



Sue White: Guiding Students on the Intellectual Journey

The sophomore Honors English class at La Salle High School in Milwaukie, Oregon, studied Charlotte Bronte's classic novel, *Jane Eyre*, last year. Besides learning something about nineteenth-century English society – and an eccentric hero named Rochester – they also discovered a new way of learning.

As class began, their teacher, Sue White, told them there would be no tests and no lectures. Instead,

“One of the things that makes Lasallian schools unique is that we train students to be thoughtful, value-oriented, Christian leaders.” – Cecilia Powers

students would participate in an open forum discussion of the novel while Ms. White would sit in the back of the room and award points for their contributions.

At first, students would raise their hands and look to her to call on them. “Don’t raise your hands, just talk,” student Kristyn Martz recalls Ms. White saying.

“I’m not your leader in this discussion. You need to do this on your own.”

But if she was a silent witness, Ms. White’s role wasn’t at all passive. Noticing one day that one student was unusually quiet in class, Ms. White caught up with her later to ask why. It turned out that she hated *Jane Eyre*. In the next class, the student explained her disdain for the novel to her classmates, and a lively class discussion – on a new and higher level – ensued.

Another student, Jane Scrutton, talks about Ms. White’s great expectations. “At first, I was very intimidated by her because she pushes you to a level you’re not quite sure you can achieve,” Jane says. “But, in the end, Ms. White helps you see that you were able to reach a higher level than you thought possible.”

Sue White knows that she’s challenging her students. “I expect students to work hard,” she says, “and I don’t back down.” Instead, her strategy is to “tell students [her]

expectations and help them get there,” she says. “You have to keep working with them. You can’t let them slip through the cracks. When they start to see that success results from their own hard work, then they catch on. Some of them have never felt that success before, and it’s especially gratifying to help them make that connection.”

Loreva Bromley: Providing a Safe Environment That encourages Exploration

Math teacher Mary Mills was “tough as nails with a heart of gold,” recalls Loreva Bromley, whose career was inspired by Mills. “Nobody goofed off in her class, but I felt safe and validated, and stretched to the max.” Specifically, she remembers a day in her senior year, when Miss Mills stopped the class to tell her she “was doing just wonderfully,” Ms. Bromley says. “All of a sudden, I felt smart. It was absolutely thrilling.” Mills is “a huge part of why I’m teaching today.”

Knowing how students thrive in that supportive kind of environment, Ms. Bromley has done her best to recreate it in her math classroom at La Salle High School in Milwaukie, Oregon.

Part of her strategy as a teacher is “to keep [students] working from bell to bell,” but the atmosphere is relaxed enough that “students feel they can take risks in my classroom and jump in and try a problem,” Ms. Bromley says. “I think I am good at getting students of all different levels to stretch their abilities.”

Recalling a college professor who was always telling his classes how much he loved them, Ms. Bromley does the same with hers.

