

Written Response

Many people question why talented, intelligent, and hard-working people enter into the field of education every day. I argue that this is because teaching is not simply a profession, but a calling. What makes teachers so remarkable is that despite the challenges that come with their profession, they choose this career because it fulfills them in some fundamental way. It is this unique combination of professional growth and sense of individual purpose that makes me want to pursue a career in education.

I first want to discuss the many benefits and the importance of teaching that I have noticed through my experience in education thus far. For one, we need teachers because they educate our future world leaders, doctors, lawyers, authors, artists, and presidents. These teachers inspire their students to pursue careers that spark fires within them and prepare them to succeed in their chosen fields. But even more than being a source of practical knowledge and resources, teachers of all grades have the opportunity to provide their students with the social and emotional intelligence that will help students navigate every aspect of their lives moving forward. These educators do not only impart wisdom on subjects such as the history of the United States, the times tables, or the scientific method-- they teach compassion and resourcefulness and perseverance, among many other things. My experience with teachers who taught me these valuable skills is one of the reasons I have chosen to pursue the same career, because I hope to instill the same lessons in my students that they have instilled in me. Furthermore, I believe that people choose to become teachers because they see the value in connecting with each and every student and are willing to work diligently in order to see them succeed. Teachers are brave. They are able to manage social conflict, disrespect, and disinterest every single day. It is often a tiring and thankless job. But there is something wonderful that I have noticed about teachers. The

teachers I know, the really good ones, find fulfilment through this kind of work. They come home physically drained but emotionally and intellectually stimulated after every single day. It is this kind of personal gratification that draws me towards the teaching profession.

However, I do not wish to romanticize the realities of teaching. I understand it is difficult, demanding, and often extremely frustrating. But when someone chooses to enter into the field of teaching, knowing its many hardships and shortcomings, I believe they truly see the possibilities in the work they will get to do. They understand that every disgruntled teenager who is always late and never does their homework is an opportunity for growth for both student and teacher alike. Choosing this career path knowing its downfalls is what makes teachers so brave. Another hurdle is the fact that teachers are often harshly critiqued. Perhaps this is because we are responsible for what many people value the most in their lives: their children and their children's education. While these demands and requests can seem impossible to fulfill, it also allows a special opportunity for teachers to consistently reflect on their teaching practices and try to become better and to never stop learning. We are role models for our students, and it is important that as we encourage our students to seek feedback in order to improve, we must model doing the same. It is not easy. It might be one of the hardest jobs in the world. But being a part of the intellectual growth of so many students every single day is the most rewarding work I can imagine. No other job prepares people for every single job in the world, and few other jobs require such a complex interplay between emotional and practical intelligence. This recurring opportunity for introspection is an essential part of teaching and is part of what makes a really good teacher. Thus, despite the harsh realities of teaching, it allows opportunity for self-growth in a way that other professions simply do not.

As a Mount Holyoke Psychology and Education major, I too find myself constantly wondering what my future teaching career will look like, and if I will be successful in my chosen field. Despite the uncertainty of my path, which a vast majority of college students of all majors face, I have found comfort through my experiences of observing teachers in my CBL placements and in general. Combining my academic knowledge of educational theory with practical experience in the classroom, I have come to understand more fully the complexities of teaching. I now have a greater understanding of the bravery, diligence, and passion a teacher must practice in order to be an effective educator for their students. Another important insight I have gained is that no one is an exceptional teacher right off the bat; they work towards self-improvement and self-reflection every day, which is what makes this job so unique. For these reasons and more, I am excited to get the opportunity to challenge myself in these ways and more through my career as a teacher.