

That question... That question we are asked usually sooner than later, Where do you work? What do you do? That question that once seemed so easy to answer, is upon retrospect, not.

I once jokingly quoted Tennyson saying, "I mete and dole unequal laws unto a savage race that hoard, and sleep, and feed, and know not me." (The long suffering teacher...That's what I was expected to say.)

But, I didn't like saying that. I didn't like it because it was not true. What we do cannot be explained to those who not done it. So I hid the truth behind those harsh words of Tennyson.

You understand, for what we do means too much to each of us to share with others who have never known the world in which we teachers live.

Go back with me to my college years. Now that's a long journey back in time. We were University of Florida graduate students-- TA's. Professor Helstrom or was it Professor Bigelow told us he was considering writing a book and we would need to do the research.

His core idea was a search of the literature for the exact moment when learning had taken place. He gave as an example—the exact moment an ape realizes it could use a tool to accomplish a task. However the professor required that the literary events we were to find, the learning must have taken place when one human learned from having been taught by another human.

The next week after a week of searching separately we all met with the professor. The professor was not pleased as he looked at the papers we handed him for all three of us without each other's knowledge had chosen the same literary event. May I share with you that event?

With the feel of water and the touch of another's hand...where once all was the void of silence and of darkness for Helen, now was light... The bright light of knowledge. Were once there was desolation and aloneness for Helen, now there was warmth.

I speak of the teacher Annie Sullivan and the blind and deaf child Helen Keller chronicled in the Miracle Worker when Annie spells the word “w a t e r” onto Helen’s hand as Helen feels the wetness of the water.

Of course the learning of our students is not as moving as that of the child and her teacher, yet our lives as teachers here at Florida Community College are full of moments to be remembered.

For to be a teacher is to have students learn .

To see that spark happen when learning takes place is to see MAGIC.

**For teaching like LOVE is the closest we human beings come to
MAGIC.**

For those moments,

for those years,

for that MAGIC,

and most importantly for each of you,

I thank you for this lifetime we have shared.

And I will not forget.

I'm not certain when I started doing it. Perhaps twenty or so years ago more or less. Now it's automatic. Each pay check I receive from FCCJ... As I endorse it... Just above my signature I write the words, "Thank you."

If you seek that which I am most proud, then turn, look beyond this room. Look at that which surrounds us. Then, turn back and see each other.

Sadly, too often, happiness resides not in the moment it happens but in the remembrance (or memory of that moment).

We make a living from what we get. We make a life by what we give.

As I walk away from this place, this time, and each of you...

As I see what I am leaving, I shall be very sad.