

# Ty Ankrom's Here's What I Think ...

Having worked in education all of my career I'm fortunate to be able to look back on experiences I've had that have helped me become, at various times, a better teacher, principal and superintendent.



The expression that "experience is the best teacher" is certainly true. Yes, we learn from books but real-life experiences can provide a lifelong lesson.

I remember when I was a new principal I made the mistake of thinking I knew more about teaching than those who had been doing the job longer (and better) than I had.

While evaluating a primary grade teacher, I gave her poor marks for a reading lesson. I then added my *expertise* about how the lesson would have been better. When we met to review the evaluation, she took me to task. I stood my ground – after all, I was the boss.

The teacher invited me back in to observe her teaching the same lesson, but using my suggestions. It was a disaster. I apologized and learned that I could learn from others while I

improved my skills.

To quote Confucius: "By three methods we may learn wisdom: first, by reflection, which is noblest; second, by imitation, which is easiest; and third by experience, which is the bitterest."

It is a true statement, as I obviously remembered that experiential learning these many years later.

I was fortunate. The teacher was willing to speak her mind and I learned from it. But there are other ways to get experience.

In a SmartBrief article, Naph-tali Hoff recommends gaining experience quickly by taking advantage of learning opportunities, such as educational conferences.

He also encourages professionals take advantage of a mentor or peer group.



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"Mentors can cut down the learning curve significantly by offering of their experiences and sharing their views on how they would handle certain situations," he writes.

And, as I learned from that primary teacher, ask for feedback. Hoff writes that "feedback is critical for the reflective process."

Read the full article that includes other tips teachers can adapt at [http://smartbrief.com/original/2017/02/how-gain-more-experience-less-time?utm\\_source=brief](http://smartbrief.com/original/2017/02/how-gain-more-experience-less-time?utm_source=brief).

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