

When people say that studying abroad changes you, they aren't lying. This has been an experience I would have never thought I would have been able to do during my time at Illinois State. As an education major, I felt that studying abroad was a luxury I was unable to have. However, I did my research and found the opportunity to travel to Milan, Italy with the College of Education. Through this experience, I was able to take two courses and also complete over 30 hours of clinical hours in a diverse classroom. I would not have financially been able to experience this once in a lifetime opportunity without the help of the 2018 Global Initiatives scholarship.



During my time in Milan I was able to truly embrace a new culture that I fell in love with immediately. I lived in an apartment in downtown Milan for a month and then commuted to my clinical Monday-Thursday. This got me extremely comfortable with the transportation system

that was once a completely foreign idea to me. I spent majority of my time at the American School of Milan and primarily observed the middle level grades which was extremely beneficial for me as an aspiring middle school teacher. These clinical experiences provided me with not only more time to interact with students, but also an amazing opportunity to really get involved in a diverse classroom. The reason that the American School of Milan is so diverse is because there can only be 40% of the student population as native Italian students, the rest of the student body is from different areas of the world. The common tie between all of the students though is the language, the students are required to speak English when in the classrooms because all of the teachers are native English speakers.

When I wasn't in the classroom I was taking every opportunity possible to travel around and get to know the country that much better. When I was abroad I traveled to Cinque Terre, Rome, Venice, Verona, Lake Como, and of course Milan. Each town had its own sense of beauty and every town was so different than the next. My personal favorite place we went was Venice, it was the first town that I went to that felt like how I imagined Italy to feel like. The buildings like the one below made up the beautiful yet quiet town of Venice. Something that I felt was extremely interesting was the fact there are no cars in the town of Venice.



In fact, there are a ton of waterways that people use to get around, they take gondola rides to be able to navigate through the venetian canals. I was able to also go to Poland, which actually ended up being one of my favorite parts of my experience. Poland , to me, was a hidden gem that I would have never thought to travel to.



So, my advice to anyone who is traveling abroad now is to go places you wouldn't think of. I was supposed to also go to Paris, France, however there was a strike at the airport that weekend and our flights got cancelled. Regardless, I was still able to explore my little heart out.

This program not only helped me as a student but also as a person. Traveling to a foreign country really changes your perspective about life. For me personally, it made me feel like I can accomplish way more than I think I can and that was actually exactly what I needed. Studying abroad to Italy was just the beginning. I cannot wait to see what my future holds because this experience has opened so many doors and I am eager to see more.

Until next time, Ciao!



Brittany Clough