

# POSTGRADUATE PERSONAL STATEMENT EXAMPLE

## EDUCATION

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### **Personal Statement Example: Education**

I will always be grateful to the passionate and experienced teachers I have encountered. They acted as role models and inspired intellectual growth and mental development at critical stages of my life. One particular teacher recognised my potential and cultivated my talents by allowing me to participate in competitions and take up leadership roles, preparing me for academic success and boosting my confidence. It is my goal to enrol in the teaching profession because I am infused with a similar passion and committed to building learning environments in which students can challenge themselves and share their ideas without fear of failure.

My undergraduate study of Psychology and Language Sciences has equipped me with the skills necessary to achieve this ambition. Gaining knowledge of teaching from a psycholinguistic perspective, I observed that teachers face numerous challenges, from aiding students in learning and conveying complex information clearly, to managing challenging behaviour and motivating students to study. Effective teachers delivered interactive lessons that involved and celebrated student discovery and applied tailored teaching strategies differentiated by design and outcome.

By understanding an individual's learning mechanisms and social, emotional and cognitive contexts, I believe that students can be engaged and encouraged. Researching the intertwining relationship between the learner's attention state and conceptual learning, I became strongly influenced by the work of Vygotsky, who proposed that students have infinite potential, which is unlocked by effective teaching. Consequently, I believe that teachers play a crucial role in scaffolding students' learning; "What a child can do today with assistance, she will be able to do by herself tomorrow." ~ Vygotsky.

Studying psychology and understanding the development of language and cognition has allowed me to develop high-quality schemes of work, teaching resources and materials suitable for a range of age groups. Although language knowledge is learned implicitly, it is helpful for second language learning if the teacher can explain the underlying rules of the

language. The linguistics element of the course provided me with the practical skills to systematically teach grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation of English. With an understanding of grammar and the mechanisms underpinning second language acquisition, I believe that I can better identify patterns of errors and respond to the needs of each language learner. I also gained awareness and understanding of mental health and developmental disorders from the perspective of clinical psychology, which will help me identify students who require extra support and counselling in my future role.

Whilst completing the academic preparation needed for a teaching career, I actively sought opportunities to widen my exposure and acquire relevant transferable skills. Under the mentorship of a senior government official, I interned as an administrative officer in the Education Bureau. Working on external and internal communications, I translated papers, drafted minutes, prepared presentation materials for top officials, composed emails and wrote blogs. This expanded my capacity to write complex and concise material with a specific focus, mirroring the techniques inherent in effective lesson planning. Equally, examining the challenges facing the country's education system, I developed insights into policies related to primary study and had a precious opportunity to meet with the Secretary and Permanent Secretary for Education, where we shared our vision for nurturing the stars of tomorrow.

As a summer intern, I joined Slater University's research team at the Speech, Language and Reading Laboratory and Child and School Psychology Laboratory in 2019 and 2020 respectively. I participated in research projects to improve reading and learning in children with AD/HD, dyslexia and ASD. These projects integrated psychological theories and research findings into curriculum design. The team introduced parents to dialogic approaches, which actively engaged children in shared reading, boosting children's language expression. I also designed and produced teaching materials explaining the concepts of mindfulness training to primary students. These experiences encouraged me to teach flexibly and inspired me to research and explore new teaching strategies. Indeed, I intend to integrate what I have learned in my laboratory research in a classroom setting, evaluating and developing my findings in a real-world context.

My tutoring experiences have reinforced my desire to study for a PGDE. I volunteered to coach children with SEN and held tutorial sessions for disadvantaged students, and witnessing their intellectual and emotional progress was extremely rewarding. I also provided private tutorial lessons on subjects such as General Studies, English, Putonghua, Biology, History, and Economics to primary and secondary school students. Becoming increasingly familiar with relevant primary and secondary school syllabuses, I was able to create meaningful interactions during teaching sessions. I frequently started lessons with a plenary activity to consolidate previous learning before integrating a wide variety of teaching strategies, including learning through stories, games, virtual field trips, songs and textbooks.

In addition to providing one-to-one teaching, I taught ESL, local classes and foreign language-learning workshops in English and Putonghua, promoting multilingualism. Consequently, I discovered that teaching a large class differs from tutoring an individual. Finding it challenging to keep all my young learners interested, I combined my learning experiences and developed different classroom management strategies. For example, I incorporated teaching with game elements, inter-group competitions, whole-class debates and role-playing activities. As a result, I gained the classroom management skills needed to teach large classes and was presented with the Foreign Language Leadership Award at the

end of the programme. I am confident that these achievements will support my graduate studies and subsequent teaching career.

Passionate about serving the community, I took on responsibilities as the chairperson of the Economics Society, a transition mentor and a careers officer. As a mentor responsible for leading and managing students, I provided academic, mental health and career guidance to freshers at SYU. Some of my most enjoyable achievements involved building supportive relationships with mentees from diverse backgrounds. Equally, working as a Careers Officer has strengthened my leadership and cooperation experience and developed the skills to accurately communicate my student's progress with colleagues and parents.

I am confident that the acclaimed programme at Marshall will allow me to receive formal teaching training, undertake teaching placements in school settings and realize my passion. Shadowing a mentor teacher in a local school will allow me to observe lessons from a teacher's perspective and develop a fuller understanding of professional teaching strategies. Ultimately, I am confident that by becoming a lifelong learner and teacher who constantly inspires colleagues, peers and students, I can contribute positively to the education of young people.

