

Personal Statement

My experience with ML students has been broad in my time working at Jefferson Middle School, but a part of my decision to apply to Evergreen's MiT program is the fact that I will leave with greater understanding of ML pathways to equitable education.

My experience with ML students has mainly been in resource classrooms. While I appreciate the support that these students receive, and strive to assist however I can, I also recognize the importance of teaching material at the grade level the students are at. Being an ELL student does not mean that core competencies or understandings of grade level concepts are not apparent. Our school is lucky to have the team it does, there are multiple professionals available at any time that are able to speak the home language of these specific students if confusion occurs in the classroom.

As far as communication is concerned, I have found that assistive technology is a great help in bridging the language barrier with specific students that are actively learning the English language and adapting to life in a new country. Even finding peer support during both structured and unstructured time has helped these students to make associations and connections between their home language and English.

At the end of the day, one thing is clear. Good teaching is good teaching, regardless of differences in language. In this modern age, we have tools to connect with and understand one another; without having a knowledge of ways for students to further comprehension of or relating to key concepts, there runs a risk of leaving a student behind when they otherwise may need just a different pathway to their education.

Recognizing and supporting student's identities and cultures should be at the forefront of this practice. In my own personal experience, students perform much better and are more engaged in lessons or presentations when they are able to recognize the cultural elements which are important to them and their own development. I have seen this most recently in some social studies classes where students were encouraged to present and speak about their important cultural practices to the class. Students who were previously begrudging to write a short fiction essay or complete a homework assignment about climates of regions of mesopotamia were engaged and excited to spend time in class and at home to complete their presentations.

I am no expert in practices relating to ML students; as a paraeducator, I can only try my best to meet students where they are at in the context of their teacher's expectations. I fully expect and am excited for Evergreen to provide me with knowledge of systems of support for a diverse range of students. I believe, now more than ever, it is important to be thinking about how we can not only provide an encompassing education for all students, but also make them feel safe in the school environment while they might have real and very serious anxieties otherwise. Having attended Evergreen prior, I know that these resources will be available to me.

