

STATEMENT OF GRANT PURPOSE **English Teaching Assistantship**

Education can help shatter the cultural and communication barriers that exist between people. Through my teaching assistantship I hope to understand Korean perceptions of American and other foreign cultures and promote a positive impression of the United States. Examining Korea's estimation of its place in the world would give insight into its culture and character. Of particular interest to me is the relationship between North and South Korea. Classroom discussion and personal examination of how these two nations have maintained an armistice may provide a model for conflict resolution elsewhere in the world. As a dancer, I am interested in Korean dance and movement. I plan to learn some *dangak jeongjae*, court dances originating from South Korea, and through these I hope to learn about Korean culture and history.

Although I have never taught English, I have taught a foreign language: chemistry. As a workshop leader for general chemistry and neurochemistry, I must present information in varied and creative ways so that students can learn the "foreign" terminology and concepts. I work closely with the respective course professors, who assist me with difficult situations in the workshop and who encourage my creative pedagogical techniques. During the classroom session I present a brief review of the concepts, then act as a mediator to facilitate discussion amongst students and present problem-solving strategies. I utilize visual and auditory cues, analogies, demonstrations, and repetition so that regardless of learning style, all of my students are able to comprehend the material. My abilities to facilitate group discourse and encourage student curiosity are not specific to teaching within the natural sciences and I will incorporate these skills as an English Teaching Assistant in a Korean classroom.

I am confident in my abilities to teach at both the primary and secondary level. My experiences as a summer camp counselor and youth field hockey coach taught me to recognize and address the needs of elementary-age children: they respond best to simple, direct language and tangible, hands-on materials. As young children's language skills are not sophisticated, they can neither ask nor answer questions precisely. It thus becomes the teacher's responsibility to interpret what children say and respond accordingly. I contrast these experiences to my time tutoring two fourteen-year-old girls in algebra. During this developmental stage, students become more social. Teaching at the secondary level elicits more mature expressions and makes possible the use of social situations as teaching tools for concepts, problem-solving, and vocabulary. Realizing the emphasis on rote learning in the Korean educational system, I bring creativity to the repetition and create a learning environment that stimulates curiosity and a strong work ethic, regardless of age level.

Through my own language education in French, Hebrew, and American Sign Language, I recognize the difficulties inherent in learning a new language. Through my Hebrew studies I learned to communicate using a non-Roman script, and in the case of American Sign Language, no script at all. Korean students face similar challenges when learning English as it has a different script, grammatical structure, and phonetics than Korean. Recognition of these challenges will enable me to address them and help students overcome them. I learned each of these languages best when interacting with native speakers. Through them I recognized how frustrating it is to be unable to communicate one's thoughts in another language. My goal is for my Korean students to feel confident in their English language and comprehension skills.

As an aspiring physician, I want exposure to a variety of medical practices so that when I have my own patients, I can provide individualized, holistic treatment. Depending upon my placement in Korea, I would like to volunteer in one of the 7,000 oriental medical clinics throughout Korea, such as, but not limited to, Chungbuk Oriental Medical Center, National Sorokdo Hospital, or Dongshin University Oriental Hospital. First-hand experience with traditional Korean medicinal doctors would allow me to understand not just the benefits and opportunities afforded by their practices, but the underlying attitudes towards them and how Koreans have incorporated these techniques into their current westernized health system. My duties at the clinic would not be limited to observation: I would like to contribute to the clinic by tutoring willing patients, physicians, or other employees in English language.

After a year of teaching Korean students, volunteering in a hospital, and immersion in a culture very different from my own, I hope to gain insight into my own strengths. A homestay experience in particular will enhance my flexibility, communication skills, and good humor. I hope to inspire in my students a passion for learning and an appreciation of American culture, and I hope they inspire in me a sense of independence, compassion, and admiration for others.