

ALL ABOUT MITTYE ADAMS

Mitty Adams

Member-at-Large, LaTESOL

ESL Teacher, Caddo Schools

Greetings everyone!

I am just too excited to be a part of this fantastic group! I hope to be able to bring my little bit of knowledge to the masses. My name is Mitty Adams – as Dr. DrPriest mentioned in the November newsletter, I am new to the team, serving as a member-at-large on the board. I can't wait to see what awaits everyone as the year unfolds and we move forward (fingers crossed) with our face-to-face plans.

A little bit about me and what motivated me to join this established program. I am from Northwest Louisiana – specifically the Shreveport/Bossier City area. After moving away in 2007, I found my way back home last Summer so that I could be closer to my support system. In the time I was away, I worked as an ESL educator in Dallas ISD and Jefferson Parish. I spent some time teaching English abroad in Madrid, Spain and currently work as an EL Coach in Caddo Parish. In all honesty, it was never my intention to become an advocate for the second (or third or fourth) language student. After all, I studied finance while attending Louisiana Tech and earned an MBA before I ever stepped into a classroom. So, when I made my career switch with the intention of teaching 8-12 ELA, imagine my surprise (and slight fear) when I was told my very first class would be ESL Science! However, over time those fears were alleviated when I realized all I had to do in order to make the lesson more comprehensible was to make the learning as tactile as possible. I couldn't TALK about what "sweet" and "sour" was, I had to SHOW it!

Has teaching the EL student – and now the instructor – been easy? ABSOLUTELY NOT! As anyone who has had an EL in their classroom will tell you, it comes with its share of challenges. It's quite possibly more work for you on the front end, but the payoff is very gratifying. One of the best things about my job is that I get to meet other educators and see different teaching styles. It's important to me that I see those entrusted to deliver the material include the EL student in their lesson by making it more accessible. The smallest of tweaks to a presentation – oral repetition, word banks, ASL, etc. - can make a dramatic difference in the English acquisition for that student who, let's face it, quite possibly does not have a voice in being in his or her current setting.

I have gained a pleasure in appreciating the various learning styles in our classrooms. Seeing the learning happen across different cultures – and having been a second language learner myself – made it very clear to me that language is only the smallest barrier in our communication in both classroom and social settings - because it can be taught. I believe the struggle, as I see it, is in ensuring we NOT disallow the communication to happen simply because of the temporary discomfort it may cause.

One of my favorite quotes comes from Mark Twain – "Travel is FATAL to prejudice, bigotry, and narrow-mindedness.... Broad, wholesome, charitable views cannot be acquired by vegetating in one little corner of the earth all one's lifetime." My point? Don't be afraid to move around and immerse yourself in the opposing view – you're never too old to learn.... that's what we tell the kids, right? Be blessed, everyone!