

Amber Clark ~ Personal Statement

I became a teacher because I genuinely enjoy helping others and because I believe education is the most important factor to self and societal improvement.

Growing up, I had the ability and the opportunity to be almost anything I wanted. I chose to become a teacher because that was how I thought I was best able to serve others. Even in high school, I would tutor my friends and help them – explaining things came very easy to me. Thus, I went to Korea for two years to try teaching ESL. I enjoyed it so much that I decided to return home and pursue my education degree. Teaching for me is a calling; it isn't just a career. I love learning, trying new things, and experimenting with new ideas. This has informed my teaching – I am a hands-on, project centered, inquiry-based teacher. I try something – if it works, I refine and repeat. If it doesn't work, I try something different. This is my personal philosophy, but it is also my teacher philosophy; I model my reflective nature to my students and encourage them to be reflective and learn from their own experiences. As an English teacher, I teach my students to accept ambiguity and that the quality of their work depends on the strength of their arguments. Sometimes there is no correct answer and life certainly doesn't have an answer key or instruction manual! Teaching is my passion and something I take great pride in; it is also something that I have refined and continue to refine.

Secondly, once a person “learns to read” they can then “read to learn.” That basic skill opens up a myriad of opportunities. We are able to access new worlds, new thoughts, and new ideas. We are able to read contrasting views and begin to create our own personal philosophy and how we want to exist within our surroundings. I was very lucky to grow up in Canada where we had access to great public education. Whatever the socio-economic status, everyone in my hometown had access to the same education system. Fast forward to now – I still believe that education is the key and I still believe that everyone, regardless of socio-economic status deserves to have access to education. Education is how we will start to affect the world in a more positive way. I also feel that teaching English Language Arts is my way to motivate others. Whether it is reading short stories to hone comprehension and analytical skills, or the social justice project, there are so many ways to build empathy, encourage students to become independent and creative thinkers, and inspire them to become problem-solvers and build a better world. For me, that is the most important goal of education.