

JESSICA DENNY BENSON | ELEMENTARY EDUCATOR

Dedicated elementary educator with a proven track record of commended performance teaching to lower elementary in a Montessori-based, mixed-grade classroom. Innovative education leader and collaborator with a passion for education and an unwavering commitment to optimizing student and school success.

PROFESSIONAL EXCELLENCE SUMMARY

Elementary Teacher, Montessori Grades 1-3 AMERICAN INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF UTAH

Responsible for educating 22 culturally- and socioeconomically- diverse students from 17 different countries. Accepted position under full disclosure of the unique challenges ahead. The class had been subject to multiple staff turnovers over a two-year period, the result of which had left this group unstructured, behind academically, and a long way from normalization. By the end of the school year my students had not only managed to catch up, they had successfully catapulted themselves into "above average" levels.

- Designed and delivered relevant student-centered instruction and assessment. Authored curriculum to surpass state core competencies, based on a combination of both the Montessori method and the International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme, and brought to life through technology integration and project-based learning in the classroom.
- Fostered an inclusive and differentiated classroom by developing a relationship with each student in an effort to effectively provide a personalized education plan, intended to inspire and ignite learning for each individual. Reported to and collaborated with parents to tailor success roadmaps per student and designed differentiated units for both individual and group lessons, depending on learning needs and readiness.
- Successfully regained control of the "classroom in chaos," by first and foremost launching "A Roadmap for Promoting Empathy in Schools," presented by: Ashoka | www.ashoka.org. Students learned to forge and navigate relationships in the classroom and whenever possible, they were offered the opportunity to provide leadership and service to the community through participation in local and national causes. Created and sustained a safe and supportive learning environment for students built on respect and rapport, where students take academic risks and play an active role in preventing behaviors that interfere with learning.
- Implemented classroom technology to enhance and reinvent the learning environment and engage my learners. Encouraged students to acquire the capacity to choose and use these technologies independently. Utilized data derived from the technology to bolster student assessment and provide timely, individualized feedback to learners, ultimately striving to deepen learning and encourage student self-reflection.

EDUCATION

ELEMENTARY EDUCATION LICENSE (1-8) • Utah State Board of Education Cactus ID 720003 • Jul 2018 - Present

BA, COMMUNICATIONS W/ EMPHASIS IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

CHAPMAN UNIVERSITY Orange, California | 2005

Graduated with Honors | Summa Cum Laude | GPA 3.985 | Dean's List | Provost's List |

Gamma Beta Phi Honor Society | Lambda Pi Eta Communications Honor Society

INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE DIPLOMA (IB)

INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF BRUSSELS Brussels, Belgium | 2001

Globally recognized diploma program fostering international citizens and global leaders.

MS, GLOBAL REAL ESTATE DEVELOPMENT

NEW YORK UNIVERSITY [School of Continuing and Professional Studies] New York, New York | 2010

M.ED WITH EMPHASIS IN MONTESSORI*

WESTMINSTER COLLEGE Salt Lake City, Utah | Accepted for June 2019

LANGUAGES

ENGLISH (NATIVE SPEAKER) ▾ FRENCH (FLUENT) ▾ GERMAN (BEGINNER) ▾ SPANISH (CONVERSATIONAL)

- Completely re-designed and remodeled classroom to establish an environment of inspiration, curiosity and learning. Recognized by administration for innovative new classroom design and praised for having **"the best classroom at AISU."**
- Commended for effectively employing classroom management, transforming a classroom of chaos into one of proven progress and success, **centered on high expectations and a passion for learning and improvement.**
- **Developed Lower Elementary Typing and Digital Citizenship course** to kick off each new year, adopted by all lower elementary.
- **Managed and orchestrated a total of eight field trips on behalf of lower elementary department** for the 2018-19 school year.
- **Launched the first-ever elementary science fair**, hosted exclusively by my class in the atrium, accessible by all departments K-12. Event acknowledged school-wide as a huge success, with resulting plans for participation by all elementary classes for following years.
- Led class to take **FIRST PLACE in school-wide reading challenge, altogether reading over 2000 books, more than 8000 pages.**
- **Improved literacy test scores (DIBELS) by a whopping 87%, when compared to beginning of year.**
- Pioneered the use of service-learning projects at AISU as part of ongoing lessons on EMPATHY. Those initiatives included:
 1. Adopting a local low-income family to provide Christmas through **United Way's "Sub for Santa"** program,
 2. Launching fundraiser with the objective of purchasing chairs to improve learning environment,
 3. Spearheading a **"Lego Drive"** to support another lower elementary teacher in her adoption of three children,
 4. Led **"Great AISU Cleanup,"** an effort to reduce litter on and around campus and contribute to reversing the climate crisis.
- At the special invitation of Secondary Art Director Trevor Huisch, my students **collaborated to design and create the message and mural for the school's Grand Hallway.** Final concept inspired by my lessons on "Saving our Tomorrow."
- **Credited for hosting the most successful classroom movie night fundraiser in AISU's history.** Proceeds used to purchase four computer kits.
- Completed innovative and unique project-based learning assignments in class. Examples include:
 - ✦ **Building four computers from the ground up**, and applied newly learned coding skills to **bring programming to life.**
 - ✦ Raising caterpillars into butterflies, constructing an indoor ecosystem and providing habitat for an ant farm.
 - ✦ Constructing and engineering lighted pens as a part of electricity and conductivity unit.
 - ✦ Creating and erupting a volcano during Earth Science unit.
 - ✦ Celebrating culture and cultural holidays with an emphasis on cultures shared by the students in our class.
- Conceived of and orchestrated two events to foster motivation and healthy competition, the **GEOGRAPHY BEE** and **MATH-A-LON**, with department-wide participation.
- Only Elementary class to participate in AISU's secondary end-of-trimester **"Celebration of Learning" event, performing a series of short plays** successfully designed to achieve underlying fluency and literacy objectives.
- Communicated effectively and collaborated with parents to ensure student success. Sent out monthly newsletters, weekly updates and maintained constant engagement and ongoing communication via Facebook Group page for Ms. Jessica's class, DOJO and bi-monthly class newsletters. **Credited for fostering a "school family"** amongst the students and their parents.
- **Founded AISU's Coding Club**, available to lower and upper elementary, boasting 16 members.
- **Directed Santa Lucia Parade** during holidays, recognized for community engagement and cross-departmental collaboration.
- Conceptualized the idea behind the primary event for the **#SaveAISU** movement, offering a voice to the overwhelming number of suddenly displaced and universally devastated students faculty and staff. The **#SaveAISU** music video, **"I Will Fight For You,"** brought together students from every part of our school and caught the attention of the media and the hearts of the AISU community.
- Contributing member of the **AISU Communications Committee.**
- **Pioneered the use of Nearpod** for classroom instruction at AISU.
- Planned and **directed the Third Grade Graduation ceremony** on behalf of lower elementary department.

