

In a family of educators and artists, I've been subjected to the influences of the performing arts my entire life. "Life upon the wicked stage" has fashioned who I am. I learned very quickly that the arts require unprecedented levels of concentration and collaboration. The process of preparing for a production is infused with both individual, thought-provoking deliberation and the willingness to acquiesce those individual needs for the good of the whole. My life experiences include multiple visits to the world of the play as an actor, director, choreographer and educator. My current involvement as a special education paraeducator at North Thurston High School has given me a new window into the human experience and has proven to be invaluable as I address the best possible ways to meet the needs of this specific population.

Since graduating from the University of Idaho in 2010 and entering the workforce, a consistent path has presented itself to me. When combining my theatre background with my responsibilities as a special education paraeducator, I've had the opportunity to assist instructors with assessments, curriculum implementation, enforcing safe behaviors, and enhancing the social growth of students in the classroom. I know how to respectfully communicate with students, parents, and community members to consistently move toward the direction of growth, integrity, and visibility for the special education population. I pride myself in keeping abreast with developments in the field by reading current literature, talking with colleagues, and participating in professional conferences. I prepare students for further development by encouraging them to explore learning opportunities and to persevere with challenging tasks.

When thinking of pathway areas for growth, I referred to the Danielson Rubric, which undoubtedly will be a major factor in my progress as an educator moving forward. Not unlike my work in the theatre, it reminds me that although I want to do well, there will always be room for improvement as an educator. I believe that the examples above coincide with the Danielson Rubric. I pride myself in being an engaged member of my community and my work place. Choosing the Master in Teaching program at The Evergreen State College was an easy choice. I know I will emerge as a better educator, but more importantly, an even better human being. My father, who was a college professor for 25 years, shared with me a quote that resonates with the courage I believe it takes to pursue a life in education. "One looks back with appreciation to the brilliant teachers but also with gratitude to those who touched our human feelings. The curriculum is so much raw material but warmth is the vital element for the growing plant and for the soul of the child." Carl Jung