

My Multicultural Experience in Europe

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After traveling to Europe my views on teaching changed in ways I never thought possible. As, a college sophomore I thought I had my life figured out. I knew I wanted to be a teacher and I figured I would teach in the same area I grew up in because that was what I was comfortable with in my life. I grew up in an upper to middle class suburb of Chicago and always thought that I would teach in an area very similar. I attended Catholic, private schools, my entire life. These schools had no diversity at all. I had never even thought about how much different life outside of my life in the suburbs could be.

I was given the opportunity through the help of Quill to travel to Europe for a few weeks this past summer. I was able to participate in a multicultural education class. This class opened my eyes to a world I had never seen before. The class gave me the opportunity to see a diverse school for the first time in my twenty year old life. I thought to walk away from my experience with more credits and a view of the world I had never seen. I never could have even imagined that I would come away from the trip with so much more than what I had expected.

One school that we visited in Paris changed my view on teaching forever. St. John St. Georges consisted of students from all over the world. Some students were refugees who boarded at school while other students came from wealthy families. It was amazing for me to see students from England, Saudi Arabia, Uganda, China and many other countries working together in the same classroom. In today's world it was amazing to me to see Catholics and Muslims sitting next to each other in class as one. The students did not even seem to realize that they were different. The students all seemed to

celebrate in the fact that they could bring different positive aspects to the classroom including religion. The students all wore uniforms and most families were able to work with the school to see that their child received everything they needed. In the case that they needed financial aid it was not a problem for any student. We were given the opportunity to travel to other schools but no other school touched me the way that St. John St. Georges did. St. John St. George was the most diverse school we saw in our class.

This year when deciding which elementary school I wanted to student teach at, I shocked my entire family; I chose a public school. I know this may not seem like a big deal to most people but this was huge to my family. Not only had I chose a public school I decided to teach in English as a second language classroom. I can honestly say that if I had not been given the opportunity to travel abroad I would probably be in the same type of classroom I had been accustom to in my life. I am not saying that the school I attended was a bad school but I believe that I have found my true calling because of the experiences I had in Europe. I know now that I would really enjoy teaching in the inner city school system. I want too look around my classroom and see students of every nationality. I only wish that every future teacher was able to share with me in this amazing opportunity.