

Diana Gomez
WLC 300
Personal Statement
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Since elementary school, my friends would constantly talk about the video games and manga which they loved. For this reason, when I was given the opportunity to learn Japanese my freshman year of high school I took it. All my friends were taking Japanese so I simply thought about how much fun it would be having class with them. I already speak Spanish, so I was excited to learn a language completely different from what I already knew. Each year my interest in Japanese grew and it grew even more so after I was given the opportunity to travel to Japan the summer before my senior year. Having stayed in Japan for 3 weeks and having met many people, the trip was one of the best experiences of my life and it made me desperately want to go back to Japan one day. When it came time to apply for universities, I decided that I wanted to continue studying Japanese even if I was not sure what I wanted to do in the future at that time.

By majoring in Japanese Language and Culture at California State University of Monterey Bay (CSUMB), I have had the opportunity of taking a variety of classes related to Japan taught in both Japanese and English. A couple of the classes taught in Japanese are Japanese Literature and upper division Service Learning. In the literature class, I was able to read many famous Japanese works of literature all while also learning Japanese language and culture. One of my favorite stories being Ryunosuke Akutagawa's "Kumo no Ito." While in the service learning class, we worked in groups to create and execute lesson plans to teach elementary school students about Japanese language and culture. It is through this class that I began to

become interested in possibly teaching in the future and I became even more interested because of my experiences while I studied abroad.

During my junior year, I was able to study abroad in Tokyo, Japan for one year. For one year, I lived with a host family, went to school, and even had a part time job. Immersing myself in the language was the most efficient method of learning Japanese and I am happy that I had the opportunity to do so. I am also fortunate that I was able to find a part time job in Japan because it is in my part time job that I met the most diverse people. I worked at an English Conversation Cafe. I met people from all different backgrounds and who had different experiences but with the common interest of learning English. I learned from them just as much as I was able to teach them despite the fact that I was supposed to be the teacher. That experience made me realize how much of a rewarding experience teaching could be, and from then on I have begun to seriously consider becoming a Japanese teacher.

After I graduate from CSUMB, I plan to teach English in Japan for a few years through the JET program. While I am working and living in Japan, I will also be studying Japanese and aim to achieve the N2 or N1 certification level for JLPT. After I have finished teaching through JET, I will return to CSUMB to receive my credentials for teaching Japanese at secondary level and also masters in Education. I would like to work in the Monterey County in the future, particularly my home town of Salinas, because I relate so much to the students here. When I was a high school student, Japanese was a positive influence in my life and I hope that one day I am able to help others in the same way that I was helped.