

Evergreen State!

Feeling acknowledged and cared for in a classroom might be the #1 requirement for creating a good experience in the public school system. Many people feel quickly alienated and ignored in their school experience, so connecting with students right away, regardless of age, cultural background, or language ability is critical! Speaking the native language of a non-native English speaker, or at least having the ability to communicate clearly and effectively with a student to convey directions, goals, and activity plans is vital to building that trust and in allowing the student to grow and succeed in their school experience!

I have worked with students at the elementary, middle, and high school levels as a substitute teacher and instructional assistant, and many of those classrooms included non-native English speakers. The majority of these non-native English speakers spoke Spanish, and I could communicate with them at least somewhat helpfully because of

my background with Spanish classes in middle, high school, and college as a student myself!

Teaching students who speak languages other than English and Spanish would be an altogether different experience and I would need different tools and strategies than the ones I currently have, assumedly. Making the whole class be able to see and understand the plan for the day (or part of the day) would be more challenging with a large variety of non-native English speakers. I expect that students at the middle school and high school levels (the age range that I am focusing on for my credential work) would have at least some exposure to English, but maybe not!

Knowing the language of a non-native English speaker is helpful for one-on-one discussions and communication, and it would be even more beneficial to have strategies and techniques that could engage the whole classroom at once and not feel that the class is divided into separate language speaking groups.

Maintaining engagement and focus in any classroom can be a positive and challenging exercise. Having more tools to use to engage and connect with a greater variety of students can only help a teacher!

So far I have had the opportunity to work for school districts in northern California, southern California, the Central Coast of California, and the Willamette Valley of Oregon! At all these locations there has been a considerable population of students who do not come from a predominantly English-speaking cultural background! As someone who wishes to continue working in education and coaching athletics, I expect that pattern to continue and possibly increase at further school districts where I am employed!

The aspect of teaching that I might enjoy the most is the feeling that I am part of a larger community. A school has many different classrooms, yet they are all part of the same group, with the same overall goal and aspirations (hopefully). When teachers, support staff and administrators are all providing opportunities for all students, especially those who

are learning to speak English, the whole enjoyment and effectiveness of the school will be increased! Hopefully I can learn things that can be shared with other teachers, and likewise learn things from other teachers and administrators that they can share from their own experiences and training!

Just as teachers are more effective when they feel part of a larger goal that the school is sharing and spreading throughout campus, so are students more effective when they are part of a group effort that they can understand and participate in equally and inclusively!