

My Time in Milan
By Maggie Monaxios

I count myself incredibly lucky to have been able to partake in the Milan, Italy study abroad opportunity. Taking classes in another country was a far-fetched dream for me, a transfer student who has far too many course requirements to fill in a shortened period of time. Fatefully, the College of Education was able to make my dream a reality when I realized there was a way to study abroad *and* keep with my plan of study. It's as the old adage goes—kill two birds with one stone!

I will forever consider my experiences in Milan as formative for both my personal and educational identity. As a teacher, I learned a plethora of information, strategies, and tools that are research-based, field tested, and, as evidenced in my clinical experiences, work in a multicultural classroom setting. As both myself and Illinois State University are committed to providing quality education to students of a diverse range of needs, there is no better place to witness how this can be seamlessly accomplished than the American School of Milan. Personally, in just a short month I found that I grew into a more globally-minded individual. It is often difficult to become so in America because we are so secluded despite the rich diversity that permeates our historic and contemporary society, but as soon as I stepped into Milan I truly felt I had the world at my fingertips. It was an incredibly humbling experience in which I wish everyone could participate during their teacher candidacy!

My biggest piece of advice for all students considering a study abroad trip would be to “just do it!” There are so many factors that will try to sway your decision, but the College of Education makes it incredibly simple to overlook those so that you may follow your dream. Fiscal apprehension? Check out the scholarships—they drastically decrease financial burden! Anxious in anticipation of leaving home? Talk to some of the students who went on the trip the year before, they are a wealth of information. There is no experience that parallels that of a study abroad opportunity, so just take the plunge...I promise you won't regret it!