

2006 HONOREE

Kelley R. Brown

Easthampton High School, Easthampton, MA
High School Humanities Education • 9-12th Grade History



Years Teaching: 7

Average Class Size: 30

Classes Taught Per Day: 3

School's % of ESL Students: 4%

School Type: Public, Rural

Type of Class: Self-contained

“All learning in my room is focused on critical and higher-order thinking. Without this focus, innovative instruction is fun, but not effective. Writing, reading, and more writing – this is what my students do, regardless of grade or academic level. We read other historians’ writing. We read our own writing. We speak our writing. We put our writing into visual image. We put our writing into one act plays. We write when we debate. Students in my classroom learn to hate (and love) the word thesis. From day one, students say, ‘But this isn’t English class, why do we have to write?’ I firmly believe in creating the most challenging classroom possible. Regardless of ‘level,’ students in my classes are always analyzing, critiquing, reading, and writing. Students don’t write reports – they develop complex theses. Whether they are writing an essay, developing a PowerPoint, or creating an ‘artifact collection,’ they must develop a theory of their own. Students in my classroom don’t read and regurgitate. They read to analyze, question, critique, and reaffirm. Students don’t memorize for a test, but learn to research, collect multiple sources, and read for bias.”

“If there is one thing I have learned as both a student and teacher of history, it is that facts, dates, and information are not useful if they cannot be retained. I have also learned that students will not retain information if it has no real



meaning for them. I reassure teachers that I train that main themes like culture, power, governance and authority, and time, continuity and change are a part of our everyday teaching. If we as teachers can organize and link our curriculum material to major themes that recur in history and then create an experience that is memorable, students will better retain information.”

“Kelley Brown is a phenomenon. In 30 years, I have not observed her combination or degree of artistic flair and scientific precision in the classroom. Every student wants to be taught by Ms. Brown whether they already know her from other school activities she advises or by reputation. Seniors pack her elective world politics class just to know her and emerge passionate about their newfound awareness of world issues. Not only do students voluntarily offer how much they like her, but not one student or parent has ever had anything but praise for her. Her dedication, creativity, and professionalism are unequalled.”

— Jeffrey E. Sealander, principal,
Easthampton High School

OTHER HIGHLIGHTS:

Chancellor’s Award for Outstanding Community Service at UMASS (2000-01) • Member of National Association for Multicultural Education (NAME) • Member (and a founder) of the Global Teachers Collaboration • District K-12 Social Studies Curriculum Committee Coordinator