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During the spring 2022 semester at Illinois State University, I spent 10 weeks student teaching in Eastbourne, England. While growing my skill of teaching, I was able to expand my worldview and build global connections. The experience of living, exploring, and learning in a new country has given me newfound wisdom and understanding of the world around me.

The main focus while I was abroad was to complete my student teaching experience. I was placed at a secondary school where I taught 6th-8th grade language arts and science. Although I was in a teacher role, I learned so much each day. Creating lessons to fit a new education system was an adjustment, but the support I had from my mentor teachers, other student teachers, and the students helped encourage me to ask questions and try new things. I taught the students how to compare and contrast different texts, similes and metaphors, and the parts of a story in language arts classes. In science the students learned about puberty, light and color, and the periodic table. The students were engaged in lessons while also being patient and understanding while I was also learning with them. I am grateful for the relationships I built with students in such a short time. The students helped introduce a plethora of British culture and made sure I tried the best food England had to offer. The support I received from my mentor teachers and the other student teachers were crucial in making this the experience it was. By immersing myself into the British education system I have learned new classroom management strategies as well as unique ways to introduce content.

When I wasn't student teaching I was exploring the United Kingdom and surrounding countries. I had many enrichment opportunities that broadened my understanding of British history and culture. These trips allowed me to see exquisite castles, churches, and towns. I was able to see more well-known locations such as Stonehenge, Buckingham Palace, Big Ben and more. I loved these trips because as I was touring, I was also getting to know other study abroad students and we were able to share these experiences together. While I enjoyed being a tourist abroad, I also had the chance to experience life as someone who lives in England. I was able to grocery shop and find new favorite snacks and candy. I had to buy a bus pass and learn the bus routes to get to school each day. I was able to explore my town and find my favorite stores and restaurants. I had the continued support from my host family and new friends I met abroad. These relationships are the reason I had such a positive experience and was able to learn more about English life. By living abroad, I was able to do more than expand my education, but expand my cultural understanding as well.

A majority of people will say that studying abroad is an experience that you will never forget. After my own experience abroad, I will have to agree, but coming to this conclusion is something a person needs to experience for themselves. Of course I will never forget seeing all the landmarks and experiencing life in a new country, but it is more than that. I will never forget that feeling of falling into a new culture, learning how to slow down and truly take in the surroundings like people in England do. I will never forget about St. Patrick's Day when I told

the students about my green pants when I totally forgot that “pants” means “underwear” in the United Kingdom. I will never forget the look on my students face when I tried my first custard cream. Now that I’m home I hear “Wow, how was England?” almost every day. When I answer, I don’t talk about Big Ben, Stonehenge, or Buckingham Palace. Instead, I bring up the friends and family I have gained and the life lessons I have learned. Now that I’ve studied abroad, I understand that cliché. Studying abroad is an experience I will never forget. I can only hope that others take the experience to go abroad, especially to England, so they too can find the new lessons, friends, and adventures that await them there.