work in probably the best department at Dollar Academy and live in a beautiful part of the world. Alan Bennett wrote that, 'Life is rather like a tin of sardines—we're all of us looking for the key.' I will forever be grateful to Mr Oliver for helping me to locate mine.

*Hannah Young*



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