

Volunteer Response

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During my time observing and volunteering for Bellevue High School, I learned about the daily activities of teachers and the difficulties and joys they face. I learned about the intense sense of community that springs from a shared passion for teaching, and how close one can become with their hall-mates. Additionally, I discovered which grade levels I connected with more easily. Personally, I found it easier to communicate with underclassmen than upperclassmen. This will be important to take into consideration as I begin teaching.

Most valuably, it helped me reevaluate my expectations and have a more realistic view of what teaching will be like. Some aspects were much less intimidating than I thought they would be, and others were more challenging than I had anticipated. For example, I thought that I would struggle much more with public speaking than I did, yet I did not foresee the intense difference in skill level that would have to be bridged in some classes. There will be classes that have ELL students or students with IEP/504s who struggle to keep up in a traditional school setting sitting next to someone who only chose not to take AP to balance their schedule. It is intensely challenging to create a curriculum that is fair and engaging for both of these students simultaneously.

In all honesty, this volunteering experience was a make-or-break moment. It is both challenging and intimidating to make a major career and life change based on what you think you will like without having ever actually tried it. Imagine deciding to go to school to become a commercial diver without having ever swum before— in many ways my decision to become a teacher felt like this. Having the chance to get my feet wet was a solidifying experience. It was scary and exciting, nerve-wracking and relieving all at the same time.

The question posed was “how has this experience *informed* my decision” and the answer is very simple: it has. I was guessing that I would be good at and enjoy teaching, and now I can say with confidence that I am making an informed decision to get my Master's in Teaching. I am excited about the potential that I have within me and grateful that it can be unlocked through this program.