

My name is Nathra Ramrajvel and I am a sophomore from Naperville, Illinois. I first heard about NSF's APNA program through my parents. I then went online and read more about it, and realized that this is an amazing opportunity to simultaneously improve my leadership skills and impart knowledge to students in India. I was a bit apprehensive at first, since my public speaking skills aren't the best, but I gradually gained confidence each day.

I taught a mix of 6th and 7th graders at a school called Sankara Vidyalaya in Karur, Tamil Nadu. The day before I started teaching, I observed a few math classes to see what it was like. I was surprised by the loudness of the teachers and the eagerness of the kids to shout out the next answer. I was also surprised that they didn't have water fountains and air conditioning; things I take for granted in my school.

The first day I taught, I didn't speak loud enough and the kids in the back couldn't hear me. I volunteer as a tutor in my local library and I was only used to teaching one on one. I had to learn to adjust my volume, and speak with confidence. I taught the kids the material they had been learning in their textbook, but I taught it in a manner more common to how I had learned it. The first day went well, but with a few hitches along the way.

The second day, I was a little more confident about my abilities. However, I had to teach different classes. Instead of teaching the same one class every day, I taught a few different classes every day, with some of them occasionally being the same. I would become nervous upon entering a class I had never taught before as the students were apprehensive, but always felt more in sync by the end. Eventually, the kids all shouted with excitement when they saw me entering their classroom to teach.

The third day was similar to the first few days, but I had gotten used to the structure by then. I was at the school from 9 a.m to around 3 p.m. In between my teaching sessions I would eat my lunch and read at the small library that they had.

On the fourth day, I decided to conduct a team competition. I split each class into two teams, and had one student from each team come up at a time, and whoever solved the problem first earned a point for their team. The kids had a lot of fun

with it, and so did I. They also asked me many questions about where I was from, why I was there, why I had to leave, and whether I would come back. Amidst all the teaching and answering questions, I left knowing it was a really validating experience for both sides involved.

Some advice I would give to future ambassadors is to focus on connecting with the students through their teaching, and not just go in with the mindset of a substitute teacher. One should make their workshop fun and interesting, because the purpose is to make the students interested in the topics you teach, not to just teach the topic. Overall, just smile, teach with confidence, and have fun.



