CABE TEACHERSHIP AWARDS

CHUCK AND ESTELLA ACOSTA TEACHERSHIP AWARD

Brenda Ramos
Region 3
University of California, Irvine

CABE congratulates Brenda Ramos for her dedication to becoming a bilingual teacher! The following describes her personal experience and educational philosophy,

Personal Statement
At a young age, teachers would ask you what you wanted to be when you grow up and this is where students described their future career goals as athletes, veterinarians, or teachers. However, I was one of the few who looked through a career book and selected the titles that had the word “assistant”. This meant I wanted to be an assistant veterinarian, a dental assistant, or an assistant teacher. I never aspired to be a leader and I created barriers for myself because I envisioned myself as an under-represented minority that couldn’t aspire to become something greater. This is one reason why bilingual programs are essential as it offers more cultural representation in schools and allows students to develop as leaders socially and academically. Representation is powerful and I’ve seen this through my various experiences working with children and parents from different backgrounds in sports and in the classroom. Bilingual programs offer students opportunities that benefit them long term with the essential skill to communicate with others, promote multilingualism, and help English Language Learners and others of various backgrounds!

As a Spanish native speaker and first-generation student, I’m able to connect and understand children who struggle to get through school and find confidence in using their strengths and apply their background knowledge. I value my cultural and linguistic diversity and believe I’m capable of providing a safe and inclusive atmosphere to develop leaders who respect others and push themselves academically to be college ready and culturally aware.

Educational Philosophy
Children need effective pedagogical practices that embrace strong activities that associate with self-esteem, team building, and independent work. I also talk to the child’s guardians after class to let them know what their child needs to work on. Parent engagement is essential as it provides a place where children need to be supported in and outside of school. Bilingual education can help in knowing and understanding someone’s background knowledge and culture and be able to share with others. It’s important to teach material that get students interested in the content area, and this could be done with connecting their culture and identity into the classroom where all students can learn and benefit. By providing a rich, safe, and brave space where students are allowed to engage in discourse in both languages, this will help students learn from each other and bring in their prior funds of knowledge. This will then avoid a lecture style way of learning as students are learning by doing through conversation and collaboration. Students become each other’s resources and benefit each other regardless of the language spoken. Bilingual education helps build empowerment, a sense of community and respect in the classroom as students are the ones to bring in the rich content into the lesson and to their peers. I use their words and thoughts to guide them through the content and help them make connections so that learning can exist and transfer outside of school.

¡Felicidades, Brenda!