

Personal statement: PGCE secondary application

Throughout school and university I was convinced that teaching was the right career for me. As the first person in my family to go to university I relished my biology degree and looked forward to the opportunity to share my appreciation of the subject with young people. After my first day on a university placement in a school I was relieved to find I truly enjoyed my time in the classroom.

On reflection my drive to become a teacher came from sixth form. Mistakenly I drifted through year 12 and by year 13 was shocked to find I had left it too late to achieve good grades at A2. I resat a year in sixth form and resolved to really apply myself far harder. This resolve has continued both in study and in the workplace and I graduated with a first. This experience drives me to motivate others to really apply themselves, and grow as students, because I've been there.

As well as observations undertaken during my university placement, I have teaching experience in two schools. I volunteered at Bedford Community College one day a week for two years and saw that teaching is not a 9-5 profession, the hard working and dedicated teachers were both caring and inspirational. I was able to spend time in their student centre, working with pupils temporarily excluded from lessons and developed creativity in communicating biology by connecting it to examples that a pupil can relate to. I worked with groups of pupils as well as gaining experience one to one with individuals, often assisting them to identify where the task can be broken down into sections, making it seem less overwhelming. Mentoring a student with dyslexia taught me the value of drawing the answers from pupils, not just giving it to them.

From January to July 2015 I further developed my classroom skills at Bedford Grammar School. I worked with students in group tasks to ensure that they are all progressing, as seen in leading weekly corrective reading sessions. I was able to observe and reflect on teaching techniques which foster authority in the classroom and create positive relationships. I began to identify different techniques being used with students of different abilities, levels and ages. I have been keeping a record of these experiences and reflecting on them, taking different ideas for my own teaching. This was put into practice with opportunities to take the whole class, leading up to taking them for full lessons, stretching my abilities to plan, time and manage a lesson.

Having worked in retail and hospitality, I have experience of shift work and balancing multiple priorities, as well as working as part of a team and as a supervisor, sometimes in pressured environments.

I love reading, visit the gym regularly and enjoy sport but above all I am passionate about biology, keeping up with research online. At university a team of us ran the Biological Society which was helpful in developing my ability to communicate diplomatically with senior staff and students alike. This experience also helped me to develop good collaborative and organisational skills. I would like to continue to develop the skills I have acquired to teach secondary biology as a career and help my pupils achieve their full potential.