

Cheryl Musselwhite-Scott



Biography

I grew up in Brooklyn, New York City. Growing up in New York City offers a lot of options when you are looking for things to do. I found that most of what I liked to do involved our public parks (walking/running/golf), museums, zoos, and the library. I think I spent more time in the library at Grand Army Plaza than I did in the mall while growing up. As an adult, I still love those hobbies, and have also volunteered at local animal shelters over the years.

I was pretty shy as a child and teenager; I think that is why I did well academically. When it came time for me to select a college, I chose Binghamton University because of its excellent reputation and because I fell in love with the area. When I enrolled, I signed up to be part of the environmental awareness module, a dorm area for students who were interested in working with the community to raise environmental awareness.

I knew I wanted to major in biology, but to be honest, I did not know exactly what I wanted to do with the degree. The decision to become a teacher originated with the work I was doing in the summer. Every summer I would go home to work in a summer camp for children ages 5-12. I found that I really enjoyed working with the kids and that I loved to see their reactions when they learned something new. That's when I realized that I wanted to teach. After graduation, I worked for a year and then returned to Binghamton University for my M.A.T. in Biology. Two years of substitute teaching ensued and then I was hired by the Elmira City School District, which is where I have taught at Ernie Davis Middle School for the past fifteen years.

School Work

The classes I teach are all seventh grade science. While my curriculum has been mostly life science, this year the seventh grade curriculum was switched to physical science, which is a mix of earth science, chemistry, and physics. The students have always been a very high energy group who come from a mix of backgrounds. There can be a very wide gap in academic achievement between the students in any one class, and many of the students have an outside interest in the sciences.

Since the students are all entering class with different background knowledge, my philosophy of teaching is to find a topic of interest that they can all related to as a way to connect the rest of the curriculum. I believe in using current events as much as possible so that the students can see that science has a connection to their lives. I also believe that the students need to have as many hands on experiences as possible, as well as time to be independent thinkers and make predictions and inferences without me rushing in to give them the answer. The main limitation for all of these things is **time**. The New York State list of science standards is lengthy; it can be difficult to do justice all of the topics.