

I Teach to bring out the children's dreams they hold inside.
I Teach so that they build words to powerfully verbalize.
I Teach them that they have the power to
a c t u a l i z e
Their *Highest Potential*.

I Teach so that students know
that there are adults who in them *Believe*.
I Teach so that our entire Chaffey High School can *Achieve*.
I Teach because I have a web of Educators
linked around me offering their support.
I Teach for the Chaffey District, for California, and my Region 10 cohort.

And the next time someone tells me that they can't believe I Teach,
especially when they do so condescendingly...
I'll reiterate,
proudly and loudly:
I TEACH!

For *You are why* I Teach
and *They are why* I Teach.
I Teach to inspire.
I Teach to change the world.
I Teach to be a change agent,
a builder of bridges.

I Teach to remind you of that which you are.
I Teach to show the world
that a computer program can
never replace our
Teacher-Stars.

For *This is why* I Teach
They are why I Teach
And *You are why* I TEACH.

-M P (CLHS
Region 10 Educator of the Year, 2012)



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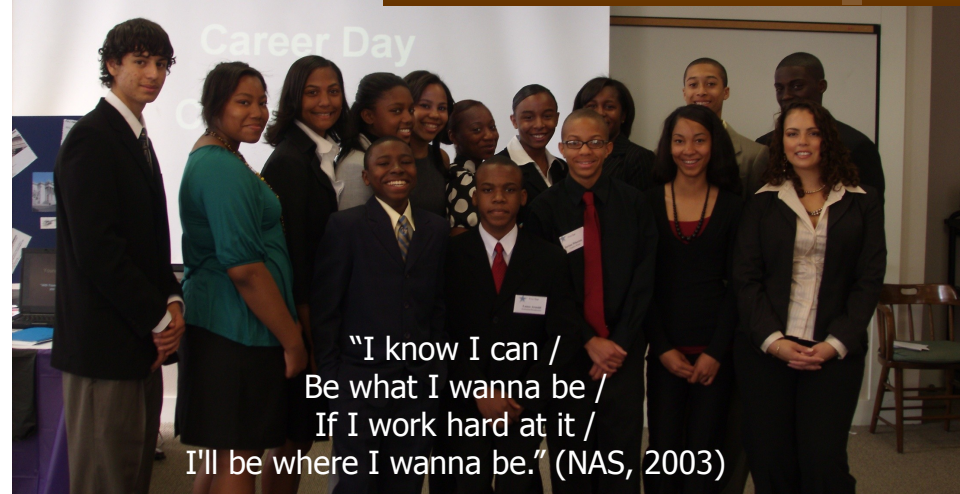


I Teach
by M.P.

"Whether you think you can or
think you can't, you are right."
Henry Ford



"We must teach our children to dream
with their eyes open." Harry Edwards



"I know I can /
Be what I wanna be /
If I work hard at it /
I'll be where I wanna be." (NAS, 2003)

I Teach

I was advised to write a speech
about what inspires me,
the reasons I Teach:

So paragraph after paragraph I diligently drafted
vignettes of my childhood: letters-to-Santa, carefully crafted,
requesting that he stuff down the chimney a great big blackboard with chalk
instead of the latest Cabbage Patch that could talk.
I retold how my teenage mother was my very first instructor,
followed by influential teachers and a whole host of others.

So as a child when adults told me that "It" would be too hard,
I knew then and there that if I were going to go far,
then I would have to break the barrier of expectation.
I knew I'd have to perform at the top of the nation.
Especially since I was what they called, "First Generation."

So later on (and to many's surprise), when I graduated from UCSB
and enrolled in Claremont Graduate University for a master's degree,
I was just twenty one when I began my Teacher Education.
And now eleven years later, I'm still committing my complete dedication
to transforming the system allowing for equitable restoration.
After all, this has been a pedagogical mission, of my own delegation.

Oh, Uh, Okay, *Why* I Teach-
I Teach to know that I am alive.
I Teach so that students will try.
I Teach so that I can remind
them of their *Highest Potential*.

Where I Teach- I Teach in sunny Southern California, Ontario to be exact.
My student population is predominantly Latino, low income, and I know I have an impact.
English Language Arts is technically what I Teach,
but also a course called AVID which makes me a sort of "doctor" of the A-Gs.
By the way, who would have known that such a simple alphabetical mnemonic device would be the key,
one that unlocked a gate, sort of clandestinely?

I Teach the A-Gs.
I Teach subjects
of interdisciplinary.
I Teach to know that I am not alone.
I Teach kids to negotiate their ego.

I Teach compassion, and selflessness, and forgiveness with grace.
I'll teach here, and there, and any other space.
I Teach the Essential Measurements Standards
and whatever else is put in place.
So give me the new Common Core
and I'll teach that too plus so much more.

I Teach from my classroom, my iPad, iPhone, and home office.
But more importantly,
I Teach from the heart.
You see, from the very start
I've wanted to make a difference.

So for seven years of Saturdays I've taught
a program called College Bound
and to me it means a lot.
It provides academic enrichment and opportunity to minority students from all around.
And because its focus is on the African American population,
well, it's my counter combat against disenfranchisement across our nation.

For I believe that Education
Is the primary mechanism of legacy we leave our next generation.
And because I was the first in my family to get a college degree,
I now want ALL my students to be all they can be,
and I'm not talking about The Army- though that has its own special calling.

You see, when my students look at me,
I want them to see their own path, realistically.
So I Teach ten year college and career plans.
I Teach oral presentation, workplace readiness skills, and how to graciously take a stand.
I Teach personal advocacy
and I reach the reluctant kid that I used to be.

I Teach for department chairs like Trevor
whose leadership style is most clever.
I Teach for SLC teacher leaders like Aiken and Mr. Q.
For they connect our kids to our campus, they are the glue.
They build community and help to personalize learning for all,
and they are the teachers who pick me up when I fall.

I Teach for guidance counselors like Leticia whose alpha group is rough.
I Teach *for* our *colored girls* who did commit *suicide* because their *rainbow* wasn't *enough*.
I Teach for students like Ana, Darrence, and Dymonique.
I Teach for ALL the students who live on D street.
I Teach to show young girls that brains are far more valuable than what beholds the eyes.
