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Bringing culture in a classroom; my philosophy

“Language is the road map of a culture. It tells you where its people come from and where they are going.” (Rita Mae Brown). Teachers are given the gifts of influence and leadership. As an inspiring elementary teacher I will embrace differences and teach my classroom that culture is the essence of life. I will encourage students to greet each other with respect and hospitality I will impart encouragement to all of those who enter my room. I will teach students that learning can be enjoyable and not frustrating although at times the ability to teach students how to problem solve can be challenging but yet rewarding. Teaching through showing visuals, encouraging parent involvement and developing reading skills by thematic instruction and hands-on projects help develop English language learners nonverbal clues.

Every person has the ability to go beyond their expectations by allowing their minds to expand by learning a different language. Let’s not forget the basic life principle of all: ‘you can do anything you put your mind to” (Anonymous). A genuine teacher is someone who makes their work a part of their everyday lives, someone who feels gratification after seeing a student’s understanding and awareness “click” when that student has been struggling to grasp the task of how to speak English proficiently. I will be a teacher who embraces culture, social and learning differences and teaches students that their greatest weakness can be their most valuable tool by applying effort and perseverance.

“Learners do not learn language like a vacuum; they learn it by interacting with others.” We should encourage ELL student to talk with their peers, to be involved in group work and to be a part of the classroom despite their differences. Teachers can help comfort English language learners by learning how to pronounce their name. A name holds great importance, it is their identity. Children who speak a different language other than English shorten or change their native name to something more American. By changing their name to something more easily pronounced we are unconsciously belittling their intelligence by making them feel immediately like an outcast or different than their peers. The fact that a student may speak a different language does not mean they are less than average, too many people see children who speak a different language other than English as a problem but, children should have a right to speak their home language, speaking another language should not be a barrier to gain a better education. We have to ask ourselves, are we accepting that student for whom they are or are we trying to “Americanize” them? We are trying Americanize English language learners by not taking the time to learn how to pronounce their name. I think it is ironic that some teachers do not take the time to learn how to pronounce a foreign name but yet the child is expected to learn a different language in one year.

Most English language learners do not graduate high school. Knowing their family background and culture can help change that statistic. I think teachers need to ask themselves, are the parents involved? Do they want to see their children succeed in school? Do the parents have any school values? Building confidence with in a child can lower the amount of anxiety a child may have and increase the ability to learn. If the parents are not able to be involved in their child’s life then it is up to us as teachers to step in and show each child that they have the ability to overcome obstacles and succeed in school by teaching those subjects according to the standards. I read a statement from a research paper that stated, "The stronger the base in the first language, the more developed children’s literacy will be and the more successful they will acquire literacy in the second language.” (nyust.com). If a student is over corrected, they will immediately shut down and will fail. It is my responsibility as a future teacher to teach according to student’s needs. Therefore, Teaching English language learns how to cognitively understand what is being taught I will teach using thematic instruction which can ensure interest and engagement in the content being taught.

Although our government has a variety of different immersion and bilingual programs, there is one thing that stands universal for all students, the No Child Left Behind act, which says that all children including ELL students have to meet the same requirements for the standardized test. Teachers are held responsible to teach according to what is on the test which enable teachers to teach by assessing their students rather than teaching them principle and not memorization. I hope to make learning enjoyable because if a child enjoys learning than they are more likely to understand tasks being taught which eventually will become a lifelong skill.