

Max Oquendo – Eastbourne Student Teaching Program

In the Spring of 2024, I participated in the Student Teaching Program in Eastbourne England, and it is an experience I will not soon forget. This was my first time traveling outside of the United States. I feel that my time there taught me how to be resourceful, adventurous, and opened my mind to new pedagogical ideas.

My host family during my study abroad program was incredibly welcoming and made me feel like I was truly at home from the moment I arrived. They greeted me with warm smiles, immediately putting me at ease in their cozy home. Their genuine kindness was evident in the little things they did, from preparing delicious meals that introduced me to their local cuisine or preparing some afternoon tea and asking about my day. They were always eager to share stories about their culture and listen to mine, making me feel like a valued member of their family. Their hospitality not only enriched my experience but also created lasting memories that I will cherish forever.

For my student teaching, I was placed at The St. Leonards Academy, a secondary school in Hastings. It was an incredibly rewarding experience that deeply enriched my teaching practice. I had the opportunity to collaborate with dedicated educators, who generously shared their expertise and provided invaluable feedback. What I enjoyed the most about these interactions was being able to reevaluate everything I have learned in my years of undergrad, opening my mind to new ideas.

Working with students was equally fulfilling; their enthusiasm and eagerness to learn made each day an exciting challenge. Engaging with diverse teaching methods and observing the positive impact on students' growth was truly motivating. Overall, my time at St. Leonards Academy not only honed my skills but also reaffirmed my passion for education, leaving me grateful for the opportunity and excited for my future in teaching.

I recommend the Eastbourne study abroad program to anyone seeking a fresh perspective on education. The program offers an exceptional opportunity to immerse oneself in a new educational environment, enriched by the unique cultural and academic experiences that England provides. The chance to engage with diverse educational practices and gain insights from both local and international perspectives is invaluable. Whether you're aiming to enhance your teaching skills or simply looking to explore a different approach to education, the Eastbourne study abroad program is a transformative experience that will inspire and expand your professional horizons.