

May 13, 2011

Dear Dr. Cottone:

I am writing about what I have learned from a graduate student about Dr. Susana Davidenko. Since Dr. Davidenko asked me to be an observer at her meeting with you and Andrea, I would like to take some time to share what I have learned from Ms. Tingting Mei.

Ms. Tingting Mei was in my department's MST program and you might still recall that she failed student teaching last semester. A few days ago, she called me when visiting a friend in another state who is also in a graduate education program. She was so excited to share with me that she realized how much she learned about the Chinese changes in math curriculum and instruction. She highlighted that she has learned so much from the work that Dr. Davidenko assigned to her for her independent study during the winter of 2011.

In case you did not remember her, Tingting completed all her course work with satisfaction last semester, but failed her student teaching. Dr. Andrea Lachance designed an individualized program for Ms. Mei so that she could graduate from our MST program with a certificate for completion of the program without student teaching. In this process, Dr. Davidenko volunteered her time and efforts during the winter semester of 2011 to offer Ms. Mei an independent study course she needed to take to complete her changed degree plan.

Dr. Davidenko modified the course she usually teaches to graduate students into the independent study for Ms. Mei to meet her needs and interests. Meeting regularly during the winter break, Ms. Mei reviewed updated research in math teacher education and shared with Dr. Davidenko the new educational reforms in Chinese math instruction. Dr. Davidenko edited Ms. Mei's papers meticulously and encouraged her to work on multiple drafts before the papers were satisfactory. Her own experience as an ESL learner in the United States really helped her understand Ms. Mei's challenges in learning to be a teacher as an international student.

Ms. Mei became a friend of mine during her time at SUNY Cortland as an exchange student from Beijing Capital Normal University and she shared with me on a regularly basis her learning experiences. More than once she told me that she wished other faculty members could be as supportive as Dr. Davidenko.

I am very grateful to work in a department that has faculty colleagues like Dr. Davidenko, who takes it upon herself the responsibilities to mentor new faculty members like me and others, and help international students by listening to their voices.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Lin Lin

Department of Childhood and Early Childhood
cc. Dr. Andrea Lachance and Dr. Susana Davidenko