

## Why I Want to Teach

When I was in eleventh grade, I got an amazing opportunity. I was told another student and I could co-direct the middle school play. Though nervous, I was thrilled to get to try directing, and it turned out that I was not half bad at it. We split up our jobs to make things easier. So, essentially she worked on the blocking, and I worked on the acting.

When we discussed the schedule, we decided that in addition to night rehearsals, it would also be good to play acting games with them once a week after school. So, once a week I took on a group of fifteen seventh and eighth graders and led them in acting exercises. Though at times they were frustrating, they were a great group of kids. However, out of all of them, one especially stood out.

He was about a foot shorter than the rest of the kids, and he suffered from a mental handicap. He had some trouble speaking and his motor skills were poorer. Due to this, he became easily frustrated and was often too intimidated by the other kids to join in on the games.

So, I talked to him a lot. I would even stop an exercise half way through to talk to him about how he could join in, or just to tell him about the amazing abilities that I knew he had, if he could find a way to let go. Throughout the course of our afternoons and talks, he grew steadily more involved, though never jumping in until I would ask or coax him to do so. That, I thought, was still improvement. However, I had no idea what would happen next.

The last day, after their matinee performance, I asked who wanted to play the first round of a game. That is when the little boy looked at me, with a smile I had

never seen before, and he raised his hand. When I called on him, he raced to the stage to play, and that was the moment that I knew teaching was right for me.

As I watched him play that game, tears welled up in my eyes. I had never seen him so confident and so happy to be with the other kids. That was the point when I realized that I needed to be a teacher, especially a middle school teacher. I realized it was not even just that boy who had grown, but also every other kid there. Around puberty is one of the hardest ages to have confidence in oneself, and as I watched the kids play, I knew I wanted to spread that confidence that they felt to others the same age.