

# Audio Transcript

## Time: Dialogue of the Interview

- 0:00 So Ken, we're here for an interview today. This is an (homework) assignment where we are trying to examine cognitive models and processes. I understand your pursuing a career in education as a high school teacher. I also understand you majored in English during college. I just want to know how you got into your profession of wanting to become a teacher.
- 0:27 Well, it was a pretty late decision for me. When I graduated from high school, I didn't really know what I wanted to do with my life. I thought of going to college but also thought of also joining the army. I decided to go to college at the advice of some people that were important to me. I did not know exactly what I am doing, to be honest. It was not until my second year of college teaching English was the right thing for me.
- 1:17 Can you explain to me why some of these values feel right that you want to become a teacher?
- 1:32 Sure. Sure. One of the things that took up the majority of my time as a kid was reading. I remember the very book I read and I was in kindergarten. I remember getting this book from my kindergarten teacher as a Christmas gift. At the time, I did not know how to read on my own. I took it home and I asked my dad if he could read it to be. He picked up the book and he tried his best to read the book to me but after a few minutes he told me that he was not able to read it. He said he did know English because he was an immigrant. Over the course of the next few weeks, I learned to read. Ever since that day, I was hooked on reading. That is the reason that I want to be an English teacher.
- 3:14 Growing up in an immigrant home, I would assume that it must have been a struggle for both you and your family. What kinds of experiences growing up as an Asian American influenced you to help children and help others to learn English?
- 4:36 I think no matter what of ethical background you come from whether it is from a Mexican background or an Asian background is the ability to develop self-reliance. Many of these children of immigrant parents learn that there are times they are not able to rely on their parents for their academic needs, and there is just a strong push for these children to become self-sufficient. First of all, there's this language barrier. A lot of these first-generation American children of immigrants often times have to take on responsibilities of an adult as well as also a responsibility of a student. What this means is that they (these immigrant children) have to act as a translator especially when it comes to helping their parents translate things at a Social Security Office, Welfare Office or any place that requires English.
- 5:28 So as you progressed throughout your life, what are some of the challenges you faced personally that made you want to become a teacher to be that influential role model? And also what are some of the steps you made in order to become a teacher academically?
- 6:42 Like I said earlier, when I entered college I did not know what to do. I was an undeclared major. I did not really decide on teaching English until I took this creative writing course. In this course, I had to write several types of writing genres. We wrote poetry, short-stories, and plays. While I was writing these things, I realized that my love for reading as a child really never left me. If anything, these classes I took rekindled my interest in literature. So, that class gave me a feeling of confidence and inspiration that I hope I can share some of my students when in my own classroom.
- 7:51 In terms of just values itself, how has your personal relationships including the influences of your friends and family has shaped your overall mental psyche for that passion of being a teacher?
- 8:05 Unfortunately, I don't have family support in this decision. They wanted me to become something along the lines of a lawyer or doctor. I chose to become a teacher which as you know teachers don't look make a

lot of money. At best, it's around \$60,000. To me, that's fine. It's absolutely fine to live on. I experienced a lot of resistance from my family. I decided to go along with this decision anyway. My friends have been supportive. My parents have been supportive.

9:00 What do you do as a teacher?

9:22 This may sound like an obvious answer; however, as a teacher I am a role-model and a bank of knowledge to my students. In a classroom, I design lesson plans and prepare what's the next thing to teacher to my students. I also just teach students how to read and write English. I enjoy this setting a lot; however, there are times I feel like giving up and losing that passion. I would say that there are times the teaching profession is pretty hard. You would always here that there is a lot of stress and less benefits with low pay. There are times other times people think these teachers are greedy and they are asking more what they deserve. When you step in a classroom, you begin to realize things.

You are also like a parent to them where you are stopping fights or helping them resolve their own conflicts. On top of that, you are also organizing club events if you are a club supervisor. There are PTA meetings that one attends; grading papers ... I don't know there are some teachers that are able to grade hundreds and hundreds of papers. But you know this is what I signed up for. Overall, I think in briefs teachers don't stop when their last class ends for the day. They have to go home and grade things generate reports, attend meetings and call parents. It's pretty stressful.

You know, one of the hardest aspects of being a teacher is also parental confrontations. Often times, parents don't like to hear what others have to say about their children. There are times things that a teacher and parent confrontation can become hostile. I have had experiences where parents were not open to input from me that their child is failing my class. Of course, the cooperative parents are great.

12:48 So amongst your peers and yourself, how do you deal with these types of hostile confrontations when parents become angry over your work how you did their child?

14:01 The most important thing when it comes to these types of confrontations is to remain calm. While I was in graduate school, one of the things I was taught while obtaining my teaching credentials is teacher hostility can have severe consequences. As a teacher, besides grading and just the social dynamics of a school environment, parents play a role in their kids' education. I always keep a copy of my students' work so parents are able to see the progress of their child. Basically, leave a paper trail.

