

My name is Paul Campiche and I am a proud graduate of the Middle College at South Seattle/High Point. I graduated in 2008 under the tutelage of Alonzo Ybarra as well as a host of other profoundly inspiring teachers. I remember my time at that institution fondly.

I came into the Middle College after nearly dropping out of Ballard High School. School, for me at that time, was seen as a horrid social perdition. I felt ignored by teachers and attacked by students. As a result I did not do well. I had talent however. My passion for knowledge was alive but it was put in a place that did not facilitate growth. The large school environment did not suit me. In fact it nearly drove me insane. I needed a change. Something that would provide me a way forward.

I was introduced to Middle College at South Seattle/High Point in my senior year of high school. I, at that time, was considering dropping out. I arrived at that school a person with no passion for education. I was there simply to pass the grade and finish. I did not see a future in academia given it had always seemed so scary and lacking in compassion. I was lost.

This state of nonplussed was perhaps the very reason that I needed to be at Middle College. While I was there I was constantly inspired by the teachers. They showed me compassion and provided me a means by which to see school as productive. I found my way overtime.

The small school environment was very helpful as it allowed me to question the ideas that the teachers were positing and get a reply. It made education interesting given it was now interactive. I was a part of the class, not just sitting in class counting the minutes. I found myself engaged in concepts and ideals that I had never been introduced to. One teacher, Alonzo Ybarra, installed in me a passion for social justice and compassionate equality that in turn has become a defining characteristic of my personhood.

This pursuit of social justice spoke to me specifically as a white male of privilege, challenging me to become a productive member of progressive society. Alonzo and many of the teachers helped me to understand my place in society and how I can help to promote a better world. The teacher engaged my indoctrinated bigotries and helped me to become a more intelligent and compassionate person with an understanding of oppression.

As I continued at Middle College I quickly rose to the top of the class. I also realized that I had a place that was safe to be the smart person I was. The teacher did not scold me for asking questions or having opinions. I remember feeling passionate about my studies for the first time.

I could give a thousand examples of the usefulness of Middle College as an individual however I think what is most telling of what this school gave me is to give me professional opinion. For if I didn't go and graduate from Middle College I would not have a professional opinion. Since Middle College I have attended and graduated from The Evergreen State College. I was admitted to this college in part because of the passion that I showed in my admissions essays, a passion that was facilitated by Middle College.

Since I graduated The Evergreen State College I have perused a Masters in Psychology at Antioch University. I now get a chance to reach out to those who suffer from grave emotional and mental disorders. This opportunity was provided in part by the education I got at Middle College. The passion that was given to me so young in life continues to shine and grow.