

# Free ms. moffets first year: becoming a teacher in america essay example

[Family](#), [Parents](#)



\n[[toc title="Table of Contents"](#)]\n

\n \t

1. [English](#) \n \t
2. [Summarization](#) \n \t
3. [Works Cited](#) \n

\n[/toc]\n \n

## **English**

' Ms. Moffett's First Year: Becoming a teacher in America,' by Goodnough (2004), is an interesting book in that it reflects the true life experiences of most teachers in elementary schools across the country. In the book, the protagonist, Donna Moffett, a legal secretary, jumps upon an idea to apply to an advertisement for a New York Teaching Fellows program. As her luck would have it, she gets a call from Flatbush, Brooklyn; considered to be among the city's most notorious schools, to teach first graders there. She is called on to pull out all her public service experiences to teach the children there who are from poor and immigrant families. For these kids, education was far from studying.

Donna finds out that the children in her class were ignorant of their class work and were instead too preoccupied with other things. She tries to understand their weird behavior, much in contrast to kids whom she knew elsewhere. Even after three months in class, Donna finds the children hard to understand. A student called Stefanie would always feign stomachache, while another student Tasha, would ask to see the nurse in the middle of class even though she appeared perfectly healthy. Then there was Curtis,

who drew pictures of monsters with tentacles and fangs. Donna also learnt that the teachers who taught there, hardly showed any interest in teaching these children. They would walk into the classroom; spend some time in class and leave as soon as the bell rang. The teachers too couldn't be blamed as they were paid poorly and students showed no interest in learning, which led the school to be in shambles. The students, coming from weak family backgrounds, also weren't supported by their parents and for them; school was a chance to escape reality. After carefully studying her students and understanding their backgrounds, Donna opened up and began to share her lunch with the children from time-to-time. It was during one lunch break that Stefanie told her about some parents. She said that due to abject poverty, most of the students had little food or clothing. Some of the parents had to work two jobs because of which they had no time for the children. Even if she wanted, Stefanie's mother couldn't speak English to help her. Because of their poor backgrounds, these children showed no interest in studies.

Despite the hostilities of her students in class, Donna didn't plan to throw away her New York Teachings Fellow program. Having spent some time with a few of her students, she knew that she had to win their confidence. She stooped down to their level of thinking and playing in the hope that they would recognize and accept her as one of their own. A confrontation could backfire and so she chose to join them. Gradually, the children began to show respect and started confiding in her. She went a step forward and fought against the discrimination of these students by school administrators. Here was a single white American woman fighting a majority black

community within the school administration. This fight took the students by surprise and they rallied behind her. This was what Donna wanted. She had won their confidence.

One day, when Stefanie told Donna about her parents, she decided that she would try and help Stefanie. Through her persistent love and patience she was able to win the children's respect. The children began to study seriously and they enjoyed her class as much as she liked theirs. The point is, its best to be polite and kind if one wants to be respected and likened and not by being an authoritarian.

## **Summarization**

A teacher's life passes through several phases in his/her career. The first step is the novice period when teachers prod to gauge their audience's expectations. The next step is the apprentice period, when teachers begin to experiment. The third phase is the most important phase in a teacher's professional life; he/she shows utmost confidence in what they do in class, and finally, they become experts. In reading Ms. Moffet's First Year:

Becoming a Teacher in America, it was evident that Donna, despite her limitations as a teacher, was able to successfully transit from one phase of learning to another and did so with distinction. What this shows is that ' if there is a will, there is a way.' She exemplifies the spirit of a true leader. Be it in motivating them, supporting them, or being a part of them, her actions clearly illustrates the qualities required to succeed in life.

Teaching young students, both boys and girls can be very challenging, especially if they showed any reluctance to study. Students would remain

inattentive and refuse to participate in discussions or class activities. They would be reluctant to do their homework and show scant respect. Teaching and learning is an art and teachers need to approach their classrooms in their own distinctive styles. Elucidating confidence and at the same time maintaining a pleasant outlook can increase respect and support. Self-facilitated action learning can be a way to improve a child's cognitive thinking and for this, teachers need to, like Donna, use action learning methods to make teaching and learning interesting and proactive.

## **Works Cited**

Goodnough, A, (2004), Ms. Moffett's first year: becoming a teacher in America. NY: Public Affairs, retrieved November 13, 2013, from [http://www.amazon.co.uk/gp/reader/1586482599/ref=sib\\_](http://www.amazon.co.uk/gp/reader/1586482599/ref=sib_)