

Good teaching is so much more than a series of intellectual directives given by one person to another. It is the intellectual and emotional exchange between teacher and student. Although the final measure by which we usually evaluate effective teaching is the quality of students' minds, it is certainly true that the best teaching begins in a teacher's heart. As a teacher, I strive to give **To Each A Caring Heart**. That is the source from which all of my teaching grows.

First and foremost, I focus my attention on my students. I care about them as students and as people, and I want them to know that. Therefore, I insist on learning their names early and well. I ask them about their academic and nonacademic interests and try to be actively supportive of them in all of their pursuits. Just as I make an effort to engage them as whole people, I am willing to open myself up to them. I share some of my own professional and personal goals. I try to nurture relationships with students by being available to meet with them individually or in groups outside the classroom. The most productive classrooms require that students begin to know and care about each other as well. In an effort to achieve that, I also insist that students know each other's names. Breaking down these personal barriers threatens many students, so I always seek to inject some levity and humor into the classroom. All of these efforts are made in order to create a sense of community which will carry us through the course. My goal is that we become a community with a common purpose.

Having begun to know each other, we now turn to know other people, people from an earlier time. I am, after all, a historian, and our journey is one into the past. History is such a rich and rewarding subject to study; we use a people-centered approach to examine the issues and events that have shaped our world, for better and for worse. Focusing on people, we are able to see their fears, their intentions, their hopes, and their aspirations. Through them, we begin to know the larger historical context in which they lived and the various perspectives through which they saw the world around them. By this process, we see beyond ourselves and beyond our present. I hope to encourage my students to develop a genuine interest in history born of a desire to understand humanity more completely rather than of a desire merely to answer the questions on an upcoming test.

Having invested ourselves emotionally in the journey, we now think more critically about the lives and worlds of historical actors. As the teacher, I set up situations intended to challenge the students. Role-playing exercises and planned debates invite them to wrestle with history's complicated and controversial issues. In

March of 1998, I led a discussion in which the students came prepared to discuss a book about the women of the Ku Klux Klan. Frankly, I anticipated disaster. The book was dry, the subject matter was repugnant. The hour we devoted to discussion, however, was one that I will always cherish. Rather than dodge the potentially explosive issues associated with these subjects, I confronted them directly. I divided the students into two groups and presented them with a question to debate: Were the women of the Ku Klux Klan just like any other "Progressive" women's organization of the 1920s? That is, were the members of this group, associated with racism and violence, acting as forward-looking reformers seeking to effect positive change? Half of the class groaned when they were assigned the task of defending the actions of Women's Klan members; their side of the debate was not only less popular, but also more difficult to support with evidence.

To my pleasant surprise, with just a little bit of encouragement these students began to imagine how they would have viewed the world had they been those very women. Shortly thereafter, the entire class became so engrossed in the debate that they ignored me. They never looked to me for guidance; they assumed all responsibility for the class discussion. They eagerly took risks; they vigorously defended their teammates' contributions; and they forcefully, though respectfully, challenged the opposition's claims. Throughout, they invested themselves more and more in the issues at hand. By the end of the hour, they had suspended their 1990s sensibilities; they had adopted a 1920s frame of mind and persuasively argued for their respective positions. The class was a great success; the students had demonstrated a mastery of the material, a commitment to working together, and an enthusiasm for engaging a controversial historical issue. Central to the success of this debate, I believe, was the fact that these students had learned to care about historical actors and that they had worked throughout the semester to develop a supportive classroom community. My hope is that this debate led students to reflect more critically about their own lives and the roles they play in sustaining and changing the world they know.

As a teacher, I open my heart and mind to students so that I can in some way touch their minds and hearts. To focus on one without the other is to miss the point of teaching. I know I will not succeed with each of my students; in fact, I would not be surprised to learn that I succeed with only a few. But I will continue to aim high and hope that my students will develop the minds to question the world that was and develop a heart to care about changing the world that is.