



MS. **D**alia one week at a TIME!!

February 17th, 2016

1st Grade Arabic with Ms. Laila: All Hands Are UP!!

One of the many distinguishing features of Renaissance Academy is our solid ASL (Arabic as a Second Language) program. The students learn Arabic as early as age two all the way through high school. Most of our students start to learn Arabic as none-native Arabic speakers. By the end of 5th grade most students develop a native-like fluency in Arabic.

This week, I stopped by the 1st grade classroom during the Arabic class with Ms. Laila. The students were learning new vocabulary and forming new words by putting Arabic letters together using the Smart Board. I was very impressed to see the students actively participating and displaying a rich vocabulary bank in Arabic. The class is conducted almost entirely in Arabic including instructions for transition activities such as "open your book", "pay attention" ...etc. The students followed Ms. Laila's instructions instantaneously. Ms. Laila has set a new goal for her students. At the beginning of the year the goal was to master 4 new words per week. The goal is now doubled to 8 words per week. Arabic grammar including forming Arabic verbs in the present tense was also a part of the class.

As a seasoned certified teacher, Ms. Laila diversifies her expectations in the class based on the mastery level of each student. After all we all know that teaching is not "One Size Fits All".

Thank you Ms. Laila for your efforts and for a great class!!



Kindergarten Class In the Spotlight Differentiation In Action!!

This week my journey around the school took me to the kindergarten class with Ms. Rousseve and Ms. Narjes. I was lucky enough to visit the class during Centers Time. Centers Time is one of the most recent trends in education. It allows the teachers the opportunity to create interest and ability based learning centers so that each and every student remains challenged, motivated and on task.

The visit to the KG class provided me with a perfect chance to witness differentiated instruction in action. The students were working in small groups. Around one table, some students were working on their Daily Fix it and perfecting their spellings. Around another table, another group was working on mastering their phonemic skills using a phone-like tool that magnifies the sounds for them as they sound out the letters to themselves.

On the rug, Ms. Rousseve pulled out small groups of students where they practiced writing and grammar by learning about the parts of a sentence and action verbs. Punctuation was also stressed during the same activity as the students learned how to end their sentences with a period. The smart board was integrated as a part of the centers. The students' transition from one activity to the other was flawless and very much self managed.

I was also very impressed with the manners of our kindergarten students and how they always remembered to say please and thank you. Great Job Ms. Rousseve and Ms. Narjes!!



The Lunch That Cost Me My Job!!

In a very thought provoking conversation with Samah Khan, she admitted to me that she would like to have my job and be the principal of the school. She has a few goals that she would like to achieve once she is in the position. These are her words: *"When I become a principal, I will give all the teachers days off and sit around and play all day"*

When I asked Samah what would I do then if she becomes a principal? It turns out that she has it all planned out. Here is her scheme:

"We will cancel out Saima and then you can be the president of the Student Council"

I do need to mention that Saima is her older sister and a very distinguished senior at Renaissance. What can I say, siblings love!! No more lunch with the 1st graders. This girl has her eyes on my job !!

