

Opening Doors - My Teaching Journey

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I am currently pursuing Certificate and Master of Education Degree in Elementary Overseas Education with The College of New Jersey's global graduate program (Expected Certificate and New Jersey State Certification, March 2015. Expected Masters Completion July 2015). I believe this will provide the perfect practical and theoretical foundation for me to achieve my ambitions of becoming a primary school teacher at an international school and make a meaningful contribution to childhood education.

Over the past 10 years, I have taught diverse groups of students in various multicultural and multilingual settings, but as I look to the future I know this is just the beginning. Reflecting on my career, my most rewarding experiences have been cultivating the natural curiosity and abilities of primary age students and seeing them blossom to maximize their full potential. I aspire to build on my experiences and foster the growth of young minds by becoming a primary school teacher at an international school.

As I trace the pace that has led me to where I am today, it all begins with my passion for language and exploring different cultures. My fascination began in 8th grade Spanish class and brought me to travel across Latin America and live abroad as an exchange student. The stark contrast between the economic situation, culture and education and the world I knew led me to dig deeper into understanding intercultural relations and international education.

Volunteering at a bilingual high needs school throughout college gave me valuable insights into the rewards and challenges of teaching the primary age range. Against the backdrop of overcrowded classes and limited resources, I collaborated with experienced educators to learn effective classroom management strategies. I was quickly given the autonomy to implement them as a teaching assistant leading small groups and as an occasional substitute. Moreover, I clearly saw the profound impact I could have as an educator: by building self-confidence, trust and catering to students' individual learning styles I was able to help transform their experience in school from one of hopelessness and frustration into curiosity and mastery.

In my first job after college developing and managing global marketing projects, I honed in on my creativity and language skills and sharpened my ability to work collaboratively and plan meticulously – tools which I believe help me thrive as a teacher.

During my second teaching experience as a learning coach for underprivileged Hispanic students, I showed particular strength in applying differentiated teaching approaches across the Key Stages. I was tasked with bringing students with learning and behavioral issues up to grade level in English and math by the end of the school year. I endeavored to find various approaches that communicated concepts in a way that made them relevant and engaging while plotting towards strict objectives. Seeing my students succeed and grasp topics that were previously unreachable gave me great satisfaction.

Since 2010, I have taught ESL across a wide range of abilities and age groups in New York and Switzerland. One thread that unites my teaching experiences is I have strived to foster a stimulating environment that encourages critical thinking. My students'

questions and unique perspectives keep me thinking on my feet at every moment and drive me to continually explore new approaches and facets of the material. The chance to continue to evolve and learn everyday makes me certain I have chosen the right profession. Examining my teaching career from a macro point of view, another central thread clearly emerges: the importance of high quality education in the formative years. I have dedicated a large part of my job as an ESL teacher to helping teenagers and adults relearn to learn effectively. On numerous occasions, I have seen how gaps in early education hinder progress and sometimes even render the door to academic success permanently locked.

As a primary school teacher, I would like to positively impact my students during this critical period in their growth to help them develop the building blocks they need to become lifelong learners and lead productive lives. I look forward to expanding my pedagogical knowledge and methods and finishing my teaching qualification over the next year so I can lead young learners to open doors of opportunity for their future success.