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# Yake Inspires Students to Solve Problems

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While the employment experts indicate that there are jobs available in STEMM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math and Medicine), convincing students -- especially junior high and high school young students -- that they should take more math and science courses is often a tough sell.

But Angela Yake, a Woodrow Wilson Foundation Ohio Teaching Fellow for 2011-12 teaching in a STEMM high school, found a way to excite students in her math classes. First thing, change the name of the class.

Yake covered up the math sign outside her classroom with a sign that said "Problem Solving Class." While this tactic may not have fooled too many students -- after all, what is math, but a bunch of problems to solve -- but it did change the vibe of the classroom and the attitudes of the students.

"Angela's approach is exactly what the Woodrow Wilson Teaching Fellowship program is encouraging," Chancellor Jim Petro said. "We are encouraging this type of creativity in the classroom to inspire students to pursue degrees in STEMM fields and find employment in one of the many companies in Ohio that have a need for STEMM graduates."

Yake graduated with a degree in Management Information Systems at Wright State University. And though she wasn't a mathematics major, math was her favorite subject in high school. "I especially enjoyed geometry and proving theorems," Yake said. Even though Yake praises her math teachers, she credits her business teacher, Mr. Ulliman, for inspiring her to go into teaching. "His background in business and accounting did not appear traditional to teaching but the experiences he shared were real and not always from a book," Yake said. "I have been teaching adults for seven years now. I found I could be creative, use my own experiences, and relate one subject area to another."

Now she inspires students as well as being inspired by them. "It's those students that really appreciate what you share with them and teach you as much as you teach them that keep you going year-after-year." Now that Yake has completed the Woodrow Wilson Fellowship program, she hopes to

incorporate 21st century skills in computer and math classrooms linking project based learning to help students form connections and obtain and use problem solving skills. She would eventually like to be a career coach for students.

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