

Why science leaves a bitter taste in my mouth



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Why Science Leaves a Bitter Taste in My Mouth “ Tell me and I forget, teach me and I may remember, involve me and I learn.” ? Benjamin Franklin

Watching science-related shows and documentaries on television such as those featured in the Discovery Channel, National Geographic and the like has truly captivated my attention on the wonders that this world brings. I realize that despite the numerous discoveries made by man, there are still unlimited possibilities out there that we can explore. Shows such as “ Myth Busters” have made science so much more interesting with all the hands-on experiments the hosts come up with in order to test the veracity of some accepted “ myths”. This way, as they demystify some established beliefs, viewers like me broaden our thinking and realize that there really are countless perspectives that may be adopted to see the truth in things. How I wish I had the same passion for science when I was younger! In my case, there was no one who made the effort to make it interesting enough for me to give science a second look. My teachers in elementary school went about their jobs in a routine manner of lecturing, assigning readings, demonstrating experiments while we students just watched. I managed surviving on a skeleton knowledge of some scientific concepts, and crammed information in my head for quizzes and exams. Understanding the lessons well was a tall order since we were not able to explore the topic enough and ask questions and discuss our thoughts with each other. Lessons were usually one way, with information passed from the teacher to the students. It was spoon-feeding in a boring sense, as we students just regurgitated the information and chucked it to our short-term memories. Once we knew that there was no need to retain it anymore in our brains, we happily disposed of it and moved on to more interesting matters. It was such a pity that my

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scientific encounters in my school days were dull. I believe science is inherently dynamic and interesting and should call on active participation of its learners rather than being relegated to teacher talk! The teaching strategies used were not varied enough. An occasional film-showing, filling out experiment sheets during laboratory periods, nurturing a plant or pet in the class to observe how it lives in a contrived environment and a field trip once or twice a year summed up my science experiences! As an adult having the option to read up as much as I want on scientific discoveries and techniques to unearth new information, I envy the students of today who are fortunate enough to have more creative teachers. Science is made magical with hands-on participation, exposure to meaningful and relevant experiences that make it easier for them to retain what they have learned. Allowing students to explore and pursue their curiosity are essential to shaping scientific minds. Technological advancement makes it much easier and convenient to make associations between certain ideas which were previously impossible to connect. Communication with other scientific minds even in the opposite side of the world is made more possible with the internet and online learning brings learning to a new level. The invention of the computer chip has made it possible to reach higher heights in learning! However, caution must be taken in being too reliant on electronic learning. Nothing beats concrete manipulation of materials and the engagement of the senses in the learning experience rather than limiting it to sedentary discoveries. I still believe learning is best when it is holistic. Targeting all areas of development - motor, affective, creative, and not just the cognitive aspect should be the goal of a dedicated educator. If I were a teacher, I would let my students do more experiments on their own, working outdoors

to make use of natural resources, collaborate with their peers in exploring possibilities of their own ideas, of course, taking on a scientific perspective and methodology. I would encourage them to research on their own and not spoon-feed them with the information they need to know. I know it is quite fulfilling to have ownership of one's learning and be acknowledged for it. Hence, I would empower my students to be young scientists who creatively pursue their original ideas and communicate to others what they have learned, for isn't that the essence of science? Science is everywhere! Children are very curious about the things around them, so it is no surprise that science and children can be a great match since each would fulfil the other if only appropriate situations allow! Educators have the power to make this possible. It should be their goal to make lifelong learners of their students and what better way to do that than to engage them in learning what they love?