

Recalling the Past to Shape Your Future as an Art Teacher



The best teachers value their students as individuals and consider teaching to be more than a job.

Pam Stephens

Ernest Boyer identified recalling the past as a human commonality. It seems that most human beings have the ability to recall the distant and not-so-distant past. Using this recall mechanism can enhance your own student teaching and shape your future as an effective art educator. This article shows one way that recalling the past is beneficial to teaching.

In the pre-service classes that I teach, one of the first assignments is for students to recall the teacher who most influenced them to become an educator. When the teacher is identified, students are asked to list the characteristics of that teacher and how those characteristics will be used as models for their own teaching.

Stop for a moment and try this activity:

1. Which teacher in your K–12 education was the most positive influence upon your choice to become a teacher?
2. What characteristics did that teacher possess that appealed to you or directed your choice?

Now think about those characteristics and how you will implement them in your own teaching. Chances are that the educator had some or all of the following attributes:

- A thorough knowledge of the subject being taught.

- Passion about the subject.
- High standards for achievement within a differentiated classroom.
- Empathy for all students.
- Non-judgment and respect for everyone.
- A strict (but fair) style of discipline.
- Good listening skills.
- Good sense of humor and willingness to laugh at own mistakes.

Of course there are many other traits of an exemplary teacher. What other characteristics did you list?


Additional Recall

As a student teacher, recall your past positive experiences in the classroom:

- What class did you most look forward to each day? Why?
- What was it about the class, the space, or the teacher that made the class your favorite? How will you make your classroom the one where students will want to be?
- What did the teacher do to encourage a sense of welcome, respect, and individual appreciation? How will you make your classroom the place where students will feel welcome, respected, and valued as individuals?
- Did the teacher's actions suggest that teaching was more than just

a job? How was this expressed? How will you express this idea?

Your

thoughts about recalling the past to create a better learning environment are valued. Please consider sending your ideas to *SchoolArts* or to the e-mail address listed below. 

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