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TE 803 Reflection

Ever since I've learned about inquiry cycles and EPE tables, I can't help but realize how often I use these tools of learning as a student. I've always been one to need multiple examples, before I can see patterns that are going on. Looking back on it, I see that some of most frustrating classes here at MSU are inquiry based, but also some of my favorites are as well. One of my favorite classes I've taken is a humanities class, in which my teacher would give us bits of information and then ask us what we could see from that. The class was discussion based, which gave all the students a chance to speak their minds. But since we all would talk anyway, we quickly learned that you had to respect others' comments in order to get respect for yours. One of the most frustrating classes is general chemistry, and I think I figured out why freshmen, year after year, struggle with this class. Chemistry is taught here with lots of embedded questions, the professors are always asking another question of the class. This is so frustrating to a student with no background knowledge on the subject, but the students who know the information needed, this is the best way to learn. Perhaps most people struggle with this style of lecture, because they either don't have the background knowledge needed, or just flat out aren't used to inquiry learning.

So what does that mean to me, and my teaching? It's simple. A good teacher has both struggled and been successful as a student him or herself. This teacher knows what to look for, they know the "tells" involved. I think it's important to set up a class as an environment that is safe for students to share what they think. I think this is not taught, but the students will pick it up if the teacher establishes this in the classroom. I also think that a good teacher gives multiple examples for students to find patterns in. Without the multiple observations, it is near impossible to find those key patterns. Both of these will present an inquiry based learning environment in the classroom.

So to sum it all up: PV=nRT

This is the Ideal Teaching Evirnonment Law. P is passion, teachers must be passionate about their subject area. V is for voice that you give to students; too often students are just the audience in classrooms. Next is n, I like to think of it as the nerd factor. If you are not afraid to show your nerdy side and appreciation for knowledge, you're not ready to teach science. R is a constant, it stands for respect. Respect for others, equipment and for yourself. Lastly, T stands for time. A good teacher must be willing to put that extra time in to accomplish their set goals.

A teacher cannot just present information, but they must also allow students to invest some of their own time and energy into finding the information.