

# I Don't Remember the Lesson

Jose L. Mosqueda

I had many math teachers; my father was one of them. My dad was an accountant, so he knew math. I do not remember his lessons, but I do remember the anxiety I felt when my dad asked to see my assignments, and the physical punishment I received if I made a mistake.

Then there was Mr. Terrazas, my very strict math teacher in middle school. Do not ask me about those lessons; I do not remember any. What I remember is the yelling and intimidation I felt when Mr. Terrazas stared at our work while he walked between the desks.

What else do I remember? I remember failing Algebra, Calculus, and Statistics and then having to re-take those classes.

Somehow, I graduated. I may not have done well in math class, but I understood the language of math. It drew me in because math, unlike any

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other language in the world, is universal. It transcends race, gender, ethnicity, political bias, and social status. Once I realized this, I wanted to share it with others. That is when I decided to become a math teacher. I've been teaching

math, mainly to adult learners, for about 25 years.

A few years ago, I noticed that it was hard for me to focus during work meetings and even during conversations with my friends and family. This was a big concern because it was affecting my performance at work and my relationships. My doctor listened to my concerns and gave me a couple of assessments and confirmed that I had mild Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD).

This news was bittersweet. It was "bitter" because I see that I did not get the help I needed as



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a child. On the other hand, the news was "sweet" because it showed that my parents, teachers, and peers were wrong to call me names for not paying attention or forgetting things. It was not my fault that I had ADHD.

Sometimes, as a math instructor, I see myself in my students. I especially notice the ones who "hate" math. Are their feelings related to bad experiences they had with unskillful teachers using bad techniques? My passion is to unearth the math skills in my students who feel bad about the subject, like I once did. I want to ignite their passion for something that will bring them pride and confidence in themselves.

Learning mathematics doesn't have to be painful, stressful, or boring. As a math instructor, I want every one of my students to have a memorable learning experience seasoned with empathy and creativity. I want them to be able to remember the lesson!

**AFTER YOU READ:** What kind of math teacher do you think Jose Mosqueda is? Be able to point to details in the article that explain your thinking.