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Prompt D: How has your time working with youth informed your decision to become a teacher?

Working with youth has given me a deeper appreciation for their enthusiasm and their ability to solve problems creatively. It has also helped me to understand the crucial role of providing a supportive learning environment that can foster their development. This experience has motivated me to pursue a career in education, with the goal of sharing my knowledge and making a positive impact on the lives of young people.

When I was in early grade school, my family moved to Olympia, Washington. Here my mother became a para-educator at Mt. View Elementary, where she worked in the resource room educating students with intellectual disabilities and behavioral problems. For many years, I volunteered at her school and in the classroom, not realizing then that it would be my path. However, this exposure to such diverse classrooms ultimately helped grow to love and be sensitive to each person's unique needs and different learning styles.

Through my work with youth I have gained a deeper understanding of the transformative power of education. I am inspired by the possibilities passionate education can bring to individuals and communities alike. My experience has reinforced my desire to become an educator to help others unlock their full potential

I've come to learn that many times teaching is described as "a calling." I can't say for me personally this was the case. What is my calling however, is to care for and nurture others with authentic experiences and compassion. My work with youth drove me to want to create such a learning environment and make the process more interactive and engaging.

While most of my experience has been focused on the more elementary age and those with intellectual adversities, it has taught me about reflective teaching. I think most importantly it has brought me to understand what it means to be unabashedly human. I hope to bring that into a high-school classroom. I hope to create a humanized space for teenage adolescence where less of us are hidden, and more of us are known.