
Education: After

I am a product of modern China. In 1978, China began economic reforms that included de-collectivization of agriculture, opening of China to foreign investment, and a gradual shift from state-owned businesses to private enterprise. Now, China has the second largest economy in the world, and is the largest exporter of goods. While China may eventually dominate international commerce, the English language will always be the “international language.”

I observed China’s transformation growing up in *****, a coastal city where international business is thriving. Starting in kindergarten, I began a 16-year journey to learn the beautiful language of English. My goal is to educate the next generation of Chinese leaders in the English language to expand our economic opportunities. I have already honed my own skills as an interpreter and translator, and realized that my greatest contribution to society will be to teach this language to others. This has motivated me to apply for graduate school at the University of ***** in the program of Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL).

As an undergraduate at Beijing ***** University, I volunteered to teach English to senior citizens in the ***** Community. I also enjoyed the opportunity to work one-on-one with fellow students to improve their English language skills. Although I believe I was modestly successful, these experiences encouraged me to think critically about existing teaching methods, and to refine my skills to tailor English language instruction to meet the specific needs of learners based on their unique linguistic backgrounds.

To learn more about the pedagogy of English language instruction, I consulted academic journals, and also completed the course, *General Linguistics*, which expanded my knowledge of English linguistics. Yet one of my greatest learning experiences was traveling to India as an intern at an Indian NGO. I visited several universities in India, and observed a diversity of English teaching methods. Another rewarding experience was when I took the initiative to establish a program through my university that allowed college students to teach English in Beijing primary schools. I observed how children learn foreign languages differently depending on their stage of development. My passion for these extracurricular activities also helped me overcome spondylopathy, a condition that causes severe back pain. Although my grades declined slightly during my sophomore year, I improved my time management skills to rebound and succeed academically despite all of my commitments.

Earlier this year, I accepted a position as a middle school teacher with the Beijing ***** School, the largest private language teaching institution in China. Initially, I was a little disappointed to learn that most students’ motivation was to improve their test scores, not understand the beauty of English. I used my own teaching philosophy to reorient their thinking by utilizing an interest-oriented approach. I started by learning about students’ various dialects since they came from different parts of China. I de-emphasized the test, and instead encouraged them to embrace cultural elements of English. By shifting their focus from test scores, to the

culture of English-speaking countries, they were more inspired and motivated. In fact, several students told me my “interest-based” approach not only helped them learn, but improved their test scores as well. This experience gave me confidence that I can make a difference.

While I have expanded my knowledge through experience, experimentation, and my own academic research, I realize that I need to further refine my skills by studying at a leading international university like the University of ****. ***** not only has outstanding professors and resources, it also has an elite international student body that will allow me to learn how English is taught in other parts of the world. I want to identify how linguistic backgrounds affect learning, and use this knowledge to design curriculums. A Master’s degree from ***** is the next step in my journey to complete a Ph.D. in TESOL.

My academic rank of 10th among 258 students demonstrates my academic ability, while my experience as a teacher will give me a unique global perspective. I also have nurtured my leadership abilities as Vice President of the Student Union. I am confident that I can succeed at the GSE, and ultimately return to my native China to help educate the next generation of English-teachers. I believe improving English-language instruction in China will ultimately improve relations between our two countries.

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