

“Why I Teach”

by Valerie Harris

Region VIII Teacher of the Year

Why Do I Teach? That is a very interesting question. Living in Amelia as a youngster, other than church school was the center of my life. Each year I can remember my teachers as loving caregivers of education who delivered direct and consistent timely discipline and instruction. Many of my past teachers made such a tremendous impact on me and this has prompted me to want to leave an impression every student that I teach. I don't quite remember exactly when I knew I wanted to become a teacher but I do know that I had many teachers that left an impression on me that walks into my classroom with me everyday. It could have been in kindergarten when the always neatly dressed Mrs. Christian danced around the classroom singing Nursery Rhymes and then turned around and cracked me across the knuckles for misbehaving in the dancing line, or it could be when I cried on the last day of first grade because I did not want to leave the always loving Mrs. Lively who had a classroom so structured that the flower petals sat up straight, or maybe it was in Pre-Calculus class with Mr. Bowers who could teach math to the fish in the fish tank. All these successful teachers had two things in common: outstanding classroom management, and a unique execution of instruction.

From the first day of class, all my students are aware of who I am and what I expect. I am very clear about the one rule that I have in my class: Think before you action. If you think I might question your actions, then I probably will. Immediately the tone is set for the remainder of the year. All my students know that they can always expect me to always be fair but consistent.

I have developed my own unique style of teaching that causes me to have a dynamic delivery in the execution of my lessons and my relationships with my students. After I have studied, practiced, and reviewed my lesson, I always add my personal touch to make the lesson practical to the students' experiences. Making connections with students' environment was enabled me to gain success in an otherwise difficult subject, math.

Any successful teacher should have a classroom where: on any given day, any given person can walk into their room and teach any give lesson! My classroom is managed in such a manner that if a substitute must come in on a short notice, he/she will be able to continue on with the class as if I was still

there. I consider myself to be a teacher striving to show Excellence in Action. Not only do I tell my student how to operate in a successful manner but I show them each day how to be organized, how to function in a proper manner, and how to articulate and express themselves. When I come to the end of my teaching journey I would like for all of my students to remember Mrs. Harris as a teacher who lead by example showing a fierce determination to challenge each student to expect more of themselves but compassionate enough to know how to get the best out of each student!



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