

Katie Wilson

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"Teaching from 'the Back of the Class'"

This was by far the most inspirational workshop I have attended. John Freer sparked something in me that I had lay to rest many moons ago. That being that students who sit in the back of the classroom often do so because they feel underqualified to answer questions or be in the school in general; a feeling of stupidity or inferiority often overwhelms them. I used to sit in the back of the classroom for that reason. I thought I wasn't good enough or smart enough to answer questions, that my voice didn't matter. Especially in grade 3. This is because someone made the "back of the class" feel inferior. A seemingly harmless, or intentionally harmful comment when they were younger sent these misfits into a spiral of inferiority and to the back row.

Freer made it clear that as a teacher it is our duty to find the potential in every student and show them they can achieve it. This can be done by encouraging them, showing your own enthusiasm and potential, and humanizing yourself to your students. The world is not built on survival of the fittest, even though that is what many believe. Education is a system that often seems to follow that notion. When in reality life and education is about survival of adaptability. As a student if you do not understand a concept, it is our duty to seek out another way or ask for help. As a teacher it is our duty to offer as many ways to a concept as possible, and always be open to more. You must also be flexible when you are a teacher.

A classroom should be a space where students and teachers can make mistakes and it is not detrimental to their social or intelligence standing. Learning is messy. It is about trial and error, and feeling inferior but knowing you are not. Also appreciating that some people have more knowledge in a subject than you, but using that conversation to gain knowledge. Rather than walking away from the conversation feeling inferior.