



100,000 Teachers

99-Word Story

100,000 Teachers

When we lived in Ecuador for two years, one of my personal goals was to learn Spanish. So I was upset when Giovanni, my tutor, announced that he would be leaving the country to take another job. Learning a second language was traumatic for me and Giovanni was terrific at tailoring lessons to my particular interests and needs. How could I ever hope to find a replacement?

Then, while riding a crowded Quito bus, I found the solution. Everyone spoke Spanish. I was surrounded by thousands of teachers!

An expert is not always better than everyday expertise.

Discussion Questions

- What are some instances when you might learn from peers, coworkers, and others who are closest to you?
- What are some times when it might be helpful to step out of your own role as an expert and rely upon the know-how of others?
- What are some situations when we rely too much on the expertise of outside “authorities?”
- How much of good teaching is based on an expert’s level of knowledge and how much is based on that person’s ability to teach the subject well?

NOTES

Read this story aloud or make copies for your group or team members.

You too can become one of many teachers by leading a discussion with your team or organization using some of the following questions that are derived from this 99-Word story.

Interpretation

Good teachers are essential to learning. They know the material but they also know how to share that knowledge with learners while creating opportunities for practice and feedback. But even terrific teachers can't do much with a student who is unmotivated, has no long-range goal, or is distracted by other needs and concerns. Teacher or student, the success of one is tied to the success of the other.

Too often there is an imbalance. We place most of the burden on teachers expecting them to create a successful learning environment for everyone – all the time. Seldom do we think about what we want to learn, why we want to learn it, what we'll do with it, and how we might learn it in the best way for us. We don't realize the personal energy investment necessary for real growth. However, once we know what we need, we can figure out how to get it. When that happens, we may see that the expertise we are seeking might come from unexpected places. We won't always find it spread before us in a book, as a slide presentation, or on a webinar. Valuable lessons might come to us from colleagues, family members, or strangers on the bus.

Ultimately, each of us is in the driver's seat when it comes to our own learning. By the effort we put into bettering ourselves, we decide our destination, the route, our speed, and who to pick up along the way.

There are many ways to understand this story as the discussion questions suggest. If you or your group would like to compare or contrast your interpretation with an outside viewpoint, consider this analysis.

Reprinted from 99's on the 9th

A newsletter of 99-Word Stories available on the 9th of every month. See more at www.99-Words.com. To subscribe, contact Brian Remer (brian@thefirefly.org).

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