

My life experiences have prepared me to teach elementary education because I was fortunate to have elementary educators that provided a solid foundation for me to excel. The educators were encouraging, motivating, and willing to help me when necessary. They remained professional at all times. My elementary school teachers were culturally competent before the term became popular.

My life experiences in later years of education introduced me to criticism and racism. No child should encounter the experiences I had in high school and college. All students need to have a sense of belonging and an appreciation for diversity. It does not feel good to be singled out and made the example because one is different.

While living in Japan I was not able to secure a job in healthcare because I did not speak the language. I had a desire to work and decided to work where I could obtain full-time employment. Living in another country and facing limited employment options allowed me to pivot and teach English to children as young as 4 years old for a Japanese Language School. It also allowed me to work as a substitute teacher, substitute nurse, and education aid for the Department of Defense.

My strengths in preparation involve the desire to show up for students. My preparation is essential to their success. Showing up prepared to educate future leaders of this country conveys a message that they are worthy and important.

Additionally, areas needing growth include learning Common Core math, supplemental resources, and new technological devices. I have heard the term Common Core math but I am not familiar with it. Depending on the school district I work for, I know I will need to study and make sure I am familiar with Common Core math. There are numerous websites available to help educate students or as a supplement. I am not familiar with all supplemental resources. New supplemental resources are created and I would investigate which ones will work best for my students. Technology changes daily. Teachers have to keep up with technology to help their students and operate classroom items.

My plans for next steps are to learn what strategies are effective for students. As an educator, I want to deliver the best methods that will have the best results for the students. I am willing to learn formally and informally what I need to do to help students achieve. I want to play a role in closing the achievement gap. I would also like to attend conferences and join associations that have a proven record of effectiveness for children. I am a lifelong learner and will continue to study and bring knowledge into the classroom.