

**Kyle J Bradshaw**

**Evergreen State College - Master in Teaching Program Application**

**Personal Statement: Integrated Multilingual Learner Pathway**

It is truly a joy to apply for the Master's in Education program at Evergreen State College and take the next step toward a career in public education. Teaching feels like a continuation of my family's legacy in education. My father is a CTE teacher and administrator, my maternal grandfather was a community college professor and administrator, and my maternal grandmother was a kindergarten teacher. Becoming a teacher means contributing to a legacy of creating a lasting impact through learning. Recently when visiting with my second cousin, a community-based science educator, she told me "Being an educator is in your genes, Kyle. Most people in our family try something else, but eventually find their way back into it." Reflecting on my work in environmental education, ministry, and business, I see how each path distilled my core values and strengthened my drive to become a teacher. My core values are to create safe spaces for students to explore the world, build deep empathy, and approach learning with determination, resilience, and curiosity. My decision to apply to the Integrated Multilingual Learner Pathway at Evergreen is a natural choice for me, inspired by these values and my work with diverse student communities.

While I haven't had extensive classroom experience yet, my roles in environmental education and youth ministry involved working with students from various backgrounds and gave me insight into the unique challenges of K-12 multilingual learners. For example, as an environmental educator, I often engaged with students more comfortable in languages other

than English. At the Nooksack Salmon Enhancement Association I co-led the Students for Salmon program. In each classroom we visited we provided pre- and post-visit quizzes in both Spanish and English to ensure Spanish-speaking students could access the same content. Observing how students responded, I saw the importance of meeting students where they are, and honoring their linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Watching skilled teachers create inclusive, peer-supported learning environments further shaped my vision of teaching. Recently I visited Salish Middle School in the North Thurston School District. I shadowed several teachers who had students who spoke a variety of languages. While all the course content was taught in English, each of these teachers had unique ways of bringing all students on the journey to inclusive education.

I want to teach social studies in either a middle or high school classroom, especially using culturally responsive methods that make learning relevant and empowering for every student. Social studies, as an interdisciplinary field, prepares students to be responsible and engaged citizens by examining history, sociology, economics, and geography. My sophomore year of college was when I discovered the field of geography, and everything clicked into place for me. I loved my social studies classes growing up, but I particularly loved asking the question “Where did it happen, and why does that matter?” My teachers, like Mrs. Cereghino in 4th grade, Mr. Sherman in 8th grade, and Mr. Schafer in 11th grade, each fostered this curiosity by creating meaningful learning experiences that engaged us deeply with place and context. I now recognize the importance of teaching in a way that validates students’ unique perspectives and experiences, helping them make connections between their own lives and the world around

them. I believe the strengths students build in a social studies classroom, like critical thinking and contextual analysis, are ultimately important and transferable across every discipline.

The Integrated Multilingual Learner Pathway aligns perfectly with my vision for inclusive education. Evergreen's focus on creating classrooms that celebrate linguistic diversity and honor students' cultural heritage deeply resonates with me. I believe multilingual support is essential for students to succeed academically and thrive personally. The asset-based learning approach outlined in the AFT article views language differences as strengths rather than barriers—a perspective that aligns with my goal of building supportive, inclusive spaces.

When I picture myself teaching in 2 years I am teaching 7th grade Pacific Northwest History at a middle school in Tacoma. We are learning about Pacific salmon and using this species as a way to talk about tribal sovereignty, economics, and human impacts on the environment. My classroom is lively and collaborative, a place where students actively participate in shaping their learning experience. I see students from various backgrounds analyzing maps and reading articles from local news articles and asking the important questions: what would be lost if salmon runs don't recover in our state? At the end of the period, we'll discuss what this species can teach us about life in the past, present, and future of our region.

I am eager to start this journey at Evergreen State College, where I know I'll be supported in becoming a teacher who fosters curiosity, resilience, and civic engagement in my students of all language backgrounds.