

Jessica Harris

Mount Dora, FL • (813) 727-7741 • jessharris190@gmail.com

TEACHING PHILOSOPHY

I believe students learn best in classrooms that feel predictable. When routines are taught clearly, expectations stay consistent, and students feel supported, the room feels safe and steady, and learning has somewhere to happen. Classroom management, to me, is not about handling behavior. It is how the whole day runs: transitions, routines, materials in labeled spots students can reach on their own, and expectations taught and practiced like any other lesson.

A well-managed classroom is not a silent one. Students should be able to talk, work together, and solve problems without the room tipping into chaos. I lean on structure where it helps, with clear expectations, follow-through, and positive reinforcement, and I pair it with active participation, discussion, and hands-on work so the structure has a purpose. When a problem happens, I look for the cause first. Sometimes the real issue is an unclear expectation or a weak transition, and the right move is to adjust my own systems rather than blame a student.

Small groups should feel like an opportunity, never a label. In one of my word analysis groups, my strongest reader was upset at first because she thought being pulled meant something was wrong. I explained that I chose her because she was strong and could lead, and she became exactly that for the group. Since then I have been deliberate about making sure every student at my table, from striving readers to students working above grade level, knows why I want them there.

Data tells me what to teach next. I have used EasyCBM fluency and vocabulary measures, Words Their Way spelling inventories, DIBELS, and informal reading inventories to group students, plan instruction, and know when to reteach. A lesson that does not land is information, not a failure, and I would rather reteach it differently than move on without the kids.

Every classroom I have taught in has included multilingual learners, so I plan for language alongside content: visuals and modeling, home language treated as an asset, and families treated as partners. My professional development has centered there as well, from WIDA eWorkshops on supporting newcomers to IRIS training on effective instruction for English learners.

Most of all, I want students to know I am glad they are in the room. Warm and consistent beats strict or scattered every time, and it is how a classroom becomes a place students trust.