

BSOS ALUMNI CAREER PROFILE: **TEACHING FELLOW** (GAP YEAR EXPERIENCE)

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Jonathan Reizes '17

Title: Teaching Fellow
Employer: MASA Israel
Major: Government and Politics
Minor: Innovation and Entrepreneurship
[LinkedIn](#)

What did you enjoy most about being a Teaching Fellow?

I enjoyed helping my students to learn new concepts in English. My instruction in the classroom used both formal and informal educational methods in order for them to really understand the language. The program's focus was to address the achievement gap in Israel's public education system – in particular, to increase the kids' proficiency in English. It was really great making an impact and connecting with the Israeli children.

What was a typical day like as a Fellow?

My typical day was the following: I would work from 8 am until 1:30 pm (with two 15-20 minute breaks during the day). Majority of the students I taught were aged 10-11, 5th and 6th grade, and I would assist the English teacher with the planned lesson. The lessons changed every week- but focused on vocabulary, grammar, reading comprehension, listening and writing.

I would often create my own lesson to supplement the course material. Sometimes I would show movies, television shows, songs- all in English. The majority of the time I would only speak English to the children in order for them to have a truly immersive language experience.

Which undergraduate experiences did you find most helpful in preparing you?

I believe my on-campus leadership role as a Community Assistant Supervisor (CAS) for South Campus Commons helped me prepare for this position as a teaching fellow for English. As a CAS, I often needed to problem solve, communicate

effectively, and mentor my staff of community assistants. The same skills were used in my recent position when teaching English to the Israeli children. One of the problems you face when teaching English to children from other countries is the language barrier. At times, I would need to translate in Hebrew the English concepts from the workbooks in order for the children to learn and understand. Furthermore, being in this type of leadership role requires being responsible, assertive, and hard working- all the necessary skills of being an effective role model.

What skills are required in this position?

As an English teaching assistant - communication is very important! I needed to effectively communicate my needs to my English teacher and vice versa. I also needed to effectively communicate the lesson plan to the students, especially the weaker students. Communication is a tangible and marketable skill which can be used any position.

Any job or internship advice?

I would advise students who are seeking a teaching position abroad that you will need patience. At times, in order to make an impact or to connect with students, you will need to be patient. For example, I would only see improvements in English after a few weeks or a few months from some students.

- Try to learn some words or phrases from their language to show that learning another language is hard, but it can be done. This shows a more positive approach to teaching English to children from different countries.
- Immerse yourself in the culture. It is really cool to understand the traditions and the culture in the society where you will be teaching. I enjoyed having my students teach me new Israeli traditions and customs.
- Enjoy your time here at UMD! Trust me when I tell you time flies by and your time at this university will come to an end. *Be open to new and unique experiences.*