



Graduate School Statement of Purpose Example for Education (896 words)

I remember exactly where I was when the shelter-in-place order was issued. I was at my teacher's aide desk in Ms. Colburn's sixth grade homeroom class, poring over the lesson plan for the day and making notes in the margins. When my email notification dinged on my open laptop in front of me, my future in education was changed forever. The email was notifying us that our lives and jobs as we knew them were about to change. We were told to return home and await further instructions. From that point on, I didn't step foot in a classroom again for over a year.

Being a teacher had been my dream since I myself was in sixth grade. When I graduated with my Bachelor's in Education, I found a position as a teacher's aide at Woodward Elementary School. The opportunity to work in the classroom, interact with students and watch them grow and question and discover and collaborate and learn, was a dream come true. I hadn't yet worked at Woodward a year before the pandemic irreversibly changed the way we educate. As a new educational professional, the pandemic threw an undeniable wrench in my future plans, and it tested my developing skills with challenges I could never have expected. However, it also presented me with opportunities I never would have had otherwise.

The first week of staying at home, I was trying to get organized, install new software on my work laptop, gather my notes and adapt to a working situation that was sometimes changing on a daily basis. My sister called to check up on me, and while we talked she asked if I could do her a favor. My niece was struggling with the new normal, learning how to switch to e-learning when learning in a traditional classroom had already been difficult for her. My niece was recently diagnosed with ADHD, and she'd explained before how she had trouble focusing, keeping herself organized and on task, and sometimes struggled to understand her homework assignments. As a student, I often helped tutor her in my free time and help her develop tools for educational success. We worked together to create a weekly schedule, practice tricks to keep her focused and alert, and established mental health "check-ins". Since starting her schoolwork from home, her old tools weren't enough. The changes to her school life and the anxiety caused by uncertainty were overwhelming her. Of course, I agreed to resume our tutoring sessions in my free time. This was a new situation for everyone, and there wasn't as many resources or accommodations for my niece as there were in her old classroom. So, we improvised. I taught her how to use the new technologies and adapt them to her needs. I helped her find and test out virtual scheduling apps and websites to suit her. We also put her in touch with a virtual counselor who could help her with her mental health. I encouraged her to take "screen breaks" and start new activities at home to help her when she started to lose focus. We began a game of virtual checkers and other mobile games to provide her a fun break when she needed it. The change in my niece was undeniable. Her mental health was better, her social skills improved, and she was adapting to her schoolwork and actually enjoying her virtual lessons. Despite missing her friends, she made her grade that year on the honor roll, and I couldn't have been prouder.



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The students weren't the only ones who I worked with to improve mental health and morale. My fellow teachers and I kept in touch to coordinate our lessons, of course, but we also started to notice the dip in our mental health. I began a weekly "zoom coffee" chat for social time and a disconnect from work. I also joined online teachers' groups where I could share my experiences and ask for advice. Having a community, even a virtual one, helped me immensely. It reminded me that although the way in which we were educating was very different, we could still recreate and adapt to our circumstances. Even if I spent my entire career as a teacher using e-learning and digital teaching tools, I knew I could thrive.

I want to pursue my Master's Degree in Education and Digital Resources to further develop my professional skillset in e-learning knowledge and resources. With a master's degree, I can adjust to the change in circumstances and better equip myself to be a teacher and educator post-pandemic. I will also have the tools to address the new challenges and realities of digital education. I'll be able to continue my passion for teaching, despite any hardships encountered, and in fact help students flourish. By working utilizing the skills I'll gain, I'll be able to work better with students who are unfamiliar with e-learning technology, have learning disabilities or other struggles with digital education.

The pandemic completely changed the trajectory of my teaching career, but as the field has so dramatically altered in recent years, it made sense for me to go back to school and continue developing myself professionally. I know I will be able to contribute meaningfully, too, with my experiences earned during the pandemic. Moving forward, I know I will be able to be a better teacher than ever in a post-pandemic world.