Karim Abdel-Wadood

Service Journal Entry #3

It was relatively late in the third quarter and I had needed to catch up on several hours, so I began going to FACLC more frequently than before. I recall one day, I went early and was there alone; only Mr. Rabih, one of the teachers who had a really raspy voice but was a good man, and a few young students were there. I had waited for about a half hour, during which Mr. Rabih and I were talking about school and life in general, before the older kids began showing up.

There was still an hour or so before Mrs. Lantz showed up with the day plan but Mr. Rabih offered that I teach the older kids some science. I was nervous about this to begin with because I really can’t control a group of kids that are my age or older for long enough that I can teach them science and concepts even I don’t understand yet. I had no authority and no experience. What’s more, the subject they had next on their curriculum was magnetism, I had no idea why.

It began roughly. I introduced myself as Karim but Mr. Rabih insisted that I be called “ostaz” which didn’t exactly help the situation. I went around asking people their names and I had already known some of them so we went on after that. I began by putting it into context; why we learned about north, south, east and west. I had known at least some kids in the class were muslim so I was talking about finding the qibla by knowing the direction of north and I asked who was muslim. I had a bit of trouble here because there was one muslim boy in the class but he decided to mess around with me a little and make some fun. I took it alright and laughed it off and made fun of him lightly too and we all laughed about it.

After 15 minutes I ran into my first real problem; I ran out of things to talk about so I just froze. But sooner or later, my saving grace, Mrs. Lantz showed up and was there to take control. Needless to say I gave a huge sigh of relief as she took me to the side and explained to me what exactly we were going to do today and divided up the kids into groups depending on how many kids we had.

This was the toughest time I had at FACLC, mostly because I was a bit nervous but it showed me that teaching really isn’t as easy as many of us might think. It was a new experience though and despite the obvious discrepancies, I’m happy I can teach from a different position.