

Ashley Vancil

Prompt B: Look over what **area you intend to teach** and indicate how your life experience 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 next steps

To become a teacher in Washington state, completing formal coursework and receiving certification or a degree is mandatory. However, there is no fixed set of skills or experiences that one must possess to teach a subject. For example, adaptability, passion, tolerance, and open-mindedness are not mandatory but are important qualities that I possess. Every experience in my life, be it good or bad, significant or insignificant, has played a role in shaping who I am today and has prepared me to teach visual arts.

My family moved from California to Guam to protect my sister and me from a tumultuous life. This move is where I first learned about adaptability from my parents. Typhoon Paka hit in 1997, and we were without water and electricity for three months. Our Christmas tree was made of duct tape and odd decorations my father found throughout the house.

Art is a medium for emotional expression, and I expect a broad range of emotions, learning styles, and capabilities in my students. Being adaptable will allow me to respond to their ever changing needs with ease.

I grew up with an artistic dad who encouraged my sister and me to pursue our passions. While art has always been my true passion which I shared with my dad, I never thought it could be something I use in a career.. Although my parents never pressured me to choose a career path, only to do my best. I still grew up thinking art is something to be enjoyed and done as a hobby. The idea of “starving-artist” was still very real in my young, impressionable mind.

After grade school I studied at South Puget Sound Community in Olympia for four years to complete my two-year degree. I planned on becoming a nurse, influenced by the money and security educators around me made seem so important. I worked in hospitals and various clinic settings to pay for college. Four years ago, after my dad passed away I became honest with myself and family knowing the medical field wasn't for me. I wanted to do something I love, and that brought me here. Society prioritizes wealth over happiness. I learned from my dad's illness that I'd rather be poor and happy than rich and miserable.

To address my weaknesses, I have always struggled with organization, and I am aware that my desire to help others; to see them succeed can also be a weakness of mine. Sometimes leading me to take on too much. I am developing habits that organically create an organized space, such as decluttering and finding a place for everything. When my space is clear and organized, it helps me to clear my mind and focus better. I know that in an art classroom specifically this is important for creative minds. I am also actively searching for tools and resources that can help me in this journey and I am open to seeking help if I need it.

In my life, "starving artist" has been a commonly used phrase, but I no longer want to adopt that mindset. As a teacher, I will bring both my passion for teaching and my love for art to the classroom, hoping to inspire my students. With my love and experience around diverse communities be it in Guam or the states; I don't just tolerate differences, I actively seek them out. This has allowed me to learn more and experience life more deeply-something I intend to share with others as an educator.