

Troglodyte: (n) a person who is regarded as being deliberately ignorant or old-fashioned



See this? This is me. I have never blogged in my life. I don't keep in touch with Facebook. I don't tweet. I don't text. I don't own a cell phone. You might ask yourself "Then what is he doing with a computer science degree?" I'll tell you.

I don't know.



Early in my life I received some very good advice from my grandfather. He said get a job doing what you love. If that doesn't pay the bills, then get a job doing what you can stand and make what you love your hobby. So that's what I did. I like programming. I get frustrated by computers quite often. Who doesn't. It's a living, and a good one.

But what I love doing and what I would rather do than anything else in the world is... teach. So, you can imagine how excited I am to be joining JHU. My cup just overfloweth like anything.

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I'm not actually that hard to get in touch with. My email is [bdillon5@jhu.edu](mailto:bdillon5@jhu.edu). I can be reached there most times of the day and I will monitor it closely. Even in the middle of the workday you might get a response in a matter of minutes. I will certainly get in touch with you within a day. It won't be that hard to find me when I am responsible for a class, but when I unplug, I unplug big time.

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I started teaching when I was in high school. As a senior, I joined a program to mentor second graders and after a few months I was the only one still showing up. Pretty soon I found myself in charge of two whole classes once a week to teach them something (mostly science). After completing my degree, I moved back into the area and continued presenting to the same classes. That continued until the two teachers, my very good friends retired a few years ago.

I like to make learning fun. I have taken on any number of educational events in order to make sure the kids enjoy. A few years ago, I used purple cabbage to make "smoothies" and demonstrated the pH scale to some middle school kids. You could read [one example](#) from a local newspaper. (No one was hurt I swear. Okay, one person was hurt, but it was an adult and no one should try to take sharp metal from an excited teenager.) The short version is that I enjoy it and I see no reason why anyone else should feel otherwise.

I also believe in seeing the problem your way. When I was growing up I learned about decimal places. I understood the names of the places, but it seemed like something was wrong. There were hundreds, tens, and ones. There were hundredths, tenths, but no ONETHS. I wanted to find the oneths and no one really cared. I didn't find the answer to that question until I was in high school and learned about scientific notation. I believe strongly that anyone can master a subject, but often the presentation is just a mismatch for that person. In my office hours you will probably see me presenting multiple alternative examples until we find the right one. Hopefully you will value this as much as I do.

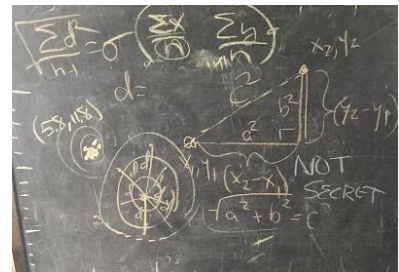
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I guess the final thing to know about my educational philosophy is how I teach my own children. My wife and I have four and we homeschool them all. I want them to see and touch everything, make connections. My best success to date was when my oldest daughter worked out that history of Spartacus, Julius Caesar, Mark Anthony, Brutus, and Augustus all culminated in Mary and Joseph walking to Bethlehem. I try to make sure that all the little pieces come together to make a coherent picture of the world. These pictures show some of the things we have done as part of “school”.



Setting up a tent. This really shouldn't be a lost art, but most people think camping includes a recreational vehicle. We go camping, make our own fires, pitch shelters against the rain, and cook on an open flame.

This is what our home chalkboard looks like. I was teaching them how to find the statistical variance of a cluster of data points on an x-y plane. This was not the only time we caught this on camera. Usually we have arguments over how to solve problems and they all get involved with a piece of chalk. The competition between siblings is great for developing their thinking processes.



This is my youngest daughter on one of our trips. She found a luna moth and we just happened to have a book with pictures of insects in it. She got to put the real creature into a context that was more educational, but perhaps less tangible. It helped a lot.

Last summer I took a trip to Texas for my work. We brought the whole family. Somehow we managed to fit in a number of stops along the way including a visit to the town where they film the Walking Dead, eating seafood right on the gulf coast, touring the Austin PD's training center, meeting the Texas Rangers, and swimming in the natural spring-fed lake in the center of Austin. I try not to let such opportunities go by without taking full advantage of every minute. Exhausting for the parents, but unforgettable for the kids.





This summer my oldest daughter joined a bunch of teenagers in a pioneer reenactment. It was a lot of fun and we wanted her to be authentic, so I designed, cut and sewed a full pioneer outfit from scratch. She was not the only kid with pioneer clothes, but possibly the only one with clothes made by her father.

Last of all, I will do anything to help get a point across. And yes, this is me blowing up lungs to demonstrate the shape. Possibly the grossest thing you have ever seen, but not the grossest thing I have ever done.



I hope you have a fun semester. I'm looking forward to it. 😊