

Personal Statement - at least 500 words ; Multilingual Education

Q : How has your experience and observations in K-12 classrooms informed your decision to apply to the Integrated Multilingual Learner Pathway?

When looking into the Multilingual Learner Pathway I view it as a challenge, for teachers and students. Research is needed on our part as educators to find successful and engaging ways to help bilingual programs through their education. Students experience struggles when learning strategies to continue through their home language as well as enabling practices they can use to interact with their peers through speaking, listening, and reading in a different language. This is quite the challenge. One that can be overcome through effort and passion to help bilingual students by learning their backgrounds and building relationships that help motivate success through their education. While working within a special education classroom, I've learned through my students that their background and stories shape them into the student they are becoming. Teachers are expected to encourage students to embrace and grow through their homelife into their education at school. When looking into what's best for the Integrated Multilingual Learner pathway, teachers create routines and learning plans to develop their academic skills. Within my classroom we try to group more outgoing and talkative students with the more reserved and quiet students creating encouraging conversation and collaboration. Focusing on the peer-to-peer strategy which relates to students accessing academic content by engaging and learning from their peers. We acknowledge that bilingual students are coming from households where they are practicing a different or multiple languages than in school, viewing the world from a unique perspective. These students usually experience feelings of loss, out of place, and confusion, when trying to learn a new language outside of their usual communication. Again, it can be challenging, especially learning English, a language with many words, as well as translating and learning new vocabulary, and looking for support from their teachers and peers. One important technique we practice in the classroom that will benefit bilingual students is visuals. Creating charts and flashcards, movies with subtitles, illustrations, and examples to help students, especially younger children who are being introduced to new words and definitions. They are experiencing the challenge of learning the world through two or more languages. Practicing visually on a regular basis will help them experience a faster and easier routine through school while growing up. Working with special education has introduced many kids that have grown up being nonverbal, more quiet, or unable to communicate their feelings. The school has integrated 30-40 minutes of ASL (American Sign Language) everyday to introduce many of the basics to younger children who are learning new words through their curriculum, as well as provide the same language through their hands. Another language every student and teacher in the classroom is learning provides help to communicate with nonverbal people. This has introduced a new concept in schools. It was never part of my own education growing up, however it's an option in highschool, but most elementary schools now require signing time for their students as it has shown benefits for communicating. The Multilingual Learner pathway has shown improvement and increased numbers within students every year, encouraging teachers to find solutions towards helping bilingual students, sharing vocabulary, through their homelife language, as well as English, being consistent, and practicing to develop their background. A challenge we as teachers can learn to achieve by

finding a better curriculum and showing positive attitudes when teaching ELLs with high expectations of success, to guide students and help them understand academic information.