



From Patients to Patience: A Physician's Career Changer Story

"It has been the first time in my career that I have had to teach students who do not necessarily want to learn," states Mike, a physician who is now teaching biology to 15-year-old boys. He explains that teaching can be a challenge even on the best of days because these boys do not have biology as their primary focus.

At the age of 50, Mike had seen too much death as a physician who was certified in internal medicine, hematology, and oncology, so he began to look into other fields for a second career. During his career, he had taught medical students, resident physicians, and nurses, and so considered teaching at a medical school, but he wanted more of a challenge. So he entered the Benedictine University alternative certification program to become certified to teach in both biology and physics.

Mike understood the challenge he was undertaking; his mother was a high school teacher and he also had several friends who taught high school. Some of these friends actually tried to talk him out of his chosen second career, but he was able to visit schools and classrooms, shadow his friends, and make his decision with open eyes.

He cautions that the first year of teaching is hard work because one is not only learning the curriculum and writing lesson plans but also developing a teaching style. However, the most important thing is that one love being with children, particularly the age where one is going to teach. He adds for those considering teaching high school, "...if you do not like dealing with teenagers all day, you will never survive."

And what's the best part about teaching? "Seeing my students become engaged and excited about biology." That is what completes his day now.

President Obama has set a goal of preparing 100,000 STEM teachers over the next decade. This can't be done without career changers moving from successful careers into a second career to teach and mentor a new generation of STEM employees in our country. If you are interested in teaching as your next career, get into a classroom as Mike did, and find out what teaching really demands. Then go to the [Center for Career Changers](#) to read about requirements, pathways, and programs in your state. Alternative certification programs are created for employees like you, who have at least a bachelor's degree and are considering teaching. Take the challenge, like Mike, and give back to your community.