

## **Tahira's Teaching Philosophy-Whole Student Whole Language Philosophy**

Education in Kuwait is centered on rote learning methodology. Historically, the Kuwait educational system was created to mimic the Egyptian rote learning systems that date back to Pharaonic times. Furthermore, Kuwaiti educators are convinced that rote learning is the optimal form of education. I believe that this method is proven to be unsuccessful, and that educators, within their classroom and lesson planning, should adapt their teaching strategies to the adoption of the whole language philosophy.

The basis of the whole student methodological construct is derived from my research based on definitions and theories as defined in Yvonne and David Freeman's (1992) book *Whole Language for Second Language Learners*. The Freemans are professors in the Division of Language, Literacy and Culture from the graduate school at Fresno Pacific College. They have an intensive background in applying this philosophy and assisting in the training of teachers to improve their classroom learning environment. I am a firm believer in this philosophical approach to teaching. I have attempted to continuously implement it within my class environment with my high school students in Kuwait, at the International Academy of Kuwait, in Maidan-Hawally, Kuwait. These students are from a mixture of Arabic heritages, mostly Kuwaiti, Lebanese, Egyptian and Syrian. The students whom I have applied these various methods on are in grades 9-12<sup>th</sup>.

The whole language philosophy has been discussed in countless research mediums. There are multiple facets of the whole student philosophy, which encompasses an umbrella of various approaches. Overall in my teaching contexts my primary focus has been mainly on the following: celebrating the gender differences in learning, respect of the student's culture, lesson plans

should proceed from whole to part, student assessment should be continuous and not primarily based upon standardized tests, and lastly classroom teaching should reflect the main three learning styles: audio, visual and kinesthetic. All what I have mentioned represent the primary aspects of the whole student philosophy.

As a recent graduate of SIT, (School of International Training) in Brattleboro, Vermont, I have enjoyed utilizing what I have gained from my masters program, to enhance the learning needs of my students. I am very passionate about my field, and my passion reflects the type of enjoyable and creative learning environment that allows students to be creative and utilize critical thinking skills to further develop their English language abilities.

What I have stated above, is a brief synopsis of my teaching philosophy. This philosophy I believe when probably utilized in the classroom, will transform the mindset of students in the Gulf region. It will help them to become more competitive critical thinkers who will be prepared for the various challenges in international universities and institutions.

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