



My First Educational Triumph

By Sandi Tibbetts

During the 1960's I spent four unfulfilling years teaching eighth grade English and Civics in a small town near Madison. The classes were large and the students largely unmotivated, and "rich and meaningful learning experiences" to quote my college education professor, were rare. Later I would often say that I'd rather work at the time store then go back to teaching.

Flash forward to the 1990's after the kids left home and a long term volunteer job ended. I looked for a new volunteer opportunity and found the Literacy Council. I knew Evie Jenson from when our sons were on the same baseball team, and she had mentioned working with adult learners. My first long term student wished to become an American Citizen. I helped him fill out the papers, we worked on the dreaded list of 100 questions, and Juan passed the interview and became a citizen – my first educational triumph!

Since that occasion, I have taught two citizenship classes for the Literacy council, and several of my students have become citizens on their own. I led a successful crash course with a very limited time frame for another student. (Previously students had at least a year between paperwork and interview, now it can be as little as a month.)

I finally feel that my Civics background has been a success due to the dedicated students of the Literacy Council.