Karissa Tatom

**Teacher Interview**

**Standard 4**

**1. Do you feel there are students in your classroom that are unwilling to learn?**

Yes, I do. They are unwilling to learn because they take no responsibility over their own work. They enjoy learning the new information but do not use classroom time well. Also there are the kids that sit and do nothing. There really is nothing that helps them so they just shut down even more. There are pretty much passive aggressive with authority. We have tried meeting with parents, but nothing happens and there is no change. This means that most kids end up in summer school where once again they do not work because frequently a third or less will do nothing.

**2. What techniques have you found to be helpful when a student does not understand the material?**

Many techniques like working on one, using both teacher talk-where a teacher explains it and student talk- peer explains it. Also you can try to chunk it down to parts or pieces because frequently the maturity is not there to understand the full concept. As well, you have to consider those that are medicated or having attitude problems that can affect understanding.

**3. What techniques have you found to be most helpful in achieving real learning?**

You can pre-assess prior knowledge, gear lessons to what they don’t know, take opportunities to help students learn new info. You can also try to figure out learning style assessments and help students to be aware of their own so they can learn how they learn best. One example is grammar which needs many different methods. You can also use multi-faceted teaching styles, try to be flexible, try new things. You can also use post assessment find out – what did they enter knowing and what have they gained? As well, something might be valuable in life that is not on the test so learning can be more then the curriculum. Try to make sure classes are smaller because many classes are just too big, try to find 6 things that you can identify with each student.

**4. If you felt your classroom techniques differed from those of the administration how would you decide to reconcile the differences?**

A lot of times it is about compromise. I have always believed that the administrators aren’t always right. I think the best methods are to work with the teacher to try to find mentors that solve shortcomings. I think that administrator’s real role is to guide and help teachers.

**5. How has your perspective of teaching changed over the years?**

I am retiring after 28 years because I feel like I’m getting old and cranky ☺. I’m getting more and more annoyed at laziness. I feel like I have higher expectations. I’ve also realized that the relationships between parents and students are vital. Students need backup at home. Those that have it have better responsibility while those that don’t are often dishonest and unproductive. There are those that improve despite their background to become driven but this is happening less and less. I feel like we have gone away from old school teaching which was teaching and learning hands on with fun project based teaching. We are told that they can’t handle the fun. I feel like sometimes I’m becoming more and more the strict old teacher. We are being told more in the last 5-7 years to teach more standard based and to teach for the test causing pressure to only teach academics. Sometimes though, learning occurs for general citizenship because not everything in life is academics. Students sometimes need to learn outside of the material so they can learn techniques for life and not just the ability to pass the test.

**6. Do you feel students’ material is always adequate to achieve real learning?**

There really is never enough time to cover everything, so you never really get the chance to dig deep, and be thorough like I’d like too. It takes time to do more exploration and go beyond so it is less superficial, but it definitely takes time.

**7. Is there a section of material you feel is easiest? Hardest?**

A lot of times the material that is easiest is one that is a naturally motivating topic in general, such as our new material right now which is about pirates. The hardest varies by individual because each one varies.

**8. Do you feel reflection is needed after a period of time? If so how long is appropriate?**

Yes, reflection ends up always happening in your dreams. Trust me, as a teacher you will always have dreams about it. You are always reflecting about something, you can never really reflect enough or at the right time because it is never ideal. This is because you are always moving kids, and attempting to get through. You can use reflecting on the work and use weekly reflections to figure out the tone of the classroom.

**9. How do you feel proper classroom management is achieved?**

I think this is really a personally based question. Twenty years ago I would have said a loud classroom that was moving and doing constantly was best where nowadays I want my classroom much quieter. I feel students need to be respectful and listening, develop a real rapport with the class with clear expectations. As well I like to have the class come up with their own rules which always seem to focus on respect, courtesy, and responsibility.