



Testimonial from a New Zealand teacher

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Mr Henning's teaching experience in France

Descriptif :

Témoignage d'un enseignant, arrivé en France en 1998, sans maîtriser parfaitement la langue française.

My teaching career in France.

I arrived in France in March 1998 and it was very difficult, due to my lack of French, to find work. However, in 2007 I had the opportunity to work at **Lycée Berthelot** (Châtellerauld) as an **English assistant**. It went very well and during the following year, as I was working as an assistant again, the position of an **English teacher** became available and I was asked by the headmaster if I would like it. Since **I have always wanted to be a teacher** I agreed immediately and later in the week I was also asked if I wanted to be **the Section European teacher** (history and geography). Since my university degree has many elements that corresponded to the job I was very happy to accept this position also.

After **spending 8 years at Lycée Berthelot**, the position became unavailable to me and I **was given the position of an English teacher at Lycée/Collège Jean Moulin in Montmorillon**.

After Lycée/Collège Jean Moulin in 2017-18, I went to **Lycée Bois d'amour** (Poitiers) again as an English Teacher and in 2018-19 at **Lycée Dolmen** (Poitiers) and **EREA Anne Frank** (Poitiers). I stayed for two years at EREA and due to a problem at **Lycée Camille Guerin** (Poitiers) I offered to help fill in for a colleague who had fallen ill in 2019-20.

The following year, 2020-21, **I was posted to Collège George Sand** (Châtellerauld) and **Lycée Le Verger** (Châtellerauld). In 2021-22 **I was posted to Collège Ronsard** (Poitiers) and **Collège Jean Monnet** (Lusignan) again **as an English teacher**.

In 2022-23 **I was posted to Lycée Kyoto** (Poitiers) and **Lycée Le Dolmen** (Poitiers) and in this current year, 2023-24, **I am still at Lycée Kyoto** (Poitiers) **as an English Teacher** where I hope to be posted next year.

Let me tell you that **I also worked part time at the IRIAF in Niort, 2009-11, as an English teacher for M2 and L3 SARADS and at the IUT in Châtellerauld in 2013.**

- My feelings as a teacher.

Obviously these are totally personal reflections...

I have always wanted to teach and it has lived up to my expectations. I really like being a teacher even if, on rare occasions, it can be challenging. I enjoy the contact with the students, seeing them progress (hopefully) in English and also develop into bright positive young adults.

It seems that **I am fortunate** in a way that it normally doesn't really matter what the profile of the student is, I can make some sort of connection. **Being a native speaker helps but it has its limitations.**

- The way of teaching

From day one with a new class whether it be college, vocation or general high school I try to **identify what are the needs, level and character of the students** individually and as a collective and **I adapt my lessons and my approach** within the parameters of the curriculum.

My mantra is : 'I don't care what your level is in English, what I want is for you to make an effort.'

...and the students soon realize that I am quite demanding in this aspect.

I try to create a positive environment to study and to learn in. I often try to **use humour in class**. This hopefully **allows the students to relax and feel comfortable and confident** that if they make a mistake, as they surely will,

no one will laugh at them, perhaps with them but that is acceptable. However, even if there is 'fun', **the limits of what is acceptable and what is not acceptable are clearly defined.**

I often play up my level of French, or lack of, which shows to the students that it is okay to make a mistake and that I can laugh at my mistakes (and they can as well, with me, but not at me !) **I often ask for their help, which I often don't need, which creates a bond between myself and most of the students.** Not all of course.

- Differences between teaching in a college, vocational school or a general high school.

The schools and students, that I have worked at seem to me to be all very similar...in the sense that **the vast majority of the students want to learn and progress.** The students behave as most normal teenagers do, notwithstanding their academic abilities.

It seems that most students are motivated and have a relatively well defined career path and a clear idea of where their future lies and that they can have a positive and inclusive impact in society. A small minority don't have this and they tend to struggle whether it be at college, high or vocational schools.

- My relationship with students.

I normally have **a very good relationship with the students.**



I try to be **patient, kind and aware to the needs of the students.** I hope that they understand that I want them all to progress in English and as citizens.

When I find a student having difficulties in English or behavioural problems, I try to find a solution as quickly as I can. However, sometimes it is not possible and I have learnt that even with the best will in the world, I am sometimes not the right person or it's not the right time or both to help.

The most challengingly part of teaching for me is when students are rude and lack respect, this I struggle with.