

Deborah Thompson
2005 ATPE Elementary Educator of the Year

Philosophy of Teaching

I believe it is my responsibility as an educator to provide a safe, stable environment for my students. My students trust me to treat them with respect and to help them learn to treat each other with respect. I strive to build a feeling of community in my classroom by allowing students to participate in making decisions that affect the class, encouraging students to be responsible for classroom maintenance, and teaching students to help each other and be empathetic. Providing opportunities for parents to be involved in the classroom also contributes to a feeling of community spirit. It's also important to laugh and enjoy each other every day.

Within this safe environment, I set high realistic expectations for my students. They work to earn a "Q" for quality work and know I will not accept anything but their best effort. Students need to know that you will help them meet their goals and that making mistakes is part of the learning process. It is my responsibility to find the method, techniques, and materials to allow my students to be successful and to use diagnostic assessment to assist me in planning for the specific needs of each student.

During the last decade, teaching methods and approaches to learning have been changing based on the amazing research that is being done on the brain and how children learn. Teachers today need to be lifelong learners in order to apply this new knowledge in their classrooms. I have been fortunate, during my tenure with the district, to be given the opportunity to stay at the forefront of educational trends through district training and also to take on many leadership roles.

During my career I've conducted over 200 hours of district in service, served as team leader for 19 years, piloted software programs, and worked as a member of the Integrated Curriculum Design Team for five years. This was an amazing experience! I taught at Mendenhall in the morning and worked at the Curriculum Design Center in the afternoon. My time at the Curriculum Design Center was spent writing curriculum, designing software, and training district teachers on curriculum and on the use of technology. I'm currently a district trainer for Cognitively Guided Math Instruction and serve as co-leader of the Writing Vertical Team charged with implementing a new Kindergarten and First Grade writing program.

There are many rewards in the field of teaching; the light in the eyes of a child who realizes they are reading "all by themselves," creating the perfect lesson to touch that "hard to reach" student, letters from parents thanking you for enriching the lives of their children, and whose heart wouldn't melt when a six year old hands you a little love note written with a crayon on a paper heart! One of my favorite notes said, "Mrs. Thompson you are my best teacher, you make me work hard but you let me sharpen the pencils."

I have been a teacher for almost half of my life and I am thankful everyday that I work in a profession I love and also have had the opportunity to impact the lives of the children I welcome into my classroom each day. Children of this age are so eager to learn and so willing to trust. My goal is to have them so excited about learning they can't wait to come to school each morning. As they leave at the end of the year you can hear them say, "We were the best class Mrs. Thompson ever had." I believe every year is the "best."

Education:

- 1973 B.S. in Education (Elementary), Eastern New Mexico University, Portales, NM
1981 Kindergarten Certification, University of Texas at Tyler, Tyler, TX
1987 Master of Education (Early Childhood, PreK - 2), University of North Texas, Denton, TX
1994 Gifted and Talented Certification, University of North Texas, Denton, TX

Work Experience:

2000- Present

Plano Independent School District, Stinson Elementary, Plano, Texas, First Grade teacher/team leader

1984-2000

Plano Independent School District, Mendenhall Elementary, Plano, Texas, Kindergarten teacher/team leader

1981-1983

Dhahran Academy, Dhahran, Saudi Arabia, Kindergarten teacher/team leader

1981-1983

Albriton-Carden School, Tyler, Texas, Kindergarten teacher

1973-1981

Substitute teaching experience

Leadership Experience: Campus

- Co-Chairman of the Stinson Writing Vertical Team charged with implementing a new kindergarten and first grade writing program
- Member of the Stinson School Based Improvement Committee
- Team Leader for past eighteen years
- Supervised several student teachers
- Served as PACE grade level teacher for eleven years
- Planned and conducted building in-services involving technology, guided reading, Integrated Curriculum
- Chairman of the Technology Vertical Team for Mendenhall Elementary
- Chairman of the Language Arts Vertical Team for Stinson Elementary
- Conducted building professional development classes in the use of Microsoft Publisher, Kid Pix, and Wiggleworks software

Leadership Experience: District

- Currently serving as a district trainer for CGI (Cognitively Guided Instruction – Math)
- Assisted in training at district New Teacher In-Service
- Worked at the PISD Job Fair
- Served on the Math Textbook Adoption Committee and represented this group on the District Math Textbook Adoption Committee
- Assisted in the development of Advanced Placement Test for district Kindergarten students
- Served a five year term on the District Based Improvement Committee
- Trained district first grade teachers who piloted the Wiggleworks Language Arts Software
- Worked as a member of the Kindergarten Integrated Curriculum Design Team for five years

- Planned and conducted over 200 hours of Professional Development Training for district employees (these hours included training on Integrated Curriculum, technology hardware and software, classroom management, planning, multi-tasking, guided reading and writing, and classroom environment)
- Wrote activity manual for integrating the use of Kid Pix software into the Kindergarten and first grade curriculums
- Coordinated and chaired the Bilingual Kindergarten transition team
- Assisted in planning and conducting Early Release training sessions involving math, language arts, technology and TAAS analysis
- Wrote the district Kindergarten Math Curriculum Guide and assisted in the writing of the second grade guide
- Assisted in the writing of the PISD Kindergarten Curriculum Guide

Other Leadership Experience:

- Planned and conducted breakout session at CAMT State Math Convention
- Assisted in planning and conducting a session at the Technology Summit for Education held at University of North Texas