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MIT Admissions Personal Statement
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“One child, one teacher, one book, one pen can change the world.” – Malala Yousafzai

I start with this quote because I wholeheartedly believe it. I had several teachers in my lifetime who believed in me. And many who didn't. The teachers that did, left an indelible mark that helped shape who I am today. I don't expect to jive with all my educators, and nor do I expect to connect with every student I may come across. What I do know, is that I have a lot to give in supporting all students and their families with respect, dignity, and the inclusivity that every student needs to thrive in a learning community.

While I was earning my early childhood education degree at South Puget Sound Community College, my studies focused largely on anti-bias education. This is a framework that focuses on identity, diversity, justice, and activism. I was able to put theory into practice spring of 2022 when placed as a practicum student for Ms. Wilson's kindergarten class at Tumwater Hills Elementary school. Here, I was able to observe, and apply theories I was learning in my program centered on guiding children in best practices, cultural studies, and anti-bias education. I feel this experience also connects fully with serving ELL students with a comprehensive understanding of the positive outcomes using this framework.

When I started Evergreen as a junior in fall of 2023, I launched right into a class named CCBLA: Center for Community Based Learning and Action. I was really looking forward to beginning the year in an internship of my choice, and a position that I was excited to learn and grow in. I started working with Ms. Kyrian, a 3-5th grade Montessori teacher at Olympia Regional Learning Academy. ORLA is a choice school within the Olympia School District. ORLA serves K-12 students of families with a spectrum of cultural, social, and religious diversities who are also predominantly low-income. I spent over 200 hours of fall quarter working closely with Kyrian and her students. Within her classroom I was presented with the diverse needs of students and the engaged training that is needed to provide an equitable education to each student. It wasn't until the following quarter in CCBLA that my interest was lit in early literacy with ELL students. I started working with Ms. Bella, a K-2 Montessori teacher and remained with her for winter and spring quarters of the 2024 school year. Spanish is Ms. Bella's first language, and she weaves English and Spanish into the daily work cycle throughout the day. I engaged with Ms. Bella, gaining a deeper understanding of the best practices for literacy development and interventions. A few children in class used English as their second language, while others were developing skills in literacy. I learned of the importance to teach the same literacy skills to English language learners and English-proficient students. Ms. Bella worked closely with me to guide me in phonemic awareness, phonics, and reading aloud. Most importantly, she taught me how to introduce these concepts to the whole group in a developmentally appropriate way. The last field trip of the quarter, Alice Nelson, faculty for my CCBLA course in spring, encouraged us to visit the Squaxin Island Museum Library and Research Center as a class. This was a memorable and inspiring visit. It re-ignited my interest in PNW history, the sciences, and geography of this beautiful

land. This tour also provided a well-rounded education opportunity to bring these elements and share with students and teachers in my local public schools.

Similarly to the spark of inspiration I felt in my year-long CCBLA courses, I felt the same in Prita Lal's fall 2024 course, Food Justice. I was introduced to the framework of transformative justice. This had changed my perspective when working with students that need extra behavioral support. I was able to apply this theory while substituting long-term for 5 weeks as a paraeducator working with a diverse group of 4th and 5th grade students. This framework is important in my professional development in that it allowed me to practice important skills to better my understanding and engage with the learning community in a new way. The premise for this theory is to remedy harm in a community without causing more harm. This also means to reflect and identify the structures in place and the underlying conditions that repeat the cycle of injustice.

My experiences and opportunities in the last 4 years has exponentially supported my life-long desire to become an elementary school teacher. I am ready for the next step in my professional development and find the MiT program at The Evergreen State College to be a near perfect fit for me. This program seems to align in my values, my learning goals, and the opportunity to dig deep into the issues I'm passionate about.