

Teaching Experience

I have always enjoyed teaching. One of my earliest teaching experiences was in the 9th grade when I volunteered at our church summer bible camp that included children from the church and from the inner city of Washington, D.C. In my 20s, I taught Sunday school while I was stationed in Virginia Beach. However the two major teaching experiences in my life were as an instructor in the F-14 and as the youth director at the Point Mugu Naval Weapons Center Base Chapel.

I began teaching the middle school students at Pt. Mugu at the Wednesday evening Bible study and became the youth director shortly thereafter. This was not your typical church youth group. Most of the young people were on almost permanent restriction. They came to the Wednesday night group because it was the only time their parents let them out of the house after getting home from school. When I started, they were out of control. It was apparent that they were used to running unrestricted in the classroom environment. The first thing that I had to do was gain control of my own classroom. It took some creative methods, but I finally established myself as the authority in the classroom. It was obvious that until that occurred, no real teaching was taking place.

This was where I recognized that the public school systems was failing to provide students with the skills that they would need to succeed in life and seek the endeavors of their hearts. The first indication was the consistently poor reading skills by almost all of the students. It was an uphill battle because the skills, like reading and self-discipline, so foundational to learning had not been provided to these children. I could see the heart breaking paths that lay before them.

There was no curriculum. I developed my own curriculum. I spent hours in preparation for this voluntary effort. These students knew nothing of the material. I had to start with the basics. Just like in a history course, I started with who did what when. Because their abysmal reading skills, I had to come up with creative ways (like Bible jeopardy) to encourage retention. Later, I could begin to expand into principles and more abstract concepts.

One of the most rewarding experiences in my life was teaching your naval officers to fly and operate the F-14 Tomcat fighter aircraft. Like a graduate level course, the students were highly motivated and dedicated. I taught two specific classroom course areas as well as instructing in the simulators and in flight, which required in-depth knowledge in all of the course material. The teaching environment varied from a classroom of 20 students, to a simulator with two students, to the cockpit of the \$65,000,000 aircraft with one student. During my time as a professional naval flight officer instructor, I revised and re-organized both of the areas of instruction that I taught in the classroom. The stakes were

high. Carrier aviation is a very unforgiving environment. Mistakes due to poor instruction are unacceptable. There is no room for high self-esteem and low standards or out-come based education when landing on the back of an aircraft carrier for the first time at night. My life, the life of my pilot and anyone that ever flew with them were dependent on the instruction, training and my abilities to teach.

I have been in the classroom. I have done it as a professional navel officer and as a volunteer. I have taught middle school, high school and post undergraduate students. I have taught when the stakes were a little higher than the score on a standardized test.

I have also seen the impacts of poor education systems and have been working for nearly a decade to make difference in the education of children. With a civil engineering major from Duke University, I know the importance of a foundation whether it is for a building or an education. As a senior systems analyst, I know that a program must be focused on the desired results and have a process that is realistic from the first step to the last. My many years on the school board advisory committees have provided me with an insight as to the attitudes, perspectives and lack of understanding of process that is found within the FCPS administration. As a military leader, I know that the way for any organization to achieve its mission is to provide those doing the primary task (teachers) with the tools, the training and the support to get the job done while minimizing the administrative burdens on them.

With your help and your vote for the Fairfax County School Board At-Large, I will provide the leadership to emphasize the basics and to not move children along before they have the skills for the next grade level. I will work hard to ensure that teachers receive the support to provide the children the skills they need to seek the endeavors of their hearts