- **Nearpod Certified Educator** (NCE)
- **Common Sense Educator** 2018-2019
- International Standards for Technology in Education (**ISTE**) **Member**
- **ISTE Edtech Advisor**, powered by LearnPlatform
- Certified **Apple Teacher**
- Completion of Google's "**Be Internet Awesome**" classroom rewards for digital citizenship.
- Certificate of Completion, **Computer Science Fundamentals Professional Development** [7 hours in-person PD focused on code.org's courses for K-5 students.]
- Artificial Intelligence Explorations and Their Practical Use in School Environments from ISTE U
- School Safety and Evacuation Protocol Training, August 2018
- Suicide Prevention Training, 08/30/2018
- Sexual Harassment Awareness and Prevention Training, August 2018
- CPR Certification, January 2019
- Communications Council, AISU 2018-2019
- Educational Technology Endorsement, anticipated completion 12/2019
- Accepted by Westminster to earn M.Ed with emphasis in Montessori Practices, June 2019
- **Canvas Training Advanced PD (Completion 2019)**
- Gifted Talented 2E
- LETRS Early Childhood
- Behavior Boot Camp
- 19-20 ELEMENTARY "LITERACY IN EVERY CLASSROOM: SLCSO's Professional Development Contract Day"
- Evenings for Educators 2019-20
- Functional Communication and Behavior Training 2019- 2020
- Evenings for Educators 2019-20
- Behavior Boot Camp Section 3 French Teacher Workshop
- French AUDII Conference 2019 (1st Year Elementary Teachers)
- French AUDII Conference 2019 (2nd Year Elementary Teachers)
- Interactive Lessons that Your Students will Love!
- Functional Communication and Behavior Training
- Art is for Everyone: Adaptive Arts for Educators and Learners (hosted by Utah Museum of Fine Arts)
- EYE 1, 2, 3 Portfolio Training and Tips Evenings for Educators 2019-20
- Outside of Language: Making Sense of the Abstract (hosted by Utah Museum of Contemporary Art)

REFERENCES

Tasi Young, Executive Director

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I BELIEVE THAT THROUGH EDUCATION, WE CAN CREATE A BETTER WORLD.

My mission is to encourage my students to become active, compassionate and lifelong learners, committed to enduring fundamental principles with a drive for innovation and improvement.

I can achieve my mission by empowering my students to become self-regulated learners who know how to ask good questions, set effective goals, pursue their aspirations and have the determination to achieve them. These skills also help to support students' sense of agency, encouraging them to see their learning as an active and dynamic process.

I believe educational outcomes are profoundly shaped by the teacher-student relationship, and that I believe that my success as a teacher depends on that connection and building a foundation of trust with each of my students. By tapping into individual interests, talents and passions, students blossom both individually and as a community.

MY APPROACH TO TEACHING IS:

- **Student-driven.** A strong emphasis is placed on students finding their own information and constructing their own understandings.
 - **Focused on conceptual understanding.** Concepts are explored in order to both deepen disciplinary understanding and to help students make connections and transfer learning to new contexts.
 - **Developed in local and global contexts.** Teaching uses real-life contexts and examples, and students are encouraged to process new information by connecting it to their own experiences and to the world around them.
 - **Focused on effective teamwork and collaboration.** This includes promoting teamwork and collaboration between students, but also refers to the collaborative relationship between teachers and students.
 - **Inclusive, Differentiated, personalized.** Teaching is inclusive and values diversity. It affirms students' identities, and aims to create learning opportunities that enable every student to develop and pursue appropriate personal goals.
 - **Data-Driven.** Assessment plays a crucial role in supporting, as well as measuring, learning. This approach also recognizes the crucial role of providing students with effective feedback.
 - **Technology-Integrated.** Learning in a rapidly changing landscape requires high levels of information fluency, media literacy, and technology integration, all of which should be structured around computational thinking and digital citizenship, beginning in lower elementary.
- International-minded.** A way of thinking, being, and acting that is characterized by an openness to the world and a recognition of our interconnectedness, common humanity and shared guardianship of the planet. I believe intercultural understanding and respect is an essential part of life in the 21st century.