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Profession, Teacher



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Words are as important to a book as good teacher is to a student, and when combining the two together it makes a successful pair. Garret Keizer's " Why We Hate Teachers", talks about the importance of teachers and how they affect who we become. Although Keizer's essay explains his views on teachers and school systems, the movie " That's What I Am" also evaluates teachers' interactions with students. The movie, That's What I Am is based off a true story that presents a teacher who goes above and beyond for his students. That's What I Am supports Keizer's essay on the significance a teacher has on the students' educational performance and the person he/she becomes. That's What I Am is a true story set in 1965 that is based off the experiences a young boy has through junior high school and the relationship he has with his teacher. Andy Nichol, a twelve year old sharp witted boy who, like most kids his age, will do anything to avoid conflict to protect himself from constant overwhelming ridicule and punishment from his junior high school peers. Mr. Simon, the English teacher, pairs Andy with the school's biggest social outcast, Stanley, aka " Big G," on a fundamental term paper. Not understanding Mr. Simon's reasoning for pairing the two in the beginning, Andy soon realizes that maybe Mr. Simon knew what he was doing when he paired Stanley with him. As the story unfolds, Mr. Simon finds himself the target of a spiteful rumor spread after Principal Kelner suspends a school bully for brutally beating up a female classmate whom he thinks had " cooties." To teach his students a valuable lesson, Mr. Simon doesn't take the easy way out by denying the rumors to save his reputation. He stands behind his beliefs and encourages his students to do the same with

theirs. Junior high school can be a difficult time during any students' life because it is a time of change. During this time the body is changing and adult situations being to be presented. Andy realizes that Mr. Simon sacrificed his reputation because the lesson being taught was far more important than all the rumors and drama within the school. When Andy confronts Mr. Simon on why he made his decision to neither deny nor confirm the rumors, Mr. Simon simply quotes "I teach. I am a teacher, that's what I am". Mr. Simon is a teacher who goes above and beyond no matter what the cost to help guide and teach his students valuable lessons. Mr. Simon doesn't hit, yell or ridicule his student for any unwanted behavior. He takes the approach that allows him to study each student and evaluate the best way to handle him/her with patience and understanding. Proving his dedication for his student, Mr. Simon goes into the girls' bathroom to comfort, a young girl, who is completely distressed having been brutally assaulted. Mr. Simon takes the time to learn each student and knows the right time when to give him/her the push needed to excel. This movie demonstrates the impact a good teacher has on their students and the heartfelt sacrifices made to prove a lesson. Keizer writes in 'Why We Hate Teachers', about spending most of his life in school and describes the impact teachers had on the person he became. Keizer explains the importance of having a good teacher by using his personal experiences. Looking back to his first grade teacher, Keizer doesn't have any particular frightening memoires, but he does recall the actions taken to punish his peers. Keizer remembers his first grade teacher punishing a boy who meandered into the girls' bathroom. For an entire day the boy had to wear a sign throughout school

that read I AM A GIRL TODAY as his punishment. Students that talked back to the teachers were hit with rulers or placed in the corners to be watched by their peers while emotions of embarrassment or anger overcame him/her. At a young age it is essential for a child to learn right from wrong along with rewards and consequences. A nurturing teacher becomes important to the students because it allows students to feel a connection to an adult other than their parents and even in some cases a close connection at all. Keizer quotes that “ For better or for worse a teacher was our first surrogate mother”. Keizer means that although a child may have his/her birth mother, a teacher plays the role of an adopted parent while guiding the child through adolescence years. Keizer explains that for several hours a day, a child spends more time with his/her teacher in school rather than home with parents. Teachers have become the parent away from home, teaching life lessons and helping deal with difficult situations. Keizer stresses that good teachers will give more from school than one whom students may be afraid to confront. It is no secret that good teachers can make a world of difference in their students’ lives. Most people presumably would like to make sure that disadvantaged students have access to these good teachers. A teacher that is willing to go above and beyond, even with the chance of losing his/her job, are the teachers who make a bigger impact on a child’s life than one with no care for a child in the school system. That’s What I Am supports Keizer’s essay on the significance a teacher has on the students’ educational performance and the person he/she becomes. Indicating that no matter what the length, a good teacher will do whatever it takes to prove a valid lesson to his/her students in order to give them a better opportunity with life

challenges. Both works demonstrate the negative and positive impacts a good teacher will have on the school system and to the students. It is not only about the education but about the important life lesson being taught to each student that has to be learned with the guidance of a teacher. One good teacher may at times change a delinquent child into a solid citizen.

Work Cited: Keizer, Garret. " Why We Hate Teachers." Fields of Reading. 9th ed. Boston/New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2010. N. pag. Print That's What I Am. Dir. Michael Pavone. Perf. Chase Ellison, Ed Harris, and Alexander Walters. Samuel Goldwyn Films, 2011. DVD.