Shared Experiences and Discovery on the Science Teaching Journey: a Voyage of Discovery for Two Science Teachers

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N: I’m a early morning person. I get here an hour before contractual time, to make sure I’m prepared for my students ...

A: Typical day, I wake up about 5:30, get there [school] about 6:15 ... so even before school they [students] come in ...
A: It’s been really hard because I’m exhausted!
N: I drop my head on the desk. I’m completely worn out.
A: [Students] want me there. They want me to show up, and that’s probably been the hardest thing. ‘Cuz,’ I want to be there, but I’m just exhausted!

... I wish I could ...

... but ‘ya’ can’t.
N: ... those last couple of periods just ‘ssssuck’ the energy out of you, in a good way, because [students] are looking for information and, you know, some attention, and some guidance. So by the end of that last period I am shot. I am. (chuckling acceptance) I drop my head on the desk bam!
A: ... teaching always was an end goal ... doing something that was biology, that I loved ...

N: I get to talk about biology, with [students].
Personal Fulfillment: Biology

N: ... like my first period [an Honors Biology class]... they’re thinking at a different level, and **it just starts my day off, right. The rest of the day is a breeze after that** ...

A: [I]... start with ... Honors Biology ... I ‘kinda’ look forward to [those classes] ... It **really sets me up with like a positive attitude** because you see you know how well things can go.
Personal Fulfillment: Teaching

N: [Students] are like sponges, and it just, it makes me feel good. That’s where the reward for the job comes.

N: ... you see [students] start to understand ... applying ... questioning ... [making] their own minds ... believe or not believe ... That is what really drives home this job.
Personal Fulfillment: Teaching

A: It’s wonderful! (Laughs) because … at least someone’s getting it. … what’s even better … is when they turn and help each other. I had that kind of a moment fifth period today … they came up with the answer … they were able to help their group … it … makes you realize this is why we do what we do. You know? For them to get it, for them to learn.
Building Life Skills

A: ... it’s not just the standards ... not text ... not even the test ... it’s got to be **life skills** and ... **basic needs** ... if they can learn ... it’s ‘gotta’ be a **life skill**.

... you don’t have to fight back when somebody pushes at you. We’ve had that conversation so many times and there’s been ... fights already this year. **You don’t have to be the one to push back.** If that’s what I can teach them, and then they go on and tell someone else, that would be important. **Sharing the knowledge**...
Building Life Skills

N: They are not all here to be doctors ... and some of ‘em’ will. ... not all ... Some of them are going to ... fix air conditioners. So, when my air conditioner breaks they can fix it. Hopefully, somebody will want to fix my car. Hopefully, somebody will want to make wooden furniture or build houses ... Hopefully, some of them will want to help design prosthetics, or you know find the next cure for whatever ails people.
Helping Disadvantaged

A: ... especially [this school], you know where there’s a lot of kids who are just very **underprivileged**, very **minimalist kids** ... [They] **come from nothing** ... I can teach them ... I think that really gives them a lot. I really think it sets them up. That’s the work I want to accomplish.
Helping Disadvantaged

N: ...our diversity of students is so wide ... students who have their own jet planes ... in the same class with kids who are **living under an underpass**. Now you can’t assess that!
N: Biology is second. I do everything I can to model being polite ... respectful ... considerate ... being prepared ... responsible ... honest. Whether it’s in your word or in your actions, dressing nice ... I try to be a role model for them ... that’s all modeling. So, that hopefully [the students] pick up on that and they become reliable and ... can look people in the eye when they talk to them.

A: I hate for it to be ... they see it, my face, and I don’t want to reflect my [negative feelings about student unruliness] to them ...
Role Model

A: ... gossip ... between teachers ... that was really surprising to me, just the lack of professionalism with adults, (laughs in disbelief) ... that was a big surprise because you, you expect kids to act one way, and it is frustrating, but they’re kids. You know, they’re learning ... if they’re going to learn it anyway it’s ‘gonna’ be from me ... when there’s adults there, that’s ‘kinda’ disappointing.
Support
Support

N: ... are very supportive. They understand the importance of what I’m doing.

... big difference ...

I couldn’t imagine going home and them not understanding the impact of my job.
A: I’ve had a wonderful church **support group** ... prayed for me ... financial backing. It’s been wonderful. And if I didn’t have that as a new teacher, (Laughs) it, I would have been a nightmare ... knowing that **people are thinking of you**, they ask about you ... there’s a lot of former teachers at my church who **want to support** me. They offer **all kinds of things** and it’s **not me** having to seek out the help.
A: ... also been a teacher ... at [an attached military school within a school], so she’s got military background, she has the discipline. She’s been in my classroom almost every third period for collaborative planning. And she has been asking do I need anything ‘cuz’ she brought me things that I didn’t even know I needed ... a wonderful help ... I don’t know what I need, (laughs). I don’t know how to ... [pace] things. I don’t know about [lab preparation] and she’s just been there. She’s just done it, all on her own.
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