

I love teaching, but I'll share a little secret with you: I still sometimes walk into a lesson scared shitless. (Sorry, that's how it was described in my home state of Missouri.) Perhaps I didn't sleep well, or didn't do enough preparation, or just looked in the mirror in the morning and said to myself, "What the heck am I doing?"

Improvisation has always been one of my strong points. I sometimes think I should have been a stand-up comedian. But teaching makes room for that dream as well, albeit I'm usually sitting down.

Imagination is also a prerequisite for teaching. If you have none, you will lose the battle with freshness and your students will soon be looking out the window.

Personally, I have the added advantage of having a long-term severe case of ADHD. I can't sit still. I go to sleep planning and wake up scheming. I write poems in my head while picking cherries in our garden and file complete lesson plans in my inner folders while driving to work. And my school is only 7 minutes from my house. My wife sees me staring at the wall and thinks I am just lazing in my nothing box. Actually, I'm squarely planted with both feet on the planet of fascination walking the streets of curiosity.

All of the above may explain why I started teaching, but why do I keep doing it? Simple. I see a sparkle in the eyes of those staring at me across the desks as they grasp a new idea. I read homework that amazes me in its use of the language. I observe students helping one another understand something like little disciples of the great me. (Only joking. I think....) I get a call or an email from a former student who has found success and credits me with at least having a small part in it.

Teaching is not the best paying job in the world if you are talking about money. But in terms of satisfaction, I'm a millionaire.