

Statement Fostering Inclusivity and Diversity in the Classroom

I have worked in the education field since 2017 as a substitute teacher. I have been privileged to serve underrepresented schools within the Los Angeles community. I have worked with students from diverse cities such as East Los Angeles, Bell Gardens, Montebello, South Central Los Angeles, and Compton. These areas are home to unique and diverse populations often comprised of low to moderate income families, First-Generation Americans, and immigrant students with a limited English proficiency. In some cases, the immigrant students are recent arrivals to America. These communities are starkly different from affluent neighborhoods and can be considered marginalized in relation to upscale affluent areas in California such as Malibu or Brentwood. Suffice to say, my education and experience serving as an educator in marginalized communities has given me the opportunity to develop essential skills required of all educators. Namely, I have developed the essential skills of fostering inclusivity and diversity in the classroom.

Serving in marginalized communities has shaped my craft to the point where I am comfortable entering a classroom to establish my presence as an authority figure to facilitate a period of instruction. As a substitute teacher, I follow the lesson plans provided by the host school. In some cases, I work side-by-side with the primary teacher throughout the duration of my subbing assignment.

My subbing assignments are usually day-to-day. Some assignments may last a week in length. Regardless of the length of my assignments, I receive a firsthand look at some of the barriers to education that students living in marginalized communities face, as they seek a better life pursuing K-12 education.

I have observed my K-12 students navigate a disproportional opportunity gap that I did not know existed until I became an educator. My students experience challenges that are unique to them. These challenges may be compounded by the fact that my students are a certain skin color, live in a certain zip code, or identify with a certain ethnic or minority group. Moreover, the financial stress of having a low-income household, coupled with being a First-Generation American that also belongs to a minority group, can create barriers to success that affluent students might not experience.

Ultimately, the barriers to success impact marginalized students more than affluent students with the marginalized group having to endure, in some cases, insurmountable odds to achieve the same position in life as an affluent person. That same position I mention is having a high school diploma to get into college to be successful. In this regard, marginalized students are significantly disadvantaged in relation to affluent non-minority students. Fortunately, as a substitute teacher, I am cognizant of this disparity. I strive to correct for it every chance I can. This has molded me into an observant and intuitive educator with interesting classroom experience. I have been blessed with the knowledge to quickly identify the struggles of students from marginalized communities. As a college adjunct lecturer, I have identified familiar systematic patterns that contribute to the widening of the opportunity gap for students that dream