When things are hard to define, I often consult my old friend, Merriam. Merriam defines the verb *teach* as:

* to cause to know something (She *taught* a math concept.)
* to cause to know how (Ms. Tarashuk is *teaching* me to save a document to a specific file.)
* to accustom to some action or attitude (We can try to *teach* students to think for themselves.)
* to cause to know the disagreeable consequences of some action (I'll *teach* you not to waste paper by hitting the “print” key over and over again because your document hasn’t come out of the printer yet.)
* to guide the studies of (Is *guide* an action verb or a passive verb?)
* to impart the knowledge of (*Teach* how to use a search engine.)
* to make known and accepted (Experience *teaches* us our limitations…It sure does!)

Merriam also has a lot to say about the verb *be*. It can be thought of as more than merely having an “objective existence in the world.” Webster adds that *to be* also means

* to have identity with (They *will be* partners for this activity.)
* to have a specified qualification or characterization (We *are* learners.)
* to belong to the class of (Johnny *is* a student in our class.)
* to have, maintain, or occupy a place, situation, or position (The student *is* at his desk using his laptop.)
* to remain undisturbed, or uninterrupted —used only in infinitive form (For some reason, no example in a classroom setting comes to mind for uninterrupted, but my undisturbed moments often occur when I step back and observe.)
* to take place; occur (The homework *was* due yesterday.)

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*Kids on the Cusp*

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