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Revelations and Inspirations: The Starting Point in a New Vocation

by Peter Zabor

Right now, I'm coming in from the cold world of business into the warmth and richness of English Literature. The ideas that spring from these pages, these phrases, these words provide ample opportunities for reflection and thought. I can extract and distill, compute and equate, align and select from the varied genius of humanity to bring into my classroom. And from the differing perspectives, the disparate world of thought that can come from history and cultures different from our own, I can find better ways to question my preconceived answers.

When I think about inspiration, I think about the reinvigoration of ideals and goals. Maybe it's because I'm a greenhorn, but I want to feel like this profession is a joyful expression of an artform, not an endeavor that requires a "survive and thrive" mentality. I'm currently a Graduate Student at The College of New Jersey (TCNJ) through their Secondary Education MAT program. This semester, I was fortunate to be able to intern and teach lessons and units on *The Crucible*, Emerson, and Jack London. The inspiration I found came not only from these works and great minds, but from the students, the faculty, and my personal learning community that I am beginning to build.

I try something new and different each day. That sort of effort brings a lot of anxiety and fear that I will fail, that my expectations will not be met. However, seeing my students working with me, trying and succeeding, is and always will be my greatest source of inspiration. From them, I can realize my goals of success. Through them, my labors and plans can come to life in a classroom we build. And with them, we grow and learn and see our efforts change us for the better. My students are why I am there, and I need to be a source of inspiration for them as they are for me.

My colleagues are an invaluable source of feedback, inspiration, and camaraderie. They are able to revitalize my spirits, refocus my aims, and clue me into new ways to imagine my classroom. I had the chance to sit in seventh, eighth, and tenth grade classrooms and the ideas that sprung from watching their craft soared my mind into wild possibilities. Supervisors and administrators that exude passion, professionalism, and determination galvanize my desire to be my ideal.

Finally, I have been wholeheartedly jumping into building a personal learning network using social media and professional development. Connecting with other teachers on Twitter through live teacher forums (usually about an hour a week, where teachers and administration can come together to answer questions about educational topics that create positive and constructive discourse), I can recharge my battery, reaffirm my beliefs and goals, and listen to colleagues across the state and the nation. By seeing such driven and idealistic people in this profession, I am motivated and inspired to rise to their ranks. I need to be continually learning and exposed to new ideas. Continuing to use these sources of inspiration and always looking for new ways to grow, I can develop as an educator and a learner.

Peter Zabor is pursuing his MAT as a Graduate Student in Secondary Education Language Arts at The College of New Jersey. He has been student teaching at both West Windsor-Plainsboro High School North and Franklin Middle School. He enjoys reading Samuel Johnson and hiking.