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MIT Summer 2023 Application

PROMPT RESPONSES

Question A:

Look over what area you intend to teach and indicate how your course work has prepared you to teach in this area. This should match the endorsement area you indicate in your application. Name your strengths in preparation, areas needing growth, and plans for the next steps.

I write here about my 54 years of life. I am from Japan, my name is Mari Gossage and I was born in Fukuyama, Hiroshima, Japan. I grew up there until I went to college.

Japan was in the midst of a baby boom at the time, and my grade had 10 classes of 40 students per class in elementary, junior high, and high school. My student life among many classmates taught and gave me communication skills and patience. For example, Japan has swimming lessons. Japan is an island and surrounded by the sea, so they learn how to swim to avoid water accidents. Sometimes, We even swim with their clothes on. I could never swim a full lap of the pool and always had to take remedial classes. Many of my friends accompanied me and taught me how to swim. I was finally able to swim a full lap of the pool. I will never forget my sense of accomplishment and the congratulations from my friends. This single sense of accomplishment has had a profoundly positive impact on my life since then.

My father was an artist who made things out of stainless steel. I became interested in making things while watching my father's work up close. I majored in architecture at the Faculty of Engineering at the Nishinippon Institute Of Technology. At that time there were only three female students, including myself. The academics were very difficult, but this environment fostered in me the desire to never give up, no matter how difficult the situation. After graduating, I returned to my hometown and worked for Yoshimoto Construction Company, where I was primarily engaged in preparing architectural drawings and documents for submission to government agencies.

When I had two sons, my interest shifted to working with children. I worked as an after-school instructor at an elementary school from 2006-2018, teaching and caring for children after school. I found this work rewarding and joyful and spent many fulfilling days. I am currently a language volunteer two days a week at River Ridge High School's Japanese language class since 2018. I made the biggest decision of my life at the age of 50, I married and moved to Washington State.

I knew no one but my husband when I arrived in this country. I chose to volunteer at River Ridge High School's Japanese language class to help improve my English speaking/listening skills and helped the high school student's Japanese skills. I found interacting with the students gave me the joy of teaching that soothed my tired mind that struggled to learn English every day.

I would like to enroll at MIT to become a Japanese teacher in the state of Washington, but my English proficiency is insufficient. However, my desire to enroll in MIT is so strong that I enrolled at Evergreen State College to improve my English skills and I am currently a senior. With the skills and perseverance, I possess, I will continue to devote myself to my studies with sincerity to realize my dream.

Question B:

Look over what area you intend to teach and indicate how your life experiences have prepared you to teach in this area. This should match the endorsement area you indicate in your application. Name your strengths in preparation, areas needing growth, and plans for the next steps.

I would like to become a secondary language teacher in Japanese in the state of Washington. As a Japanese, English is my second language. I am having a very hard time learning English. Because of this, I understand the feelings of those who try to learn Japanese as a second language. From my experience, I believe that the first encounter is important when learning a second language.

Japanese people are taught English from junior high school. I remember looking forward to my first class because I was interested in English. But My first English teacher in Japan was a very poor English teacher. The teacher was a feared figure throughout the school who often slapped his students on the cheek when they made grammatical mistakes. From that day on, my English classes were nothing but terror. In Japan, English is a required subject, and I spent my student life memorizing vocabulary and English grammar without thinking about it like a mathematical formula just to pass the entrance examination for higher education, and then forgetting about it once the examination was over. In the end, I did not acquire English skills. Forty years ago, such unreasonable teachers still exist in Japan. Since then, I have had complex feelings about English. This thought still lingers with me and hinders me from learning English. I have had this experience and realize how much one teacher's actions can affect students.

I want to be a teacher who can have a positive influence on my students. If I become a Japanese teacher in the future, I hope that the Japanese language I teach will spark students' interest in Japan and that young people in both countries will

continue to maintain friendly relations between their countries through language and cultural exchange. To do this, I need to change my complex feelings about English, which I have had since junior high school. It is also necessary for me to lead a full life in this country.

This complex, which I have had since junior high school, cannot be wiped away immediately, but everything I have seen, heard, read, written, felt, and experienced since coming to this country has been a good remedy for me. There is no immediate effect on it. But it is certainly a driving force in my future direction. Japanese society is based on a lifetime employment system, with a mandatory retirement age of 65. In Japan, it is difficult to study in graduate school or change professions at my age. But in this country, I am in an environment where that is possible. I want to make the most of this opportunity and strive to realize my dreams.

