

From the beginning of my undergraduate journey, I have always known that I wanted to become an elementary school teacher. I recognized the skills I needed to develop to become an effective educator for young children. During my first two years at Evergreen, I took various education-related courses, including "Teaching and Learning When the World is on Fire: Education and Justice Movements," "The Aim of Education," and "Principles of Learning." These courses deepened my interest in early childhood education and reinforced my desire to influence young learners' academic development.

My coursework has provided me with valuable resources and encouraged creativity in my learning, demonstrating how educators can shape the future of their students. Specific courses within my program emphasized classroom management, assessment methods, and inclusive teaching practices. Additionally, I engaged in projects and case studies that allowed me to apply theoretical concepts to real-world teaching scenarios. One of my classes required volunteer hours in an elementary school, and I chose to work with kindergarten students. This experience helped me develop patience and creativity, as I explored different ways to accommodate each student's unique learning style in their first year of structured education.

Through my coursework, I have also strengthened my communication and collaboration skills. Many assignments emphasized teamwork and peer interaction, especially through Evergreen's seminar-based learning approach, which mirrors the collaborative nature of teaching. My studies have highlighted the importance of aligning curriculum with student needs, equipping me with tools to differentiate instruction and implement diverse teaching strategies.

As I prepare for student teaching and continue working as a paraeducator in special education, I am committed to addressing areas where I may lack sufficient coursework. My plan includes pursuing professional development opportunities such as workshops, Rights-Response training, online courses, and certifications in elementary education. Gaining hands-on experience in schools, learning from experienced teachers, and exploring innovative strategies to enhance student engagement will further support my growth as an educator.

Beyond formal coursework, my life experiences working with children of various ages have enriched my knowledge and skills. In addition to my education classes, I have taken psychology courses that have deepened my understanding of behavioral and learning challenges. This background has given me insight into how to support students who may not fit the typical learning profile. By applying this knowledge, I aim to foster academic growth and social and emotional development to meet the diverse needs of my future students.