

Teacher State Map Diagnostic

A TWELVE-QUESTION CHECK-IN for locating your dominant teaching state across the last three or four working weeks.

Choose the answer that most honestly describes your recent average, not your best day and not your worst. Circle A, B, C or D. Do not overthink it.

Scoring

Count your answers by letter. A usually maps to Steady, B to Braced, C to Flooded, and D to Depleted or Disconnected. Read your highest result first, then your second-highest result.

A count	B count	C count	D count
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This is not a clinical diagnosis. It is a working map from the book. If you are experiencing significant distress, speak to your GP, union, occupational health service or a qualified professional.

The twelve questions

1. You walk into the classroom for period one on a normal Wednesday. Your body feels:

- A. Ready. Breathing easy. Shoulders down. You can feel the room.
- B. Alert. Slightly forward in your body. Prepared for something to happen.
- C. Already tight. Jaw clenched. You are running through a mental list of what could go wrong.

D. Heavy. You are functional but the reserve is not there yet, even at 8:45am.

2. A student behaves in a way that catches you off guard. Your first internal response is:

- A.** You register it, decide how to respond, and act. The whole thing takes half a second.
- B.** You feel the flash of it in your chest, notice it, and choose your next move deliberately.
- C.** You feel your heart rate lift, and you have to work to stop the reaction from being bigger than the incident.
- D.** You notice you are watching yourself handle it from a slight distance. The reaction feels muted.

3. It is period four. You have not had a proper break since 8am. How does your body feel?

- A.** Tired but functional. You know you can get through the last hour.
- B.** Wired. Not tired. Running on the alertness the day has built.
- C.** Overloaded. Everything feels slightly too loud, too fast, too much.
- D.** Flat. You are here in body but the vividness has gone.

4. A parent email arrives at 7:47pm. Your body's first response is:

- A.** Slight tightening, then you decide whether to open it now or in the morning. Usually the morning.
- B.** You open it immediately because the not-knowing is worse than the knowing.
- C.** Chest tight. You open it, read it, and now the whole evening has changed shape.
- D.** You see it, register it, and feel a strange distance from it, as if it is happening to someone else.

5. You drive home. Somewhere between the school gate and the driveway, your body:

- A.** Releases slowly, one system at a time. By the time you park, you are mostly home.
- B.** Stays wound up. You get home in the same state you left work in.
- C.** Sometimes releases into tears, or a burst of frustration, in the car.

D. Feels nothing in particular. You realise you have driven the whole route without noticing.

6. Someone at home asks what you want for dinner. You:

A. Answer. It is not a hard question.

B. Hear the question but your mind is still on the parent email or the seating plan.

C. Feel a disproportionate flash of irritation. You are aware that this is not fair.

D. Cannot decide. The question feels heavier than it should.

7. It is Sunday afternoon. Your body's relationship to Monday is:

A. Neutral. You can think about Monday without a physical response.

B. Alert. You are already running scenarios for period one on Monday.

C. Tight. There is a physical dread that starts on Sunday and builds until you are in the room.

D. Flat. You are not looking forward to it or dreading it. It is just what happens next.

8. You get ill on the first day of a holiday. This happens:

A. Rarely. Your body seems to hold together across term and holiday.

B. Sometimes. Usually a day or two of tiredness before you feel human.

C. Regularly. The first three or four days of any break are lost to illness.

D. Every time. You have accepted this as part of the job.

9. When you notice you are dysregulated at work, your usual response is:

A. Take a breath, drink some water, keep going. You have a set of small resets that work.

B. Push through. You know it will pass by lunchtime or by the last bell.

C. Escalate slightly. Snap at a colleague or misjudge a student and later regret it.

D. Withdraw. Go through the motions. Get to the end of the day and drive home flat.

10. You think about the profession over a five-year horizon. Your body's response is:

- A.** You can imagine staying. There are hard things but it is manageable.
- B.** You are still in. You cannot imagine leaving, but you notice the shape of the day is changing.
- C.** You are honest with yourself that something has to change or you cannot stay.
- D.** You have already partly left. You are here in body but the meaning has gone.

11. You look at the people in your life who love you. Your capacity to be present with them at 8pm on a Tuesday is:

- A.** Reasonably intact. You can listen, respond, and connect.
- B.** There, but late-arriving. You need twenty minutes to switch modes before you can be present.
- C.** Compromised. You are physically there but emotionally the shape of the day is still in you.
- D.** Very low. You want quiet and are aware this is costing the people you love.

12. The most honest answer to How are you? at the end of most weeks is:

- A.** Tired but okay. Grateful for the weekend. Ready to reset.
- B.** Wound up. It takes me until Saturday afternoon to feel like myself.
- C.** Overwhelmed. I do not know how much longer I can keep doing this.
- D.** Numb. I am doing the job but I am not really here for it any more.

Your dominant state: **STEADY**

You have usable capacity. The work now is to protect it.

BREATHING IS EASY. Shoulders are down. You can hear the class and the individual student at the same time. You can choose rather than react.

Why it matters

Most teacher-wellbeing advice assumes this state is always available. It is not. If you can access Steady, use it for work that needs judgement and presence.

Do this week

Identify the two periods of the day when you are most reliably in Steady. Guard them for meaningful marking, careful conversations or planning that actually needs thought.

Read next

Chapter 8, Chapter 11 and Chapter 12.

Your dominant state: **BRACED**

You are functional, but you are running warm.

JAW TIGHT. BODY slightly forward. Voice a little higher. Alert to the room. Prepared for something to happen.

Why it matters

Braced works. It gets teachers through corridor duty, difficult lessons and parent evenings. The problem is that it does not always turn off afterwards.

Do this week

Name it when it appears. Ask: am I in Steady, or am I in Braced? Use the Corridor Breath when you are braced without needing to be.

Read next

Chapter 3, Chapter 4 and Chapter 15.

Your dominant state: FLOODED

The demand has exceeded your regulation capacity. This is information, not failure.

CHEST TIGHT. HEART rate up. Thoughts looping. Difficulty holding the next five minutes. Over-response becomes more likely.

Why it matters

Flooded is physiological. It is not a character problem. Do not make important decisions or send difficult replies from this state.

Do this week

Use somatic first aid: long exhale, silence, cold water on wrists, movement, or a trusted colleague. Then identify what repeatedly produces the flooding.

Read next

Chapter 6, Chapter 9, Chapter 10 and Chapter 18.

Your dominant state: DEPLETED

You are running on reserves that are no longer there.

HEAVY BODY. SLOWER speech. Reduced facial expression. Small requests feel larger than they should.

Why it matters

Depleted is not a motivation problem. It is what happens after prolonged Braced or repeated Flooded states without enough recovery.

Do this week

Move into Minimum Viable Mode. Reduce non-essential work, reschedule reactive tasks, eat, hydrate and prioritise sleep.

Read next

Chapter 5, Chapter 11, Chapter 15 and Chapter 16.

Your dominant state: **DISCONNECTED**

This is a shutdown response. Not laziness, not indifference.

NUMBNESS, DISTANCE, AUTOPILOT, emotional flatness, or watching yourself teach as though from outside the room.

Why it matters

Disconnected often means the system that lets you feel the care has gone offline for protection. Do not push harder.

Do this week

Orient to the present: five things you can see, hear and feel. Move your body. Speak to a trusted person. Use professional help if this state persists.

Read next

Chapter 4, Chapter 15, Chapter 17 and Chapter 18.