

Introduction

Writing this book is an exciting experience, especially as I consider who is probably reading it. Who reads a book on education when there are so many other attractive choices for spending our time? You are probably a person of passion, a person of three loves: a love for the subject you teach, a love for the students you inspire and a love for teaching. A teacher must have passion about the subject taught, especially if the students are going to love it as well. Personally, I love mathematics. I have a passion for learning about mathematical truth, studying the history of mathematics, re-reading mathematical truths first studied long ago and exploring new mathematical ideas. For me, the study of mathematics is better than sliced bread! What subject inspires you? Which subject do you love? Which set of ideas causes you joy? Your excitement will be contagious, enticing kids to invest themselves and to find joy in the subject you love.

The reader, no doubt, shares with me the love of children, the joy of being with young people who bring a certain naive freshness to our lives. They energize us with their enthusiasm about new ideas; they look at life in an unspoiled way, and they listen to our advice and life stories. Occasionally we can provide meaningful input and have a positive impact in their lives. Kids are a second passion teachers need to possess, thereby making each day of coming to work a new and rewarding adventure.

If you are reading this book, then you probably have a third passion, which is teaching your first passion, your subject, to your second, the students. Teaching mathematics to young folks, demonstrating mathematical truth to them for the first time, observing that excited look of discovery on their faces brings incomparable satisfaction to the heart of a mathematics teacher. There is a genuine adrenaline rush when the young person utters the words, "I got it!" A fellow teacher calls this the "math high." I am sure that teachers of other subjects experience this as well when chemical truths are discovered, skills of speaking and reading French are developed, the genius of Shakespeare is internalized, the events of a world war are relived and so many other new truths are enjoyed, perhaps for the first time. To be the one who introduces young minds to these great ideas is truly an amazing privilege.

Purpose

This book is about teaching, about helping students to engage in learning no matter what the subject being taught. Having passion is essential, but passion without effective teaching strategies can lead to extreme frustration. Passion should motivate the teacher to become an expert in the subject matter and to develop effective teaching skills.

