Influencer

Particularly when I think about my artistic development, few people have had as much influence on me as my former middle school and high school drama teacher Janet McLaughlin. For much of my childhood I was home schooled, which came with some advantages and disadvantages. When I went to public high school it would have been easy to feel out of place. Drama helped me find my voice and confidence to stand on a stage in front of an audience and perform a role.

More than just the value of performance, Mrs. McLaughlin set a very high standard for her students, expecting us to be responsible for not only learning our lines and blocking, but also for developing our characters. She gave regular notes during our rehearsals and di not pull punches. Still, when we did well, she fostered an environment of celebrating successes together. When we failed to live up to what she knew we could do, she challenged us to improve without belittling us or condescending to us.

Overall, she taught that while fun is an essential part of the artistic process, so is hard work. These principles serve me well know as I wrestle with learning to code. It reminds me a lot of theater. We must learn our lines and deliver them correctly to not disrupt the flow of the production. There will always be challenges and setbacks and always more development we can do to bring our ideas to life.