

John Godber and his style

John Godber trained as a teacher of drama at Bretton Hall College. Whilst Head of Drama at Minsthorpe High School, the school he attended as a student, he won every major award at the National Students Drama Festival between 1981 and 1983.

John Godber has a distinctive style of writing that appeals to a wide range of audiences. He creates worlds and characters that ordinary people can relate to. Godber writes with a fast-paced and energetic style to keep audiences on their toes and intrigued.

Features of Teachers

Teachers is an episodic play written as a play within a play in which three students put on a performance to their teachers.

Everything in the play is reduced to the bare essentials, with very little set and the three actors playing twenty other parts.

However, Godber has said that it could also be performed with twenty different actors.

The action is set within a 'play-in-a-play' format, which is something you must remember when watching or performing it; your character is a student acting the part of a teacher, dinner lady etc so you are in fact playing two characters at any one time.

Colloquial Language

Colloquial language is casual and conversational: it's the difference between "What are you going to do?" and "Whatchagonnado"

Stereotypes and Exaggeration

A stereotype is "a widely held but fixed and oversimplified image or idea of a particular type of person or thing"

Godber uses these stereotypes to draw out humour from his characters, exaggerating language and personality to create funny dialogue.

Drama Terms

Colloquial Language
Episodic structure
Stereotypes
Over exaggeration
Multi-roling

Dramatic Conventions in Teachers

Actors play multiple roles
Direct address to the audience
Social Commentary veiled in humour
Quick paced scenes
Episodic structure
Frequent changes of direction
Use of different styles of text
Colloquial language

Context of Teachers

Teachers was written in the 1980s however it is still politically and socially relevant to today.

Many of the issues raised in the play are still current in today's schooling

Margaret Thatcher's changes to the Education System

During the 1980's the UK's education system underwent a huge change. Before Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher took leadership, schools were governed by Local Authorities who drew up catchment areas and distributed funding for schools.

School exam results were not published publicly and there was no National Curriculum.

Under Margaret Thatcher powers for Local Authorities to make decisions on their schools was reduced. Direct control was assumed by Whitehall and Central Government (notice the name of the fictional school in Teachers!)

The National Curriculum was introduced, initially for Maths, English and Science but it evolved over time to what we have now. New schools called City Technical Colleges (CTCs) were established with aid from private sponsorship, and parents were given more choice about which school they sent their children to.

League Tables and funding linked to student intake meant that management structures in schools became more market driven. It was important that parents wanted to send their children to the school to keep funding high.

Thatcher wanted more fee paying schools who charged students yearly to attend their school.

Episodic Structure

An Episodic structure involves a large number of different characters and locations. It covers a lengthy period of time and typically involves sub plots in addition to the main story.