

My commitment to educational settings is based on 3 reasons. Firstly, I believe that education is the one medium that can reach out to entire generations of the population in order to create vast ideological changes in society that are often required to overcome the societal issues that plague us today. Secondly, the public school system provides the foundation for the meritocratic ideals that I strongly support and see as the pride of a successful society. The public school system provides a social setting that provides all students, regardless of socio-economic status, family background, and race/ethnicity, a common forum to interact and learn together. Much research has been conducted to outline the ways in which different backgrounds still affect student development and learning despite classrooms being equal or the same. However, the public school brings us one step closer to providing all members of society with equal opportunity to learn and develop their skill sets. Lastly, the school building provides a forum for students to develop critical social skills such as teamwork, cooperation, collaboration, the art of argument, etc. While social interaction can be limited in some educational settings, such as with rural populations or families with both working parents, the school is one place where students are able to interact with other children and with adults. In my opinion, there is not better medium than schools to provide these benefits.

My interest in education stems from the power that education has to transform society, as mentioned above. I am primarily interested in language instruction in a school setting as compared to a home setting. My interest in language instruction stems from the research that highlights non-linguistic cognitive

Ramya Ramnath

Education 370

skills that are developed when one learns a language. The development of these skills stands as testament to how crucial languages is. My interest in education lies primarily in ESOL classrooms, as compared to other language classrooms. I have had experience teaching English to refugee populations, teaching Hindi to college students, and teaching English to children with communication disorders and multiple experiences learning languages in different educational settings. This variety of experiences have led me to be interested in identifying successful teaching techniques that successfully support language learning while still retaining student interest and creating long-term linguistic competency. While I am interested in language instruction for normal populations, my core concern is for language instruction to children with language disorders.

My primary goals with language instruction are to provide a space in which language learning feels practical, important, and interesting to students. I have done research on the cognitive benefits of language learning and have come to understand that language must be learned in a comprehensive way, such that grammar becomes intuitive, in order to gain other related cognitive benefits. I hope to provide this type of learning experience so that students gain equal levels of comfort with the new language as they had with their native language. I would like to do this by providing speaking practice using real-life scenarios, emphasizing the importance of learning grammar, and ensuring that even repetition practice involves the use of a diverse group of examples so students are not bored but their knowledge is still sufficiently reinforced.

Ramya Ramnath

Education 370

I have already attempted to practice such methods in my few teaching experiences. When teaching ESOL students or adults, I focus my lessons on vocabulary and scenarios that they would encounter in everyday life. For students, this would involve organizing to meet their friends whereas for adults, this would involve a trip to the bank or the DMV. I also try to create multiple practice scenarios that use the same grammar structures so that students are able to practice their skills in different contexts. Lastly, I ensure that students understand the cognitive benefits of language learning. I have noticed that students are more likely to be interested and invested in learning if they see a purpose beyond simply knowing more material.

While I have strong convictions on the importance of learning languages, I remain open-minded about the best practices in this learning context. As a psychology major, I stay well read on brain-based research about language learning and its relationship to processes in the brain and mold my lessons to recent research in this field. By using scientific approaches to support my teaching strategies, I hope to provide students with the most effective learning experience.