

Preface:

Teachin' It! has been writing itself in the back of my brain for decades. By the age of 19, I had already faced homelessness. I had survived a knife sexual assault, survived a gun sexual assault, and had other experiences typical for students living on their own with few resources. Although neither of my parents, nor any of my five siblings had obtained a bachelor's degree, I knew that attending college was the key to my financial independence. Therefore, when I was 20, I hitchhiked the 360 miles to the University of Vermont (UVM) to "go to college." I wandered in-between and around the forest of looming buildings on the UVM campus for two hours seeking clues to how to go to college. Eventually, I hitch-hiked home without having any better idea about how one gains entry to a university. That was my first college experience.

As a first-generation college student, it was a long, transformative journey from completing my first course at a community college at age 23 to obtaining my PhD in Math Ed from Stanford University at age 54. During those three decades, I supported the success of math students in urban public schools, Probation and Parole, community colleges, and universities. My interest in supporting the success of historically underrepresented students drove me to complete a PhD in Math Ed at Stanford in 2016. Stanford exposed me to the cutting-edge research of scholars including Jo Boaler, Carol Dweck, Claude Goldenberg, Kenji Hakuta, Prudence Carter, Ramón Martínez, Shelley Goldman, Rachel Lotan, and Claude Steele. In addition, I conducted my own research exploring the wealth of community assets of Yucatec Maya math students in a Yucatec Maya village. Around that time, I worked with thousands of K-14 educators to help them support students of color and students from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds. Currently, I incorporate lived, educational, and research experiences into my own classroom practices at my position teaching math and college skills at the Santa Rosa Junior College.

I wrote *Teachin' It!* because I want to help students like me, first-generation college students, students of color, and other students who are driven to get a college education, but who may feel like cultural outsiders on college campuses. *Teachin' It!* helps college professors to breathe life into students' big dreams by helping them refine their craft. *Teachin' It!* helps instructors create engaging learning environments where students from all backgrounds feel safe and are motivated to take risks, make mistakes, share their unique approaches to learning, and develop identities as competent life-long learners and professionals?

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