

5 Ways to Share Your Passion for Learning

by Jordan Catapano

Many teachers would verify that they entered the field of teaching because they love it. Not only do they love teaching others, but the subject material they teach thrills them. Stories abound of would-be teachers switching out of college majors to pursue the career they love. In other cases, teachers work with their subject material - whether it be English, Math, Science, or whatever - in arenas beyond just their classroom. They gravitate towards those venues. They feel complete when they work with and talk about what they love.

And then they meet students who are, shall we say, not quite as enthusiastic. Some teachers can be caught up in a moment of pure passion when talking about a topic without realizing their audience doesn't exactly sympathize with their sentiment.

The truth is that teachers regularly love "this stuff," whatever it is they may be teaching. The question is, "How can passionate teachers get their students to be passionate, too?" After all, unless students have some degree of interest in the topic, they are not going to be motivated to excel.

1. **Be open with your own passion.** It's unbelievably boring to learn from someone who doesn't even seem to care about what they are saying. It's incredibly inspiring, on the other hand, to have someone talk about a topic with pure joy. If you love something, then show it. It's contagious.
2. **Regularly apply your passion, and tell your students.** Be an example. If you were thinking about something, working on a project, or just walking along and found something interesting that relates to class, tell your students about the experience. What you and your students talk about doesn't have to be isolated to your classroom. Let them see how what you're teaching applies to the world beyond the classroom.
3. **Get students to apply it, too.** Whatever your content is, if students have experience applying that knowledge to more than a test, they'll be hooked. The world is diverse and fascinating. Classrooms, on the other hand, are abysmally isolating at times. Give them a glimpse of the real world.
4. **Passion is cool.** At least, that's what we adults think. Students often shy away from becoming too "academic" or "nerdy" because school isn't always presented as something cool. But it is. Constantly remind students that being smart, passionate, engaged people is cool - and give them plenty of opportunities to be cool.
5. **Set goals and reward improvement.** When students set a goal for their own academic growth, half the battle is already won. Now they have an internal motivating factor that will help propel them to that next level of success. And lavishly reward students who make any improvements.

Turning even just one student onto a particular topic is not easy, and getting an entire class passionate is a true challenge. But with the right enthusiastic atmosphere, students might just realize that learning can be really, really cool.