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Profile: Dave Kanellis

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Dave Kanellis, a teacher of social studies and environmental studies at West High School in Iowa City, is what one might consider a teacher's teacher. Although Dave was born in Wellsboro, Pennsylvania, he has acquired many of the characteristics of a midwesterner, one of which is a down-to-earth approach with people. This characteristic is displayed in many ways in the classroom as well.

Dave received his B.A. Degree from Iowa State Teachers College (UNI) at Cedar Falls, Iowa, with a major in Social Studies and a minor in English and Earth Science. In addition, Dave received his M.A. Degree from the University of Iowa, at Iowa City, and his major was Sociology.

After teaching high school for four years at Union, Iowa, Dave moved to Spirit Lake, Iowa where he taught for an additional three years. During the next ten years, Dave taught in high school and in a junior college in Worthington, Minnesota. Finally, Dave found himself teaching social studies and environmental studies at West High School in Iowa City, Iowa.

Along with his high school teaching, Dave is also involved in a teaching capacity in the Interdisciplinary Environmental Institute for Secondary Science and Social Studies teachers at the University of Iowa. His vast

experience in teaching has added an important dimension to the institute. As a result, the teachers who know and have worked with him have become more effective in helping to facilitate learning in their respective classes.

What makes a good teacher? In my estimation, it's the approach to teaching that one takes. The good teacher, like Dave Kanellis, is not strapped to only the traditional method of teaching. When a problem arises that requires a solution--some method must be applied. Chances are, in Dave's class, the methodology applied will be novel and exciting. Whether it be a teacher-made simulation game or an action-oriented approach, one can be sure that excitement and enthusiasm on the part of the learner will exist. What is it about a teacher that makes him a teacher's teacher?

In my opinion, it's the teacher's diversity in background and interests! Not only is Dave a teacher, he is also a writer of a weekly column for several newspapers in Iowa and Minnesota. Further, he is a musician as well. In addition, one might listen to Dave giving a speech after dinner in one of many community and/or educational organizations.

When asked what his most rewarding experiences in schools have been, Dave replied, "teaching in Iowa City and seeing the school environment changed from teacher-centered to student-centered and seeing the vast majority of students accept this additional responsibility." In addition, when asked his view about the function of schools, Dave retorted, "to provide an atmosphere for the students so that they can be prepared for adult roles in or out of higher education and to give them experience and practice in factors that are functional in a democracy by providing students a voice in making decisions and by speaking their minds frankly and without fear of reprisal." Further, "acquiring basic skills is necessary for producing a responsible and active citizenry." Asked what social studies teachers should be teaching in the 70's Dave replied that teachers should help to facilitate an understanding in students of "their roles and expectations as citizens," and "coping with change in this society." Finally, Dave said "most of all a good teacher should prepare a student for the time when he no longer has need of a teacher." I agree!

Charles Frederick
Managing Editor