

September 3, 2006

Hello Students...

Welcome to room E229!

First of all, if you look at the walls around the room, you can get a pretty good sense of what I like. The decor reflects my favorite movies, music, books and other cultural pastimes, they're kind of eclectic, but that's how I am. I hope you'll find we have some things in common when you check out my posters.

I love my classroom because I spent four years in a room nicknamed the Dungeon at Irvington. It was cold and damp and drafty, a converted autoshop with 17 foot high ceilings and concrete block walls. Looking back, I don't know how I lasted so long in those conditions. This room is such a haven in comparison, and I feel blessed to be at Washington in general. It's a warmer, friendlier place than I've been used to, having graduated from Mission, then teaching there for three years, followed by four years at Irvington. I think I've finally found a home here at Wash, and hope to be with you for a good long time.

This year is an exciting one for my family, as we're moving back to San Francisco after 15 years of suburban exile. My husband and I both grew up in the city and we love it there, it's home like nowhere else on earth. While I've been grateful for my 10 minute commutes over the last ten years, I'm ready to go back to the place I belong, even if it means three hours a day on the road.

As for my home life, I have two kids, 10 and 15. The fifteen year old is a sophomore at Wash, some of you may know him. My daughter is in the fifth grade at Mattos, with Mr. McLeod. We have two dogs, Jake and Nobi; a tuxedo kitty, Cleo; a bunny named Tutu; and a ball python named Buckwheat. My husband and I will celebrate our 18th anniversary this year.

Finally, I'd like to say that I've wanted to be a high school English teacher since I was 15. That was the year I failed four classes because I hated school so much I stopped going to class. I think I racked up over 50 absences in the second semester of my sophomore year. But I passed English with a B+, because it was the only class I enjoyed. Once I decided that I wanted to teach English, my grades improved across the board, in junior and senior years I earned almost straight As. This helped get me into Berkeley, where I spent the seven happiest years of my life, getting my BA, teaching credential and MA.

So, I hope you can see that I take teaching very seriously, it's not just a job for me, it's a calling. I understand that school is often not a lot of fun, and I do my best to sprinkle some fun into my class...but sometimes, there's just no substitute for hard work, and I ask you to stick with me when it's time to buckle down and focus on learning. When I give you an assignment, please know that I really believe it is necessary to further your education. I hope you'll trust me on that.

Affectionately,

mst