

Jennifer Ruiz

Hawthorne Elementary School

2016 Rodel Exemplary Teacher

Collaborating for student success

“ I am constantly looking for new ways to help my students learn and to close the achievement gap. Collaborating with my colleagues provides me with opportunities to learn what has been effective for others, which I can then implement in my own classroom, helping my students to succeed. Additionally, I have brought in many experts from the community to teach my students in areas that are not my specialty. Some of these experts have come from Salt River Project, Scholastic, Mesa Police Department, Junior Achievement, and more.

Bragging rights

“ My greatest source of pride about my students is that I have helped each of them to develop a Growth Mindset and as a result they are challenging themselves and one another to continue learning daily - beyond what they initially thought they could. We have also created an environment in which each student feels safe and empowered to take risks in class in order to learn.

A tip for new teachers

“ I would want new teachers to know that teaching is an art, and it is not easy. As a teacher, you are constantly learning and adjusting. Things are not always going to go as planned, and that is okay. How you respond in such situations is what matters most.



Jennifer Ruiz
Hawthorne Elementary School

Mesa Public Schools

Sixth grade

Experience: Eleven years in education including two years as a sixth-grade teacher, one year as a first-grade teacher, four years as a second-grade teacher, one year as a first- and second-grade ELD combo teacher, and three years as a third-grade teacher; member of school leadership team and District Leadership Development program, Summer Lab School Developer and Student Council Advisor

Degrees: B.A. in Elementary Education from University of Arizona; M.A. in Educational Leadership/Administration from Grand Canyon University; Principal Certification; Standard Elementary Education Certificate; Full ESL K-12 Endorsement; Reading Specialist K-12 Endorsement

The Rodel Exemplary Teacher Initiative honors extraordinary teachers and asks that they each mentor high-potential student teachers.

What sets the program apart from typical student teaching programs is that mentor teachers are selected based on their outstanding student achievement in high-need schools, their ability to mentor new teachers, and the recommendation of their principals and Rodel's observation team. This ensures that student teachers are learning from the best. In addition, Rodel provides further training and support to both mentors and student teachers to assure Promising Student Teacher Graduates start their careers as outstanding educators.

Since 2004, 167 Rodel Exemplary Teachers have been named and more than 650 Rodel Promising Student Teachers have been mentored.