

Making It **Personal**:

Relevance and Rewards of Knowing Your Students



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ARE YOU LIKE ME?

Stand up if you are LEFT-handed.



Contrary to popular belief, your students need to know your history.



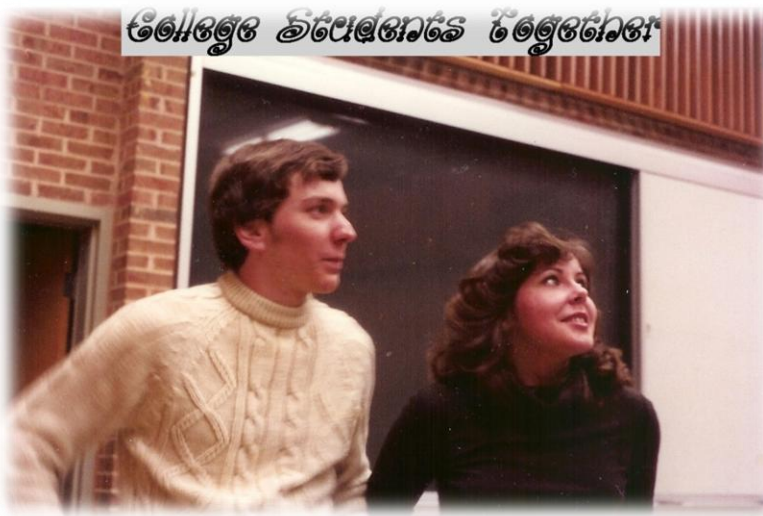
I was an alien raised by human parents—just like Superman!



Me in the “sixth grade” ...and you think you have self-esteem problems? Take a good look at that picture! You want the cool hairstyle and glasses, right? Can you spell *homely*? How about *geek*? See, life isn't *that* bad!



Contrary to popular belief, your students need to know your history.



This guy named Curt Phillips was my interpreter at AHS and VHCC.



I thought my learning dis/Abilities made it impossible to be a teacher and that college was never an option for me. I tried some regular jobs.



ARE YOU LIKE ME?

Stand up if you wear glasses.



“It is virtually impossible to personalize learning without fostering a sense of belonging.”

--William Powell

(referring to Maslow's 1999 research)



A Quote from Tara Brown, NMSA

“Some educators really struggle with this concept because they fear familiarity might create a more undisciplined atmosphere in the classroom. The fact is, the more comfortable your students are with you, the more relaxed and receptive they will be.”



ARE YOU LIKE ME?

Stand up if you like to read
mysteries.



William and Ochan Kusuma-Powell's Research

- To maximize learning, we need to dig deeper, go beyond superficial acquaintance.
- A caring and interested teacher can develop rapport and trust, not just between teacher and student but among students.
- A sense of belonging and being valued maximizes the chances that students will adjust their pre-existing mental models to accommodate new, deeper learning.



ARE YOU LIKE ME?

Stand up if you love to cook
but hate washing dishes.



A vested interest in the classroom community.

This student was frustrated when I asked him to do an introductory activity the first few days of school. He said that nobody cared what he liked, so he wasn't going to do the activity.



Give him a hand!

Here is his finished product. He went on to tell the class about himself and has since developed friendships based on trust and interests. He is a successful learner and a valued member of the class. Even the most reluctant learner wants to feel good about life.





More Powells' Research!

- Teachers often think of learning readiness as dependent on the knowledge, understanding, and skills that an individual brings into the classroom.
- Teachers need to remember that readiness is also influenced by an individual's prior learning success or failure, self-esteem, sense of efficacy, cultural norms, social status within the class or group, life experience, dispositions and attitudes, and habits of mind.



ARE YOU LIKE ME?

Stand up if you were
ever a Girl Scout or a Boy Scout.



Powells' Production Style

- According to the Powells, production styles are defined as preferred ways to express learning.
- Four production styles:
 - writers
 - performers
 - builders
 - artists
- Learning tasks are assigned to fit students' production styles.



Merlin's Cave

RATIONALE



Visiting Merlin's Cave in Tintagel, Cornwall, made it possible to able create an enriching, realistic writing experience in my classroom .

- **A majority of my students have not been outside Central Appalachia.**
- **Merlin, King Arthur, and Arthurian legends are in the curriculum.**
- **Cornwall and Southwest England are too far away for a field trip.**
- **Students need a realistic exposure to historic sites, whether fantastic or actual.**
- **Students need to own my knowledge or experience when they don't have their own.**



Activity Time!

- Watch the following looped video.
- Pay attention to the pictures and sounds.
- Imagine being in this cave all by *yourself*.
- Close your eyes and experience your visit. What is your story?
- Write freely! Use the creepy hand paper!
CASUAL style is allowed, but pay attention to writer's voice and basic mechanics/conventions!



Merlin's Cave on YouTube

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OFC4Mk_6-Lk



SHARING TIME!



Read to your neighbor!



Student Reactions to Merlin's Cave Activity





Student Reaction to Merlin's Cave Activity





Student Reaction to Merlin's Cave Activity





ARE YOU LIKE ME?

Stand up if you hate
anchovies.



AVEBURY STONES ACTIVITY

- Remove the 4x6 print that is in your baggie.
- Read the prompts on the back; notice they educate, entertain, and offer you choices.
- Using the “creepy” stationery, write a quick one or two paragraphs responding to the prompt you like most.



SHARING TIME!



Read to your neighbor!



ARE YOU LIKE ME?

Stand up if you played
a team sport when you
were a kid.



My Eternal Thanks

When I was seventeen, Dr. Bob Raines told me I should be a teacher. I laughed aloud. Twenty-three years later, I asked him to be my faculty advisor so that in my middle age, I could become a teacher. He remarked to students almost daily that it takes some people longer than others to learn. While everyone in class thought he spoke of math, I knew better!

Thanks, Dr. Bob, for having faith in me long before I had faith in myself. And thanks, Juanita, for getting after me about teaching when my daughters attended Watauga Elementary School!



“Make every day count. Make every student realize you count on them to learn.”



ARE YOU LIKE ME?

Wave if you were
in the high school band.



So many to thank...

- Virginia Highlands Community College
- Gary Aday for helping me get over my fear of public speaking
- Emory & Henry College Neff Center Professors and English Department
- Retired principal Belinda Mullins for giving me a classroom
- Appalachian Writing Project/National Writing Project
- David Lambert, Principal of Wallace Middle School
- Jeff and Mike for video taping my classes
- Mr. Tom McGlothlin and the McGlothlin Foundation
- my family for their willingness to let me be on sabbatical for extended periods of time since 2003



ARE YOU LIKE ME?

Stand up if you have
eaten all the candy
that was in your baggie.



Consumable Artifacts!

- If your Avebury Stones Sheet has one of the following numbers, claim your prize at the end of the presentation!

37

75

3

104

11

59

88



How Well Do You Know Your Students?

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Weq_sHxghcg



Sources

Brown, Tara. The Power of Positive Relationships. Middle Ground Magazine. National Middle School Association. August 10, 2010, pp. 8-10.

Powell, William and Ochan Kusuma-Powell, How to Teach Now: Five Keys to Personalized Learning in the Global Classroom. Association for Supervision & Curriculum Development (June 2011), pp. 26-54.



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