

Tomorrow's Teachers: Summer Assignment

As a member of the Tomorrow's Teachers class, you have an exciting opportunity to develop an understanding of the teaching profession while working closely with an elementary school teacher throughout the duration of the school year. In addition to your work as a teacher cadet, you will receive instruction in educational theory, classroom management, exceptional learners, and effective teaching strategies, to name a few, all while developing your own philosophy of education.

In addition to preparing for a career as a future educator, you will have the opportunity to earn dual enrollment credits through our partnership with Kean University. Our Tomorrow's Teachers course is a college level program designed to challenge and prepare you for a rewarding profession.

Any student enrolled in this class must complete a mandatory summer assignment. Your task is to read *Educating Esme: Diary of a Teacher's First Year* by Esme Raji Codell. This text chronicles the challenges and rewards experienced by the author during her first year as a teacher. Your summer assignment is broken into two parts: a reading journal and a reflective essay. Please complete your reading journals and reflective essay on separate Google Documents.

Part A: Reading Journals

Educating Esme: Diary of a Teacher's First Year is separated into 3 parts. Your task is to write two reading journals for each part of the book for a total of 6 entries. Each entry should be a half to one page in length. Please consider the following in each of your entries:

- Summarize a key event from the reading
- Describe an important issue or challenge related to teaching that appears in this reading

Examples might include:

- Classroom behavior
 - Helping struggling students
 - Teacher stress
 - Student motivation
 - Fairness
 - Relationships with students
 - School rules or administration
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- Reflect:
 - What would you have done in this situation?
 - Do you agree with Esme's choices? Explain.
 - What does this reveal about the realities of teaching?

Part B: Reflection Essay

Choose **one** of the essay prompts provided below and write a 2-3 page paper reflecting on the

1. Idealism vs. Reality

How does Esmé balance her passion for teaching with the bureaucratic challenges she faces? What does this teach you about the profession?

2. Classroom Management Philosophy

What type of classroom culture does Esmé try to build? How does it compare to classrooms you've experienced?

3. Your Future Classroom

What kind of classroom environment do you hope to create one day? Use examples from the book to explain what practices you would adopt — and what you might do differently.

4. The Importance of Relationships

How does Esmé use humor, trust, and empathy to connect with students? Why are relationships essential for successful teaching?

5. Teaching Beyond Academics

How does Esmé support students emotionally and personally in addition to academically? Should teachers be expected to take on these roles?

6. Would You Want to Teach There?

After reading the book, would you want to teach in a school like Esmé's? Explain your reasoning using evidence from the text.

7. Hope in Education

Despite setbacks, the book remains hopeful about teaching. What gives Esmé hope, and why is hope important in education?