



TRIDHOS 3 - GENERATION COMMUNITY FOR LEARNING

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March 25, 2012

Letter of reference for Mrs. Tiffany Crook

It is my great pleasure to write this letter of reference for Tiffany Crook, my colleague for the past three years at Prem Tinsulanonda International School (PTIS), Chiang Mai.

What do you do when you have to teach MYP Science grade 9 to 21 students, of whom 8 are ESL students of lower-intermediate ability? How can you teach increasingly abstract science concepts to students with practically no English while also not short-changing the English-speaking students in your classroom? This is the situation at our school each year and I was worried when I learnt that I would have so many ESL students in my Science class.

I was relieved to learn that Tiffany would be working with me to address the language issues of these students and to help them succeed in the mainstream classroom. As an ESL/EAPP (English for Academic Purposes) teacher, Tiffany was responsible for helping the 8 students to not only understand the science topics, but also to get acquainted with the MYP assessment criteria. We met regularly to make sure Tiffany knew my lesson plans so that she would prepare the students during her time with them in the EAPP classroom. Tiffany's role as a "Push In" teacher was vital for the students' success. Tiffany would sit in on my science lessons (seated with the ESL students) while simultaneously drafting simplified notes with diagrams on her laptop (which she would then make available to the entire class) and also helping students with worksheets or overseeing their work in the laboratory, ensuring they understood instructions. Having first-hand knowledge of the lesson, she was then able to devise language lessons for these same students during the "Pull Out" lessons with these students in her own EAPP classroom. This proved to be a very effective arrangement. Tiffany ensured that the students got ample practice with the essential vocabulary and concepts necessary to successfully complete the homework, especially the lab reports and projects that required students to address the impact of science on humanity. These are not easy tasks for students with limited English!

To give you a particular example, when I assigned a project on a technology involving static electricity that I would use to assess the "One World" and "Communication" criteria, Tiffany created a scaffold that was very clear and which helped the students understand and address all aspects of the assessment criteria. When Tiffany showed me the scaffold, it was clear that it would also benefit the English-speaking students. We decided it made great sense to use this with all the students and

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that Tiffany would teach this part of the lesson. As students were also expected to give an oral presentation of their research, Tiffany suggested that the ESL students be given the option of making an audio recording to accompany their PowerPoint presentations as they still did not have the confidence to stand in front of their peers and speak in English. In the end, we were both very pleased with the attention to detail that all the students paid to addressing the criteria. All the EAPP students did a marvelous job in their presentations and experienced the success that would encourage them to press on with their studies in English.

It is clear that Tiffany is loved and respected by her students. She gives one hundred percent of herself to helping them. Tiffany is a highly respected member of our faculty as well, and we have benefited from her expertise in ESL and in marketing through the various workshops she has presented to staff. Her workshop on strategies for teaching so that you can reach the ESL students in your classroom was the most important workshop for me. I have ESL students in my IBDP Chemistry and Math classes too and, although I have taught for over 27 years now, it is essential to be reminded of these strategies and to learn of new strategies to reach ESL students.

In summary, it has been a privilege to collaborate with Tiffany. She is positive, energetic, and a professional with a wealth of knowledge, not only pertaining to ESL teaching and learning, but also in marketing, and our school has benefited from this knowledge and advice.

Yours sincerely

Voula Anson

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