Question C:

Education is both a social good and structurally unjust. Explain your understanding of this contradiction and ways it can be addressed.

“Contradiction” is written in Japanese as “矛盾”. “矛” means a spear, and “盾” means a shield. This term was coined from the ancient Chinese story of Han Feizi's “spear and shield.”

There was once a man in China who sold shields and pikes. Boasting of the shields he sold, he said, “My shield is so solid that even the sharpest blade cannot penetrate it. He also boasted of the spear he was selling and said, “If I tell you how sharp my spear is, it will pierce through anything solid. When a person heard this, he asked, “What would happen if I pierce your shield with your spear? the person could not say anything. A contradiction is a situation in which two things cannot be true even if they are both true, or in which only one thing is true.

I believe we all have this contradiction in every world. Since people are born into this world, they live with a sense of contradiction and injustice in all matters. This is no exception when it comes to education. For example, the gap between rich and poor is linked to the gap in education. This should not be the case, but this is the reality. It is difficult to change this discrepancy and inequity immediately. Aspiring educators need to approach how to live in a world of contradictions and inequities, not how to fix them.

There is nothing special about it. We just need to share with our students how we have been dealing with our feelings after living in a world of contradictions and injustice. Perhaps they find themselves in a world of contradictions and inequities

and think that's all there is to it? Are they not throwing away the potential that is all around them into the drain by themselves? I want people to know that under no circumstances is a person without potential. And I want people to know that the best timing is when people make a decision and start moving, that people can change direction at any time, and that age has nothing to do with it. To do so, I think a teacher should be someone who can share a lot of "for example." This "for example" can of course include not only successes but also failures.

I want to prove these things by practicing them myself. By taking on the challenge of the MIT Program at Evergreen State College, I want to prove that no one is without potential, no matter what the circumstances. I want to prove that the best time is when you make a decision and start moving forward by studying in the MIT program, that you can change direction at any time, and that age is irrelevant. I want to work hard in academia so that my storehouse of "For example" stories will be full when I complete the MIT Program.

Question D:

How has your time volunteering and observing informed your decision to be a teacher?

I have been a Japanese language volunteer at River Ridge High School since 2018. I was saved by volunteering. When I moved to the U.S. at the age of 50, life in the U.S. was more of a struggle than I had expected. I had spent 50 years of my life in Japan, and my life in the U.S. was so different. I did not even know how to use a credit card! Japan has become much more e-money oriented with the 2021 Tokyo Olympics. However, most Japanese people still use cash for most of their purchases. I never used credit cards in Japan.

It is quite difficult to change what I have acquired over the past 50 years. It is the same with language. I attended English as a Secondary Language at SPSCC, I could not hear English no matter what I did. I think my pessimistic feelings about the English language were due to the violent lessons of my first English teacher in junior high school might have also influenced my English learning. The more I tried to improve my English skills, the more my mind became exhausted. Then my stepson suggested, "There is a language volunteer program at a nearby high school, do you want to go?"

I was curious about how high school students learn a second language. At the same time, I wanted to find a new way to learn English for myself.

I encountered many surprises as soon as I stepped into that River Ridge High School's Japanese language class. The teacher Sam of this Japanese class is an American who has taught at a Japanese high school. He welcomes students by

strumming his guitar before class begins. Sam's classes are lively and not depressing. He incorporates cartoons and songs that interest his students and even has dancing with everyone while learning Japanese. His innovative teaching and the way his students enjoyed learning made me interested in the teaching profession. And it was the presentation I gave to our students that determined my desire to become a teacher. Sam understood my pessimistic feelings about English because he also had a very hard time learning Japanese. He made time for me to make presentations to students to help me overcome the hurdles of English trauma. I had a total of four presentations to the 9th-12th grade classes. I shared with our students my feelings about English, and they listened intently to my poor English and shared their thoughts and opinions of my presentation with me in slow and easy-to-understand language! I could hear their words perfectly at that time and it was a great experience for me. Even the familiar city looks somehow shining, that was how great I felt!

Volunteering does not only benefit the recipient of the volunteer work. I have received many gifts from volunteering. I am very grateful to the teachers and students at River Ridge High School for accepting me. They taught me the joy of teaching. At the same time, they rehabilitated my trauma to the English language. They call out to me even if they meet me outside of school. I am not lonely, but it turned me into a passion to study at Evergreen State College and gave me the courage to try the MIT program. I intend to continue volunteering.