

A Crystal Clear Path
A Personal Statement for Erica Bustos

Ever since I was young, the thought of teaching appealed to me. I always thought it seemed like something fun to do. From how I remember my teachers, they were always smiling, and looked happy when they were in their classrooms, especially in elementary school. The image of their smiling faces became engraved in my mind, and throughout my life, I dedicated myself to becoming a teacher. If anyone ever asked me what I would grow up to be, I answered, “a teacher.” Even though I knew from the very beginning what I wanted to do with my life, it wasn’t finalized. I had yet to fully grasp what it meant to become a teacher and the hard work that would go into my training. At the time, it only seemed to me that teaching was a fun career and that was as far as my thoughts went on why I was pursuing teaching. I had yet to fully realize *why* I wanted to teach.

The *why* came years later, during the end of my second year at Cal State University Long Beach, where I began my schooling majoring in Liberal Studies. It was during the spring semester of 2010 where I met some people, two sophomore high school students. We were all very different people, yet somehow, we got along and quickly became friends. As we would meet up to chat, they would tell me about their problems, and how they all revolved around high school. One of the friends, in particular, had the worst time. He would tell us about the people that made it difficult for him, sometimes students and teachers, his lack of interest in school, his troubled family situation, but most importantly, his lack of support. My high school life was pleasant. I never had any problems, with other students or teachers, so hearing this from someone else was an eye opener. It is common knowledge that these types of situations exist, but this was the first time I had run across someone who could attest to the stories. My other friend and I, we worked to help him get through everything. I felt like a psychiatrist, trying to get to the bottom of

a problem and helping the person reach a solution. In the end, everything turned out for the best, and I could see my effort pay off. After this time, it took about a year to settle everything; I began to rethink my motives and my current path. I wanted to help people, the way I had helped my friend, but I didn't want to become a psychologist or counselor. I felt those careers required people to come to you; I wanted a more direct route to helping people.

The following semester I changed my major to English Education with a creative writing emphasis, focusing on the high school level. I had realized the best way to help people was to keep my path as a teacher, but to fine-tune it. If I continued as a teacher, I could have direct contact with students daily, and be better able to provide help. I choose to focus on English for two reasons. The first is that it had always been my favorite subject, I enjoyed the novels we would read in class, and I greatly enjoyed writing, so much so that my second goal in life is to become a writer. The second reason is because English allows students to be expressive. Students can find relatable characters in books, or they can write about their problems. My decision to pursue this career is fueled by my desire to help anyone who might be going through similar problems. Even now, I have a student who I tutored during spring in 2012, and she comes to me when she wants someone to talk to about her family and relationship problems. It is great knowing that you are helping, even if you all you do is sit there and listen. I had always stood in the field of teaching, unsure of which direction I was heading, but once I realized my true intentions, it was like a clear path opened for me, and I gladly took that first step into a decision of which I couldn't be more proud.

With these motives in mind, I planned to pursue teaching and eventually have a classroom of my own. After completing student teaching, I began to work as a substitute teacher for various districts. Unfortunately, substitute teaching, to me, was very unlike actual teaching. I

loved the times when I would be given a long term assignments, and I would be able to be in the same classrooms, and see and get to know the same students. During one of these long term assignments at a middle school, I met a teacher librarian and fell in love with the job position. I have always loved being in the library as I had spent much time there when I was younger and I began to think teacher librarian would be a great prospect. It is the perfect combination of both worlds: teaching and librarian. It was after that meeting that I decided to pursue a career as a teacher librarian.

Reading has always been a passion of mine, and I want to share that with all of my students. To have students take a few minutes out of the day to become lost in a book would be ideal. With my love for reading, I would want to create a book club, or several book clubs, for students who want to read but may have too many distractions at home, or they might just want to have other people to have discussions with. If I get the chance to influence students, and share my love of reading, I would feel accomplished.

Along with reading, I would give students a variety of creative projects. I am a very creative and artsy person. I love to draw, create, and most recently, I fell in love with the art of crochet. My favorite class in high school was AP Art History, so I can say that art is another passion of mine. Art and creativity work wonders in the classroom because students learn in a variety of ways. There are students who do better by creating, by seeing visuals and these assignments would benefit them. These creative assignments would come in different forms, so that all students can have an equal opportunity to pick and choose the method that works best for them.

The learning environment is also very important to me. I want students to walk library and feel welcomed, to feel that it is a place where their ideas can blossom and they can speak

their minds, to me or to other students. I will work hard to create this environment for all students. However, I will also set up rules. Much like an environment, there need to be governing rules to ensure smooth functioning, and that includes the library environment. I hope to be able to bring my vision to life by obtaining a teacher-librarian position.