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*Link: <https://www.owlypia.org/teachers-dont-just-educate-they-inspire/>*

## **Teachers don't just educate, they inspire!**

Ok, so the title is a bit misleading because we can all remember some teachers we just didn't like and who seemed to give us more headaches than inspiration. However, that's not what this blog is about! Instead, I'd like to take a moment to share with you who I think was one of my best teachers in high school.

One of the teachers I have very fond memories of is my physics teacher. He was an older man with a crazy beard and the same outfit for every day: photos of him twenty years younger showed that he wore exactly the same clothes back then! I think this made him seem a little strange. However, now that I am a bit older, I think it's kind of cool. Why would you change a winning outfit?

He was polite and friendly to students, but it was clear he wasn't trying to be the students' friend. For instance, he used the formal pronoun for addressing the group of students, which is unusual in this situation. He did once explain why, but sadly this is too far back in my memory to remember. Maybe he thought using somewhat formal language added to creating a professional work environment, and he might have hoped this would make students pay more attention in class?

The teacher seemed very serious about his field and approached the classes in an organised manner: he would explain new topics by drawing and writing on the board whilst talking about the subject. He also frequently made us take small exams. In the class following such an exam he would show us pre-made drawings of the answers and how to get there using an overhead projector. This allowed students to figure out what they did wrong and how they can do better at the bigger exams. One key tip that is etched into my memory is to take a close look at the information provided in the exam question or assignment *before* you start solving the problem. Sometimes you are given 'extra' pieces of information you don't actually need and that might just send you down the wrong path.

In addition to the regular course work, there were a few 'special' demonstrations. The one I remember best is when people from a university came over with fancy equipment to teach us more about radiation. One of the pieces of kit they brought with them was a 'box' with which you could look at things using X-rays. I think one of the objects to explore with it was a mummified monkey hand! These demonstrations made the theory seem much more relevant, and I am grateful to our teacher for going the extra mile to organise this.

Although I found many topics in the physics class interesting, the subject wasn't easy for me. My grade was sufficient but it wasn't amazing. Towards my final exam I started paying more attention to things I previously considered 'useless details'. I also pushed myself to work in a very organised fashion and clearly write out intermediate steps. These are all things I learnt in class, and this approach helped me obtain an excellent grade for my final exam.

My teacher not only taught me well, he also inspired me to consider teaching because I experienced first-hand how much of a difference a good teacher can make. His teaching style has helped me when I was a teaching assistant myself, and the love he showed for his field inspired me to find a field that I love just as much!