

# Best of Both Worlds

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“Teaching is one of the best jobs that I ever had,” says **Cathy Flite, MEd, RHIA**, assistant professor at Temple University in Philadelphia, PA. When Flite says that, she’s speaking from experience.

She entered the academic world midway in her HIM career, after working in management positions and as a coding consultant in the Philadelphia area for 15 years. What made her decide to make the switch to education?

“The students were my motivation to become an educator,” she says. Flite spent a considerable amount of time working with HIM students who were doing their clinical affiliations when she worked in management in a number of acute care facilities.

“I was really impressed with the students because they brought such a high level of enthusiasm, creativity, and commitment to the HIM profession,” says Flite. With all her HIM experience and a master’s degree in education, Flite felt she could bring a lot to a career in education. “I always had an affinity for teaching and a passion for learning, which I feel are the right ingredients for an educator,” she says.

In fall 2000, she joined the faculty at Temple. Flite is enjoying the change, noting that as an educator, she is able to be at the “cutting edge of the profession,” by learning new things. “In teaching you have the best of both worlds,” says Flite, “seeking new knowledge and a chance to be innovative and creative in expressing that knowledge in the classroom.”

Flite admits it’s hard work, but she is up to the challenge. “Teaching effectively is challenging and difficult, but it is also a rewarding job,” says Flite. “I think it takes a person who has a passion for learning—someone who wants to grow and learn with the students.” Having what she describes as an “excellent mentor” and “outstanding colleagues” also helped her build her career in education.

It’s growing and learning from students that creates what Flite describes as a “dynamic” relationship between educator and student—a relationship she finds very rewarding. “It is exciting to see fresh and creative minds at work in our profession,” she says. “You just know that they are going to make a mark on the HIM future.”

—Jessica Squazzo

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