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A Significant Moment in My Life

When I looked around my new classroom at all the brand-new students and saw everyone looking at me, dead silent, waiting to get started, waiting for me to say something, I didn’t expect it to be a moment I’d want to remember. In fact, at that time, all I wanted to do was go home and forget about the whole thing.

I had just begun my new job as a middle school teacher at a charter school in Pleasant Grove, Utah. I had zero teaching experience going in, and I had always loathed public speaking throughout all my life up until that point. I was always described by everyone I met as quiet, so getting up in front of thirty ninth graders to talk about computer programming was a daunting prospect. I had a huge lump in my throat, and I could hardly even think, let alone start a lesson.

In that moment I really realized what imposter syndrome felt like for the first time. I had no experience as a teacher, and I didn’t go to university for a degree in education like my coworkers. I was a lot closer in age to my students than the other teachers, and there I was, needing to act like I knew what I was talking about and make sure everyone believed that I belonged there. I had interviewed for the job because I needed to make some more money, even though the listing said that it required a bachelor’s degree, so I was completely shocked when I received an offer for the position. I only had a week beforehand to prepare my curriculum and get ready for the school year, so I was feeling extremely unprepared, and more nervous that I had in years.

As the class began and I started talking about the basics of web development, things like HTML, and elements of a web page, all my anxiety started to just wash away. I realized that there was nothing to be intimidated by, and that I was really enjoying showing my students something I was passionate about. It was even better when they started to reciprocate, getting excited when they could change the color of the text on their screens, or add random pictures they found online to their website. I found that it was really fulfilling to see them learning and seeing them at least hopefully, enjoying what they were doing in my class.

In just that short moment, I realized that I had found a career path that I could enjoy, and find fulfillment in. It was extremely gratifying for me as someone who always felt like they had a hard time communicating with people their whole life, to be able to do it in a manner that began to feel natural and exciting. It’s a moment I’ll remember for the rest of my life.