

# Comments from Past Participants

## *SAIS Institute for New Teachers*

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### What did you learn?

- I learned how to really be prepared to **identify myself and my style** as a preparatory measure for the classroom. I think it will help me **maintain quality in a way I hadn't considered before**. Improv is valuable, but so is preparation!
- As a new teacher who went through various teacher preparation programs in college, **I learned far more than I ever expected to in only 3 days**.
- To quote a fellow participant, **"this provided me with 90% of what I think I'll really use as a new teacher"** ... compared to 10% that I already thought I knew! Such rich, straightforward information was SO HELPFUL – thank you!
- The most important thing I learned is to **have a little confidence in my own abilities**. As a brand new teacher, I found it incredibly helpful to have others in the same boat with the same fears and working together to overcome them. I also think that one of the most valuable things was developing an entry plan, and I enjoyed the time outside of the "classroom" to get to know other new teachers and reflect on the sessions with them. Additionally, I learned **how my personality can translate into an effective teaching style in the classroom**.
- **I was encouraged to think about some practical applications that I never had thought of before**. I come from an education program that only addressed theoretical issues, and it was refreshing to think about my pencil sharpening policy and encounter specific examples with parents.
- **I learned the importance of planning ahead**. I feel that I have not been particularly good at this in the past and I got some great ideas and strategies to use. From knowing where I want my students to be at the end of the year to creating a constructive, engaging classroom for my students to walk into on the first day.
- **I learned were the importance of maintaining open communication** with parents and students -- as well as faculty and administration. I also learned the importance of staying "ahead of the game" and planning as much as possible. **Plus I learned a great deal of classroom management techniques from both the institute faculty as well as my peers**. Having other future educators discuss their concerns, comments, strategies, and overall suggestions in the video breakout sessions was simply priceless.
- My favorites were the hands-on things (for example, when they gave us a list of difficult parent scenarios and we had to brainstorm how to address them). Also, the personal anecdotes from the instructors will really stick with me.

### How were the instructors?

- I literally have pages of notes on all variety of issues. I appreciated how the seminars touched on various aspects of the teaching experience, and how all of the instructors gave great personal advice from their own successes and failures. They also gave great advice about **how not only to do a good job teaching, but also how to simply enjoy doing the job**.
- I was very nervous that the students wouldn't take me seriously, but after talking with the instructors individually about some of these concerns, they helped me to develop a plan.
- Listen and pay close attention to the comments from your peers and supporting faculty members during the videotaping, as it's very rare to get such valuable feedback from so many people all at once.

- The instructors taught us ways that we can be more effective and successful with students in the classroom by providing general teaching techniques, as well as specific ideas on to how to improve the lesson plan we presented. Their ideas were just wonderful. Not only will I use them, but I am sure they will inspire more ideas to come in the future.

## What about those videotaping sessions?

- The videotaping sessions were the most daunting at first, but **they did turn out to be my favorite.** The small group setting was wonderful, and everyone had so many different ideas to contribute!
- **The feedback I received during my videotaped lesson was very insightful.** It gave me a lot to think about as far as my strengths and weaknesses, new ideas to add to my lesson, and ways to improve certain areas of my lesson.
- **My teaching techniques have improved tremendously from this seminar.** The videotaped sessions were the most valuable.

## What would you tell future attendees?

- I would tell future attendees not to be afraid of the videotaping – SAIS does such a good job of creating a welcoming and calming environment. New teachers have nothing to worry about. (Oh, and I would tell them that **your seminar is a MUST! For me, it was life-altering!**).
- **It's absolutely the best 3 days a new teacher can spend before their first year of teaching!**
- What was most helpful to me were the **small tips that end up being big things in classroom management.**
- That it's an essential for anyone who doesn't have any teacher training, and a great review and time of brainstorming and encouragement even if you have done a lot of these things in grad school.
- As teachers, we are never alone! Whether it's trying to figure out how to reach an "unreachable" student or struggling to write effective lesson plans, we're not the first to need help. There are teachers across the Southeast who share our struggles and difficulties, and we have plenty of ideas to share with each other.
- The Institute for New Teachers made me much more comfortable with the idea of starting teaching right out of undergrad, which was something I had been worrying about.
- It was wonderful! I feel very prepared to go into my classroom -- and this is my third year teaching. Thank you for all your time and effort to make sure our kids get the best we have to give.