

## **J. Travis I. Wood**

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### **Letter of Introduction**

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to express my interest in a position with your organization.

My teaching career began on Vancouver Island, off the coast of British Columbia, where I was trained to use the provincial Integrated Resource Packages (IRPs). The curriculum's philosophical charm was in the repeated presentation of concepts across content areas and in varied contexts. Throughout my degree in education, I focused on technology as a tool to teach. And, in fact, I created and ran a summer computer camp for school-aged children using a curriculum that I, and a fellow student, developed.

In my first year as a teacher, I was met with a challenging proposition. The school disclosed their desire to correct a deficiency that had not seen a single student graduate in six years. They charged me with the task of applying my skills with technology to the problem. At first, the principal was hesitant to provide the necessary classrooms, remove walls, and commit \$150,000 to the task. But I shared my suggestions with a concerned parent whose daughter was in my classroom. And at the time, I was unaware that he was the chairman of our school board. Nor was I aware that he passed the plan on to the board members. The next morning however, I was pleasantly greeted by the principal who asked, "How soon can you get started?" I spent the remaining part of my first year pulling network wire under the floors of the school and installed three PC computer labs, two servers, a satellite Internet dish, and Learning Management Software (LMS). As an ambitious first-year teacher, I was now obliged to prove my mouth wasn't bigger than my brain. And the innovation saw me at school until 11:00 p.m. most nights.

In my early years as a teacher, I came to know the level of commitment it takes to develop the art and science of instruction. Quality teaching requires the ongoing reflection of the job you've done. And the efficiency of learning with technology has a direct correlation to the level of interaction students have with the computer AND the teacher. A teacher is remiss in their duties if they leave the computer to do the teaching. It's still incumbent upon the teacher to monitor how students interact with educational tools, the information they deliver, and intervene when necessary. And when I lacked the skill or experience necessary, I made good use of experts who did. So how did my three-year undertaking turn out? My students represent the highest number ever graduated (all but one), many completing university degrees (including the daughter of the concerned parent. She has since become.... a teacher).

When I started teaching in California, I taught math and science. And I continued to shape my understanding of how to improve a student's learning through the use of technology. I exploited my experience with integrating cross-curricular content to bring robotics into algebra and physical science. The enrichment and motivation that students experienced resulted in the highest mathematics test scores during my entire tenure at Almeria Middle School.

Shortly after an article in our district's newsletter featured my classroom, I caught the eye of a fellow district employee who was also an instructor for the Instructional Technology program at California State University, San Bernardino. He persuaded me to enroll in their Master's program. And after I graduated, I was invited to fill the Technology Coordinator position at Truman Middle School. Today I use self-directed technology modules (weaved with state standards from core subjects) because I find my own interest in something motivates me to engage the learning process in a more meaningful and authentic way. My students deserve no less.

I believe I am a qualified candidate for a position within your institution because I continue to reflect on and adapt my understanding of teaching to improve the prevailing educational circumstance.

Travis Wood