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EDT Program Application
University of Hartford

Letter of Intent

I have been an English teacher for the past four years. I entered the profession almost accidentally; I wanted to travel and live overseas for a few years, and I needed a way to support myself financially. I never dreamed that what I originally saw as a means to an end would become such a rewarding experience and an integral part of who I am as a person. Having now found my desired profession, I would like to further my own education in the field by entering the Educational Technology master’s program.

I currently teach English as a Second Language (ESL) in the English Language Institute at the University of Hartford, and depending on enrollment each semester, I also teach ESL Reading and Writing at Quinebaug Valley Community College in Willimantic. At the University of Hartford, I primarily work with international students from all over the world who are trying to improve their English language proficiency in order to pursue studies at the undergraduate and graduate level here in the United States. At the community college, I work with a similar population of students, though many more are returning to college and/or juggling many responsibilities in addition to their studies.

Despite these differences in student population, the common thread in all my students is their familiarity and competence in using and relying on technology. They use some form of technology in almost every aspect of their lives and are rarely disconnected. More than one of my current students has multiple smart phones to use at the same time. Because of this reliance on technology and digital media, it is essential to use technology in order to both relate to students and to create excitement and engagement in learning. Having used supplemental websites with different textbooks and Blackboard, I have seen increased engagement in digital assignments often translating to improved achievement and proficiency. It seems logical then to further engage students in areas they already use to encourage learning. Active student involvement and interest are essential in both teaching and learning, and I think it is important to meet students where they are and use tools and technology with which they are already comfortable and successful. Therefore, I would like to complete the Educational Technology program in hopes of gaining the
knowledge and skills to be able to use technology to inspire and motivate my students as much as possible in order to encourage their eventual success.

I alluded to the prevalence of technology in my students’ lives earlier. Technology is such a huge part of today’s life and society and its uses in the classroom appear limitless. Not only does technology have the ability to enhance education by making it accessible and engaging, but it also provides opportunities for teaching and learning lessons applicable in all areas of life. Most individuals learn, master and develop new technologies using a hands-on, experiential, approach. Few elementary school students need to read a manual in order to successfully program a DVR, use a cell phone or set up a video game system. They are unafraid of technology, undeterred by mistakes, blinking lights or blank screens, and play with it until it works and they achieve success. I believe this illustrates the most effective way of teaching individuals regardless of the subject matter. At times, children need supervision and guidance with technology, especially with the Internet in the areas of safety and digital citizenship. However, they readily adapt to new and emerging technologies with their ever-expanding knowledge and skill base. In a similar way, formal education that encourages learning and problem solving over specific information positions students for future success. In my own teaching experience, I have found that my students understand and achieve more when I guide them through focused questions and facilitate learning, but do not force it or merely dispense answers.

Learning how to learn is vital for individuals of every age. I believe technology teaches us both how to learn and also how to process new information and skills in light of existing knowledge and skills. This ability is not only beneficial in the classroom, but also necessary for success in life. I hope the Educational Technology program will enable me to achieve greater educational success for both my students and myself.