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ED 337  
Dr. Brisbon  
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## Teacher Interview

**Your Name:** Sauda Abdullah

**Your Position/ Title:** Teacher/Team Lead

**Grade Level:** 1<sup>st</sup>

**School District:** Rockdale

**City, State:** Conyers, GA

**1. What inspired you to teach math? Was this your first choice subject?**

I have loved math since I was a child. I love that there are multiple ways that lead to the correct answer and how problems can be thought of like puzzles. I currently teach all subjects, but previously taught only math to 100 2<sup>nd</sup> graders. If given the choice math is always my first choice in subjects to teach.

**2. What tactics have proven to be the most effective for you as it regards to overall retention within the classroom?**

Repetition is always important when it comes to retention. Another tactic that is effective in my classroom is differentiation. When learning a new skill/topic I try to incorporate visuals, audio, art, dialogue, and collaboration as often as possible. The information is retained better when students have had many interactions with the information.

**3. Math is usually not the favorable subject for most students! How do you keep your students engaged// keep a positive mindset?**

I always start the year by telling my students how much I absolutely LOVE math. With little ones, especially, when they know their teacher loves something, they want to love it too. I keep my students engaged with lots of hands-on activities. We don't do a ton of worksheets, but we do play a lot of math games. Students become engrossed in solving math problems and just feel like they are playing with their friends.

**4. If I were to sit and observe you teaching, what do you think would catch my eye first (your teaching style, classroom aesthetic, organization, etc?)**

My teaching style would likely catch your eye. We get up and dance, call out silly words, laugh, and play, all while learning with high levels of rigor.

**5. Can you give an example of a student who struggled during class and how you engaged with them mathematically?**

I engage my struggling students by building a classroom community of caring and support. If a student is struggling, we take extra care to celebrate their achievements. I consciously call on that student to answer questions I know they will get correct. I also

have students become the teacher and lead math talks; this gives my struggling students an opportunity to gain confidence in their ability to do math.

**6. What do you foresee being the biggest challenge(s) in current and future classrooms given the new space we are in with the pandemic?**

The biggest challenge I am currently seeing is with teaching virtually. It is hard to know who truly understands a concept when you can only interact with them through a computer screen. I am unable to quietly whisper to an independent student and provide encouragement to keep going. Students also are not able to easily collaborate with each other and participate in cooperative activities, which are so important for young learners.

**7. Currently, I am divided between working with younger students (Pre-K through 3rd) OR working with the older students (4th-6th grade). Although I plan to be certified in PreK through 6th, what advice do you have for me in narrowing my selection?**

I have taught both upper and lower elementary. Students in K-2 are learning to read, while grades 3-6 are reading to learn. Decide if you want your focus to be teaching student to read or teaching them to use text to write about their reading. There are pros and cons to both.

**8. Any pieces of advice / gems you have for me!**

Your work environment will be so important to your happiness. Don't feel like you have to stay in a work environment that doesn't make you feel fulfilled. Every school is different and there is a perfect match for you.