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During the fall semester of 2022 I spent around 9 weeks in Eastbourne, England student teaching and it truly was an experience I will never forget. I was placed at St. Catherine's College, a secondary school in Eastbourne, and to say it is different from the school system in the U.S. felt like a bit of an understatement for me. I was suddenly teaching a much younger demographic about topics I had little to no experience with. I was assigned to teach history to years 7 through 9 (6th-8th grade in the United States) and working with middle schoolers was a bit out of my wheelhouse. While my focus was on British history, I learned a lot about current day British culture as well.

This experience was one of challenges but in the absolute best way possible. I found myself being pushed to do better and come up with new ways to teach information that I was still learning. I found ways to tie in what the students knew about the United States into lessons about William the Conqueror that somehow engaged students and allowed them to put the content into modern day terms. I learned from several teachers at my school that steered me towards the teacher I have become, and I feel that my time in St. Catherine's was well worth coming over to the UK based on what I gained. Even though I had such a short time at St. Catherine's those students will stay with me forever. From the surprised looks once I opened my mouth and they heard my accent to laughing over the England vs U.S.A game during the World Cup. They wiggled their way into my heart and will stay there for a long time.

As fun as the teaching was, I did a lot more than that! I was so lucky to get the host family I did and could sing their praises for hours. I felt right at home in their house and made some lifelong friends out of their kids. I fell in love with the area I lived in and can't wait to make plans to come back to the gorgeous coast of the English Channel. Beyond my living arrangement I got to explore much of England through school trips arranged through the University of Brighton and my own means. Places like Brighton, Buckingham Palace, Stonehenge, the Roman Baths, Dublin, and so many other wonders left me astonished over and over again. I was even able to bring my trips into my teaching which served as an amazing addition! I will never forget the laughs I had during those trips from freezing while waiting to go up the Eiffel Tower with friends to getting a tattoo in London to commemorate my time here. I have memories that will stay with me forever and that includes the people I met and got to know.

I could not give more of a recommendation for anyone even considering this program! Not only did I learn so much teaching but my outlook on life changed. This was my very first trip abroad and taking such a big leap by living in a foreign country by myself gives me a sense of pride that I can do anything now. Everyone I know always wants to hear about England! Although I think they are getting a bit tired of hearing about it this experience is something I will cherish forever, and hope others have the same opportunity to fall in love with England like I did.