

RADHIKA HIRA



What motivated you to enroll at Teachers College?

I had been teaching yoga to young children at a few head start programs when I had this realization that being an elementary teacher might be my purpose. After researching programs in the area the strong emphasis that TC places on the development of the whole child – socially, emotionally and intellectually was what drew me to enroll here.

What have you learned since enrolling at TC?

I have truly learned so much about the profession and my role as a teacher but if there was one thing I know I will walk away with it is that I am preparing students to be citizens of our communities. Treating each one of them and their ideas with respect is my moral obligation.

Is it difficult balancing student teaching and coursework?

Yes, it is challenging from a time management perspective. You have to be organized and patient with yourself so you can get everything done. However by their very nature the student teaching and coursework are so well coordinated that you are constantly able to draw from one while doing the other. It is the most invaluable experience I have had in this process.

Do you feel supported in your work by TC faculty?

Absolutely, the faculty and the staff of the program are constantly in touch and truly do everything in their power to support us as student teachers.

Describe your student teaching experience.

My student teaching experience is slightly different from most of my colleagues since I have

"The students in my 4th grade classroom are exceptional. I learn from them everyday and what I am most proud of with them is their ability to constantly be open to learning and growth."

been at the same placement for both semesters. I also work at the school full time so I don't get Fridays off or Wednesday half days. While this makes my time slightly more limited, on the flip side it forces me to be even more organized. In the classroom I am most enjoying teaching and planning lessons and all the feedback that I get from my CT and supervisors which is such a great support. I learn something new almost everyday and now as I near the end of this experience I feel very confident in my abilities to go out and have a classroom of my own.

Describe student work that you are proud of?

The students in my 4th grade classroom are exceptional. I learn from them every day and what I am most proud of with them is their ability to constantly be open to learning and growth. They work so hard to do well, study hard, and make their families and teachers proud that it motivates me to be my best self as well. An example of this is that we just finished a unit on figurative language and they were so involved in the different types of figurative language and had such interesting and intelligent conversations about why something was an idiom or a simile and not a metaphor, etc. In the yard after recess I

said to one of them that I was starving and his response was, "Ms. Hira, that's a hyperbole. You're not starving, you're just hungry." Made my heart jump with joy! Success.

Describe your transition to virtual student teaching.

The transition to virtual teaching has been so abrupt that it has forced me to face it head-on. The learning curve for any new skill is always steep, and so it has been with this. I've learned how to work with google classroom, developed more ways of providing feedback on classwork, and how to address the needs of diverse learners through different platforms and emails. I also see the potential for having a consistent online learning platform that can help students during absences, with homework, classwork, etc.

How have your pedagogical practices changed as you adjust to provide remote learning experiences?

The most significant learning I've had about my pedagogical approach is that whatever the medium, I am committed to ensuring student learning isn't compromised. I'm exploring so many new resources that can help students engage and also provide access to everyone through multiple means of representation. I think this has opened the door to see how to harness technology to give students a vibrant learning experience even when we come back to the world of classrooms!

What are you looking forward to having your own classroom?

I am most looking forward to having a chance to implement a social emotional curriculum in my classroom. I cannot extol the benefits enough and I really want to offer this to my future students and give them essential tools to face life with calm and peace.

What are your goals after graduation?

I would love to work in an upper elementary grade, in a public school either in New York or

STUDENT TEACHER PROFILE RADHIKA HIRA (CONT.)



Westchester, where I live.

What do you enjoy doing in your free time?

I don't have much of that these days but spending time with my family and working on my own yoga practice bring me such joy and happiness.