

John T. Belcher Scholarship Essay

Keith Ransom - Mexico High School

Essay

Please write and title a 500-700-word essay on the following theme:

School districts throughout Missouri and the nation are facing a shortage of teachers. In your essay, identify and explain how best to recruit students to pursue a teaching career. Reflect upon those teachers whom you consider to be excellent teachers. What skills are needed to be a high-quality teacher? Please provide examples of how high-quality teaching inspired you to succeed as a student.

I think that the reason there is a shortage of teachers is that students today do not have much experience with teaching others. I think many people have the natural ability to teach, but they do not get to use that skill in school. I believe that implementing a new curriculum that encourages students to learn by themselves and then instruct their fellow students would increase the number of students who want to pursue a degree in education. Teaching is a very rewarding career choice, but I think students don't have enough experience instructing others to know if that is one of their abilities. I think that allowing students to teach each other more in schools would increase the number of future teachers.

As I look back on my years in school, my favorite teachers were the ones who challenged me to go above and beyond. One of my favorite teachers was my second-grade teacher Mrs. Whanger. Ms. Whanger allowed certain students in her class to create posters and do their research projects on topics that they found interesting while the other students worked on different assignments. My teacher had enough trust in her students to allow them to do unsupervised research. This was an empowering experience as a second-grader. It made learning exciting and made her students feel extremely smart. Mrs. Whanger understood how to make her students passionate about learning and her always optimistic attitude kept the class engaged.

Another teacher that had a huge impact on me was my fifth-grade teacher Mr. Howard. Mr. Howard challenged me every day. He understood that some of his students were capable of higher quality work than others and he expected the best from all of his students. While most of the class worked on 5th-grade math, he selected a group of his students who were able to move ahead faster to do harder and more advanced problems in the hallway. He allowed the higher-level students to advance faster and he kept the learning environment stimulating. Mr. Howard valued his students' time and made sure that we were always working on something. Looking back, he did almost twice the amount of work than he had to just to keep the faster students busy and I will always be grateful for that.

Finally, my all-time favorite teacher was Mr. Senior. He was the teacher of my AP United States History and my AP US Government classes. What I respected the most about Mr. Senior was that he did not hesitate to give extremely large amounts of work at once. He did not budge and he did not care that his students were stressed because he gave them the tools they needed to successfully get their work done. His teaching strategies were the things that I liked about him the most. He would let his students advise him on how they learned best and he would adapt his lessons to help his students learn better. He would change his lesson plans completely to teach his students more efficiently. Mr. Senior was dependable, predictable, and made the class feel safe. That is why I liked him and his teaching strategies so much.

In conclusion, the best teachers that I have had all pushed me to be the best student that I could be. They were extremely hard working and they were not afraid to change their lesson plans to teach their class better. They were adaptive and compassionate towards their students. Also, they all expected the most from their students, and I have massive amounts of respect for them because of that.