

Teacher Interview

Blurb from Terri Ward:

In the classroom I try to use lots of praise and encouragement and look for ways to compliment students that are being helpful, appropriate and using positive behavior. I also use a rewards system and give tickets to students when they respond quickly and quietly while getting out their books or transitioning.... On Fridays we draw tickets (names) and several students get to go to the prize box. If students are not following classroom or carpet rules, I ask them to move their frog – 1 jump (warning), 2 jumps (time out), 3 jumps (note home). 2nd graders are pretty easy to motivate. They just want to please the teacher and little things like stickers and stars go a long way. Schoolwide, we use the Love and Logic approach. Students are expected to be safe, be responsible and be respectful of others. If they aren't, it's a bummer, but there are consequences.

My Interview with Terri Ward:

Q: How long have you been teaching?

A: 18 years

Q: What grade/s have you taught? Do you think that your present grade is the ideal grade for you?

A: 1st grade, 2nd grade, 3rd grade and 6th grade and combinations

Q: What do you like best about this grade level? What are the challenges?

A: This is the grade level where they really learn how to read and get excited about learning. They are still emotionally young, and still at the "tattle-telling" stage. They aren't very independent workers at the beginning of the year and by the end of the year they become more independent.

Q: What is included in the curriculum that you teach at this grade level? What are some main instructional units you teach/like most?

A: For language arts, we focus on writing paragraphs, summaries and letter writing. For math, it's moving from basic math to a little more complex such as fractions and multiplication and double digit adding. We do units on the plant life cycle and insects – earth science.

Q: What are some specific physical, emotional, social, and intellectual characteristics of children this age?

A: 2nd graders: They are pretty good with fine motor skills and the beginning of sports activities versus just independent activities in PE. Socially, a lot of their focus is still on themselves. Trying to get them to focus on how they affect others. Intellectually, they are starting to come up with more advanced thinking and learning how to rationalize things a little more.

Q: What are some of the major challenges that California teachers face in education today?

A: Funding, common core, lack of parent support / family involvement at Chapman in particular

Q: What advice do you have for beginning teachers?

A: Be flexible and know how to budget your time and be able to have a life outside of teaching. Teaching can be really absorbing. Don't let go of the things that you really enjoy.

Q: How do the California Standards for the Teaching Profession impact you as a professional?

A: They make us accountable. All teachers are teaching the same thing. There is a lot of collaboration among teachers. Make sure that we're teaching grade appropriate things

Q: How do you create positive classroom environments for your students?

A: Lots of positive praise and encouragement, teach a lot of social skills of respecting themselves and others and being kind to each other

Q: How do you accommodate for differences in language, SES, or culture?

A: ELD classes at Chapman, pre-teaching before the lesson. Hmong and Spanish translators are available for parent conferences and Chapman does their newsletter in all 3 languages

Q: What forms of communication do you use to involve parents in the child's education? How do you deal with challenging parents?

A: Math family night, and invite the parents, newsletters, parents pick up and drop off so you stay available before and after school for the parents, don't take it personally, they are their child's advocate

Q: What kinds of conflict do you most often encounter? How do you handle it?

A: Between the kids, it's minor issues. "A bug and a wish" what is bugging you about what they're doing and say that you wish they would stop. "Love and logic" consequences working above the line and below the line, the kids have to learn to use their words, can't just go tattle and get the results that they want

Q: Who are the other school personnel that you interact with often? How do you interact with them? What forms of communication do you use?

A: Meetings, email, face to face talking (lunchtime), Title 1 aids, instructional aids, custodians, the office staff