

November 7, 2005

Josh Allen
BYU-Idaho
English Department
138 SA
Rexburg, ID 83460-0820

Dear Josh:

Thanks for allowing me to visit your English 335 class this morning. I always look forward to being in your class—it was also good seeing so many of my current and former students in that class.

You have such a relaxed, comfortable teaching demeanor. You create an atmosphere of trust, and you have an infectious enthusiasm. Students enjoy being in your class.

I like how you give students an overview of the exam, and you really want them to do well, and you're being straightforward and encouraging. You're also very fair in letting students know the exam can be on anything for this period, but you'll only select passages from a smaller grouping—that will help them focus their studying. I also give my students a take-home written essay as a part of their exam—it works well in giving them more time to formulate thoughtful responses (and we can hold them more responsible for their work).

I like how you set up your class. At first I was a little nervous with the PowerPoint on the Harlem Renaissance because I was afraid the entire presentation would be just reading the slides (which many teachers do), but you were using the slides/lecture just to introduce major concepts of the movement. As you were doing this, however, I noticed that only a few of the students were taking notes—they others were drifting off because you had indicated that this would be on BlackBoard, so they may not have sensed the need to pay careful attention. Perhaps another effective strategy would have been for you to outline the major points then discuss them without the longer written text, then read the slide text as a reinforcement of your points—that way they get the information in three formats—orally, outlined (and they fill in the information), and formal definitions. significance while encouraging students to work with textual support.

So, Father Josh, you're doing well, and I'm so grateful for you and your goodness. How can I help?

Take care,

Rodney D. Keller