

American Education Week Essay
Elisabeth Forrester
Wilson Middle School 7G

As John Lubbock once said, "The important thing is not so much that every child should be taught, as that every child should be given the desire to learn." This quote is meaningful because every child *should* want to learn and discover all they can about the world around them. There are many people who can influence that curiosity in children, and not surprisingly, some of the most significant role models are teachers. Teachers can really help students to achieve that drive to learn, by showing them the joys of discovery and the satisfaction of making connections to the real world around them. As you may know, math has a reputation for being difficult, complicated and boring, but I don't feel that way at all! Last year, Mr. Christman was my math teacher, and he encouraged me to appreciate the complex techniques used in mathematical systems, taking it to a new level of understanding, and inspiring me to learn so much more about them. As my math teacher, Mr. Christman had three qualities that helped contribute to my love of the subject. He made the lessons enjoyable with his sense of humor and bubbly personality, he was always willing to help students in any capacity, and he had excellent communication skills that consistently kept the students engaged.

Mr. Christman has a unique ability to make math class fun, entertaining and lively, with his sense of humor and bubbly personality. The classroom always

had a positive vibe, and that made learning a lot more enjoyable. He would even tell us funny stories sometimes! As with all classes we were assigned homework, but he made it more tolerable, often by writing amusing things on the homework board. I remember we once got a homework assignment that simply encouraged us to “stay fresh”. I’m sure that putting a positive spin on homework really helped others as well as myself to have fun while practicing our math techniques. His positive attitude and sense of humor really made the class enjoyable, and therefore inspired me to love math and want to learn so much more!

Teaching requires patience, and Mr. Christman was always willing to help students in any capacity. If you don’t understand a topic, it is important that you feel safe and comfortable asking questions, knowing you would receive a thoughtful and helpful response. Mr. Christman would always answer any questions the class had and made sure that everybody was comfortable with the material. For example, if students in the class didn’t show understanding of a part of the lesson, he would create example problems so the class could practice and see the work done one more time. When I understood the math being taught, it became easier and more rewarding to explore other math concepts, and this influenced my continued interest in mathematics.

Lastly, Mr. Christman’s superior communication skills helped to grow my learning mindset. He is very good at conveying math topics to his students. This is

important because when topics are explained to me in a way that I can understand, they are easier to learn. He would personalize his lessons so that the specific grade level he was teaching could get the most out of the class. For example, he would use terms familiar to the students, and incorporate aspects of modern culture into word problems. I remember he wrote a word problem involving purchasing pairs of shoes called "Crocs" for you and your friends, to help convey the topic of ratios and proportions. Mr. Christman's good communication made for a more rewarding learning experience, and connected math to the real world in a way that I could understand and relate to.

John Lubbock's quote is insightful and true, and I can understand and relate to what he is trying to convey. Mr. Christman's energetic personality and sense of humor, willingness to help, and excellent communication skills all helped me to achieve that desire to learn. I even joined my school's math club, MathCounts, because I wanted to explore challenging math and logic puzzles. We are learning so many interesting things, and I'm glad I took that opportunity. Having that love of learning is important, and I hope that Mr. Christman continues to inspire children to take their education to the next level!