

To: The Evergreen State College
Re: Recommendation for Jacob Strain

Dear Admissions Committee,

It is my pleasure to submit this letter of recommendation on behalf of Jacob Strain in support of his candidacy for admission into the Masters in Teaching Program at Evergreen State College. I met Jacob in 2010 during his time at Great Circle, a school in St. Louis for children with emotional and behavioral disorders in grades K-12. He was hired as a teaching assistant, and though it was a short-term position (summer school) it was evident that Jacob has a knack for the art of teaching.

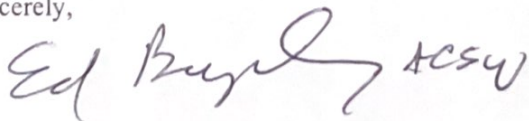
As a teaching assistant, Jacob showed initiative by taking an active leadership role. He recognized that the pre-existing physical education program wasn't engaging the majority of students, so he designed a curriculum for an elective martial arts & dance course. He was given the opportunity to teach the course under the supervision of the program director. The course was a huge success; several parents were astounded to see their children move their bodies to that degree. Designing and teaching this course was above and beyond the position description, and indicative of Jacob's passion and creativity.

In addition to his leadership skills, I was impressed by his aptitude for connecting with students from diverse backgrounds, even those students with difficult behavioral problems. It takes patience, skill, perseverance, effective communication, and empathy to show up in this line of work; Jacob has both the head and the heart to be successful. He showed himself to be an adept motivator and instructor, coaxing not just cooperation, but respect from students. Jacob drew students out of their shell by learning earnestly about their interests, and then connecting each student's interest back to the lesson at hand. For example, one student was fixated on Pokemon, and would not engage with anything that was not Pokemon related. Jacob learned enough about Pokemon to be able to bring one up during every lesson to draw this student's focus to the task at hand. I often saw how much fun and laughter the students displayed. Teachers that can make learning fun are special.

Overall, I strongly recommend Jacob for your program, as I know that he will make an exceptional teacher. His enthusiasm for learning is infectious, and a powerful tool for engaging students (and peers for that matter). He has a wide breadth of knowledge to share and can speak intelligently on diverse topics- from particle physics to postmodern poetry. With formal training in education and a teaching license, he has the potential to be a teacher that changes lives. I am confident that he would be a valuable asset to your program and your community.

If you would like to contact me regarding Jacob's application, I would be delighted to discuss his qualifications in further detail. My phone number is (314) 302-7136.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Ed Buzby" followed by some less legible characters.