14:48 As you were undergoing post-undergraduate studies, were there points that you just wanted to give up and perhaps even lost that passion to teach?

15:01 I have to approach this question very carefully because a lot of people will take our words and skew them in a certain way. I believe that young people in their teens and in their 20. I believe that young people and their routines in their 20s. I believe they don't know exactly what they want to do with their lives. They may be 99% sure and they may be 99% unsure, but nobody is 100% sure what they want to do for the rest of their lives at such a young age. There have to been a time when the workload has got to me, I felt like giving up that day. As far as teaching as concern there has been time where I leave work frustrated or angry where I really have a bad week or weekend I just keep going determination. That determination comes from my belief that I am doing the right.

16:18 After your undergraduate studies, what are some additional steps you have personally made to become a teacher?

16:22 Well first of all you have to past the CBEST. The CBEST is an exam that all teaching candidates must past

before they enter the credential program. The CBEST consists of reading, math and writing so you basically have to know basic algebra. In addition to the CBEST you have to pass the CBSET in the subject area you want to teach so if you want to teach high school biology you have to pass the Biology CBEST if you want to teach high school English you have to pass the CBEST English and on top of the top you have provide a police record, TB test because you are working with children and top of that you have to do observations and after you get your preliminary credentials you have to teach for a year. After you have completed that you receive your credentials.

18:06 Well that sounds very difficult, would you say the process to become a teacher just to attain the teacher is a long process and what would you say to that?

18:19 It is a long process. I am 25 years old. Some of my friends are making over \$100,000 and some of them have full time positions. Most of them are done with school so in many ways I feel like lagging behind. I am willing to deal with because I believe that teaching is right for me.

18:47 What is your teaching philosophy?

19:02 First all, I don't believe there is such a thing as a bad kid. I think there are kids that may not want to learn, who may not be behaving as you would be expecting. They are not bad kids. Teenagers go through a lot of personal issues with their lives. In the classroom, I do my job to teach English. However, you have to take into consideration of the current things happening in some of these children's home. Some of them might come from a broken home, experiencing family issues, or someone they know that joined a gang. It is important for a teacher to understand these kids are still young and still malleable. I think the most important thing as a teacher is to treat your students the best you can and not look down on them.

Of course, the students that eager to learn also need special attention as much as the students who are doing poorly. I believe that in a classroom, fairness is absolutely needed.

21:30 During your teacher credential program, what are some of the classes you took to help you become a better teacher as part of your teaching curriculum?

21:42 I don't remember all the classes I took. However, I remember some of these courses included behavioral psychology and sociology. In addition to just how to be a better teacher, we learned how to communicate and handle special needs children especially those have physical or mental impairments. I also had to learn about the culture of schools especially in Los Angeles. Before entering a school, I did not know every school is different set with its own distinct culture and ways of handling issues.

While teaching, there were colleagues that acted as my mentor too. I would guess their experience themselves has influenced how I run my classroom.

23:02 What kind of norms and cultures did you experience as a teacher in a school environment?

23:20 Every school has a culture. A lot of people think that culture arises from the community of the school including teachers, students and other staff members. Social hierarchy is present like any work environment. Even amongst teachers, a social hierarchy is present. Some teachers can be cliquish and like parents, there are sometimes colleague hostility. I have learned to overcome these kinds of things.

Amongst colleagues, gossip is sometimes evident. Unusual jargons are used and shorten-acronyms can inspire either positive or negative connotations.

24:08 Can you elaborate more these technical terms or jargons?

24:37 There is a lot of terminology in the academic work environment especially in K-12 education. Part of the

reason there is a lot of terminology in each district is because of political correctness. Political correctness plays a big role in naming in education. What might be suitable to use at one time may not be suitable to use at a later time. So in my workplace personally, I work also at an after school program. We use JK to refer to the program where we have students from kindergarten to preschool. We also use RRR for retentional reading kids which refer to basically extra practice for these kids who struggle with learning how to read. Basically, there are plenty of jargons in the academic setting.

25:53 Time is about to end. We are going to conclude this interview lastly with just your brief perspective of a teacher. Is there anything you would like to share about being a teacher that you haven't said?

26:01 I think teaching is an ongoing process where both the teacher and students are learning from each other. It is kind of a mutual understanding both teachers and students create. I think besides seeing how kids can learn, I am more excited when my students love the subject I am teaching. The most gratifying and satisfying part of my job is help these children grow personally and academically. At the end of the day, it is the children that I think I may have an impact that really brings out the rewards. It is really stressful amidst all that stress that it is easy to forget how you might treat people as people. We live in a population over 80 different ethnicities. At times I think that education is deprived to people. I think that is a shame. I mean education is meant to open our children to the world and I hope to serve that function as a teacher.

28:34 I just want to thank you for participating in my study for my assignment with UC San Diego. I thank you for your time.