

Time is the best teacher; Unfortunately it kills all its students!

by Ijeoma Emeagwali

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I think my favorite year of middle school was eighth grade, mainly because of my science class. In that class, I learned more about the subject of science and about education in general than I did in any other class up to that point. Several factors could have gone into why I learned so much from the class. Perhaps the curriculum was well designed or the subjects were easy to teach and interesting. However, I think the true reason why the class was so great was because of the teacher, who delivered an experience different from that of any other.

Throughout sixth and seventh grade, none of my teachers were very memorable. That's not to say that they all were bad or uninteresting teachers, but none had any special traits that truly separated them from the pack. However, my eighth grade science teacher was in no way just another regular, forgettable teacher.

My eighth grade science teacher was without a doubt the most enthusiastic, unusual, and fun teacher I have ever had. He was a very funny man who always found a way to keep the class exciting. Whether by telling jokes, giving an enthusiastic impression of an earthquake or tsunami, or by getting completely off-topic about things as random as

his favorite meal from Bob Evans, he always kept people's attention. Because of this, his class felt like it was not just a science class, but an experience that couldn't have been had with any other teacher.

The most memorable moment of the year came while studying elements and compounds. Every day, we watched a cartoon featuring dancing hydrogen and oxygen atoms singing about making water, and every day he sang and danced along with the video. Though the educational value of the video clip was limited, it nevertheless proved to provide us with some entertainment each day on a subject that otherwise wouldn't seem that exciting. Surprisingly he announced during the test on the unit that for extra credit we had the option of getting up in front of the class and singing and dancing to the song. He ranked our performances from 1 to 10 to determine how much extra credit we would receive. Some worried about looking foolish, but I was willing to do it, even though I had never been much of a performer. The teacher and class found my performance so enthusiastic that I was the only one to get a perfect 10.

I cannot say for sure where my sudden enthusiasm for performing came, but I am certain that it was a direct result of my teacher's enthusiasm. He had always been so enthusiastic that it carried over into my performance. That day, I learned that enthusiasm is contagious. His enthusiasm throughout the year was what kept the class interesting, and as a result, I was always attentive and able to absorb the information.

Eighth grade science felt like the easiest class I had ever taken but it wasn't for lack of challenge. We learned a lot and were tested often, but I never felt unmotivated to do the work. As a result succeeding in the class seemed to come easily. I think my teacher had

a big impact on the rest of my academic career because he taught me that enthusiasm and passion are essential for being successful at what you are doing.



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