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My Inspiration - My Memories

For this assignment, I want to keep this a bit informal and from the heart. The reasons I want to teach lie within my memories of my schooling. My teachers inspired me to become an educator, and I want to share some fond memories I have related to school, because these are just a few of the reasons I want to be a teacher myself.

I have always been interested in teaching and the pursuit of knowledge from a very early age. I was always a “good” student and loved to learn. Looking back, I would say this was partially because I had high-quality teachers in almost every grade I was in, starting all the way back with kindergarten. Even recently, I was talking to one of my students about the fond memories I had in their parents' class back when I was in kindergarten, which I found to be pretty cool. I have many fond memories of my time in school, and when looking back, I really don't think or see many bad schooling experiences. A common theme, though, between all of these memories is that the teachers genuinely cared about us and wanted to help us learn, have fun, and enjoy school. The teachers found ways to make it their mission to come to school each day and put a smile on our faces, which is frankly what children want.

Moving forward a bit, I would say my most influential educational time took place between 6th and 8th grade, and I have the fondest memories during this time. Honestly, if I had to give credit to a specific few teachers who inspired me to become a teacher, it would definitely be my middle school ones. They really went above and beyond to ensure we not only learned but

had a great time doing it. The two main classes that made the most impact were Social Studies and the fantastic activities my teacher would do, and my tech ed teacher, who not only did the technology side of learning (I love technology!) but also did woodworking too. This, combined with the other teachers' kindness and care for their teachings, really made a significant impact. I also think this was the most impactful because middle school is right around the time in a student's life when abstract thinking begins to take place. Many students around this time start to think more broadly and begin to understand the impact others have on them.

To dive a bit deeper, some of the activities my teachers helped put on for us were the abundance of extracurricular clubs and fun after-school activities. They ensured we had many school dances each year and fun clubs to join. We also had many significant events during school, such as recess relay, which was a whole additional field day where students from all grades got to walk/run around a track to raise money for cancer research and support. This began with my grade and the grade above mine, which I found to be pretty special to be a part of.

Another main activity that I remember is the food fair. My social studies teacher loved food, and he actually wanted to be a chef. He didn't let working in education crush that dream, though, and made sure to incorporate it in several other activities as well. The food fair was a fun project where we got to research a country of our choosing and make food to bring in that is from that country. This was on public display for the entire school to come by and try, and allowed us to develop excellent presentation skills that I use today. This same teacher also convinced the school to do a medieval day for the medieval unit in social studies. This was only for the middle school, but basically, the 8th grade got to attend a large medieval feast where the social studies room was converted to a mess hall, and my teacher cooked multiple turkeys, sides, and dishes to go along with it. He also convinced other teachers to be a part of the royal court

and had the principal and vice principal be the king and the queen. This was certainly memorable and something I will never forget.

This same teacher also managed to get permission to show the respective grades the movie 300 and Gladiator, to go along with the lessons being learned. Both of these movies are R-rated, so the fact that he got these approved was an educational miracle. For both films, we needed signed permission slips, and he skipped over any parts that contained nudity or anything overly intense, but it was still amazing.

Another big thing that the teachers did was provide many field trip activities to help our learning and have fun. The tech ed teacher actually had a mini bus license, so he was able to do small field trips for us without having to cost the grade a vast amount of money.

As a work and as I push towards becoming a teacher, I try to model myself based on them. I want the students to learn, but I also want them to make memories, too. I want to make a difference in the kids' lives and prove to them that learning can really be fun. I think these great experiences are a big reason why I want to work in middle school myself, and I do think of them quite often. My biggest motivator is the pursuit to make a difference because, truly, at the end of the day, that is what is remembered. When these kids look back on their schooling, they aren't going to directly place the math, the english, the history, or science, but what they will remember are the fond memories they hold and the stuff they learned not by sitting but by doing. That's the type of teacher I want to be.