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**Touro – 673**

**Teaching Philosophy**

### **Who I Am**

I am a fourth-grade general education teacher in an ICT classroom. I have 4 ELL students, two of whom are commanding. One of my core beliefs is that every student in my class is entitled to learn and participate. They deserve to be heard and respected each day. The other is that not all students can perform on summative assessments. Many need support or a second method of evaluation. I allow questions during all my exams. I clarify questions carefully, without scaffolding.

Math gets complicated, so my co-teacher and I often give performance assessments or “math labs” where students take a deep dive into topics like measurement & data or geometry. Often, students can “show what they know” more clearly when we change the assessment method.

Equity in ESOL education means that my students should be evaluated in various ways. Often, speaking an answer reveals more about what a student knows than writing an answer. Many students can show me locations on a map more easily than they can “highlight” a specific region. In our city’s multilingual communities, teachers struggle to achieve equity. For example, I worked in a school that was 60% Spanish-speaking. Our administrators designated a What I Need (WIN) period. General education teachers pulled out Spanish-speaking students for small group instruction. From meeting with students, I was able to understand what topics were difficult for them. I found Spanish language videos and problems, and used Google Translate a lot. Also, my lessons involved photos and videos. The students gained confidence and became stronger as a group. As I got to know these students better, I met their families. We laughed together over their children’s interests and abilities, their hopes and their fears. I felt as though we became a closer community.

### **My Classroom**

In my classroom, I establish routines. I feel that this reduces anxiety. We work on math for the first two periods and ELA for the second two. We snack and chat between subjects. The fifth period is their “special”. Lunch is sixth period. When we return, we can wrap up our day with science or social studies. My students know what to expect, and they enter the classroom ready for work.

The special education teacher and I model vocabulary words across all content areas. We have special boards for math, science, and ELA terms, and world maps for social studies. We display supports on chart paper and always write page numbers in the top right corner of the smartboard.

Our group is very accomplished in English, so the TESOL teacher pushes in more frequently than she pulls out students. Because we co-teach and do not want to cause

undue confusion, one of us takes the lead and the other provides support. Often during ELA, I support a small group of learners, ELLs, and others who need scaffolding for writing. We use RACER (read, answer, cite, explain, wrap it up), and some students need sentence frames, transition words, and grammar support. We have become an enthusiastic and patient class.

### **Language and Culture**

Students' home languages and cultures play a large role in their English language development. I always take the time to meet with parents after school because I feel that all parents need to feel connected. Also, we celebrate cultural events and encourage parents to show up for them. When families take part in our school community, their children feel supported. This enables students to grow socially and emotionally as well as academically.

### **Learning from My Experiences**

My experiences have shaped my understanding of language learning. I have found that learning English while studying core subjects is a steady climb. We begin with vocabulary, then we move on to the lesson. In math, we teach operations and often translate word problems. In ELA, we use all the scaffolds we use for English-speaking students: sentence frames, grammar and punctuation rules, read-aloud formats, and question and answer sheets. I assess student knowledge and read the room.

Keeping a steady pace ensures that everyone's needs are addressed. I no longer panic and reach out to Google Translate when there is an issue; rather, I use the support available in our classroom to help my students make sense of a topic. My vision for my ELLs is to empower them to delve into a topic and ask any questions they have. It is okay to take baby steps, if they don't quit the race! Their personal success is linked to their academic achievement. As they learn to speak, read, and write English, they gain academically. They also gain from the standpoint of personal development: they become more confident. My ELLs have made me aware of the results of good teaching and strong relationships among classmates.

### **Role Change**

As I move from the role of classroom teacher to ESOL professional, I will have to continue my professional development because there are always results of new studies that help us teach. My role will change, and my responsibilities to ELLs will change, too. I will become more active in their social and emotional development, speaking to families and developing school activities that draw on their interests. Also, I will be advocating for them in the classroom, implementing assessments that can best evaluate their learning. After years of working with ELLs as a classroom teacher, it will be exciting to transition to a new role.

## **Grammarly Reflection**

I had never used Grammarly before! Thank you for providing it on Canvas. It “edited” my document but did not find many mechanical errors. It indicated one sentence that lacked subject-verb agreement. Also, it had an issue with the term “ELLS”, which is understandable. In one sentence, it changed the punctuation.

Grammarly has a purpose: it points out mechanical errors in our writing that we may not be aware exist. Some examples could be that some students do not use upper case letters consistently, while other students do not write clear sentences. I think that Grammarly would be especially helpful to ELLs because it would indicate areas where meaning needs to be clarified.

My writing issue is different: I studied History and English as an undergraduate and have written profusely. There have been several occasions when professors chose to tear my writing apart. Ouch! Developmental feedback from a Master of the Art is always painful... I was able to muddle through and become a better technical writer. However, developing a consistent style has always been challenging. My cousin writes for The Boston Globe. He is truly a writer, and I love getting emails from him. I admire his diction and his voice. If Grammarly can help me write more like Cousin Tom, I’m all in!