

### Director's Note Transformation via Immersion

Happy New Year, and welcome to another issue of Field Notes! As in years past, we are using this spring's issue to highlight the value of globally-minded teaching through the lens of our international student teaching program.

As you read on, you will get a glimpse of what two program participants learned from their experience student teaching abroad. Rachel Allgeier, a graduate of our English Education Program who is now teaching at Boyle County Middle School, shares perceptions about working in a Swedish school last spring; and Morgan Bergren, who is preparing to teach Health and Physical Education, reflects about her experience in Auckland, New Zealand this past fall.

Reading these accounts helped me think about the transformational nature of this program. By student teaching in another country, our candidates come to see the world differently as they develop deep, positive relationships with their hosts and acquire culturally responsive practices.

Their reflections also helped me consider how in the future I might better help candidates who are preparing to teach to promote intercultural understanding and address globally important issues – two important tenets of global mindedness.

I hope the pictures these candidates have drawn will help you, too, thinking about ways in which you carry out these ideals in your classroom with your students and with the prospective teachers you supervise. Rachel's cooperating teacher commented that he found ways to strengthen his own practice as he and Rachel taught and reflected together during the time she was in his classroom.

We want to know about how you are helping your students broaden their perspectives and address globally significant topics. Are there stories, strategies, or resources you would care to share with us? We would be delighted to hear from you.

With warm regards,  
Sharon Brennan  
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### Moments Which Mark Your Life

Morgan Bergren, Kinesiology & Health Promotions  
Auckland, New Zealand

While playing the character John Hobbes in the film *Fallen*, Denzel Washington said, "There are moments which mark your life; moments when you realize nothing will ever be the same, and time is divided into two parts: BEFORE this and AFTER this." The day I left New Zealand was one of those moments for me.

Before embarking on this journey my perceptions of the world were skewed. I thought I had all the answers, and I was pretty close-minded, even though I thought otherwise. I recognized substantial growth in myself in multiple facets of my life over the span of three months: the way I approach teaching, how I connect with people, the importance of building relationships with students, my love for adventure, and my ability to adapt and feel at ease in uncomfortable situations. My time in New Zealand made such a huge impact on me; my life will be changed forever due to my experiences there. In three short months I accomplished countless firsts, overcame several obstacles, made many connections, and formed lots of new friendships.

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*KHP student teacher Morgan Bergren with students from Kentigern Boys' School in Auckland, New Zealand, where she completed her overseas student teaching assignment.*

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When I started college, I dreamed of studying abroad and seeing the world. As a student-athlete on the University of Kentucky volleyball team, I didn't think my dream would ever come true. However, thanks to UK's College of Education, my dream became a reality when I went abroad for student teaching.

When I left the comforts of my family and home back in Indiana, I was unsure of what to expect while living in New Zealand, but I knew from the moment I arrived



**Morgan poses with her honorary sisters -- daughters of the host family with whom she lived in New Zealand.**

that I was going to have the experience of a lifetime. From the very beginning, my host family made me feel at home; I immediately felt a sense of belonging. I am a family-oriented person, and the Grants accepted me and treated me as one of their own. Duncan and Debbie called me their third daughter, and their two girls adopted me as their big sister. This part of the experience was crucial, because people and relationships are such an important part of my life.

The people I met throughout my time there made this experience second to none. Everyone I came into contact with was extremely warm-hearted, positive, and caring. I saw this first hand every day, while working at Saint Kentigern Boys' School. During my first day on campus I was formally introduced at morning teatime by our headmaster, Peter Cassie. Over the three months of my experience, the staff reached out to make sure I was benefitting from my time in New Zealand. I felt like I fit right in to the school community.

Duncan, my host dad and also the director of sport at Saint Kentigern; Emma, the other PE teacher in the office; and Chris, my cooperating teacher, provided me with the love, support, and guidance I needed to blossom as a teacher. Chris wanted me to make the most of my time there, so by the second week, I was writing lesson plans and leading class sessions. He provided me with the space I needed to make mistakes through which to learn and grow, but he also gave me advice and feedback in the areas where I needed improvement. I was really able to spread my wings and grow professionally. I now have the confidence and experience that I was lacking before, and I would feel comfortable teaching any level of PE in any school.

Saint Kentigern Boys' School is a Presbyterian School with Scottish roots. The boys wear blue and white uniforms,

and start the week by gathering in chapel every Monday morning, where Reverend Hardie teaches about the values of the school and the Saint Kentigern way--serving and loving others. The boys learn from a young age what it means to go out into the community and serve.

While most of the service awards are acknowledged at chapel, it is at the weekly school assemblies where other types of achievements are recognized. Many of these successes deal with sport and academic accomplishments. The importance of sport at this school is like no other school I've ever seen before, so there are always a number of sports awards to hand out at the assemblies. There are also multiple science and math teams that compete at different events throughout the year. Along with these awards, there is a "House of the Week". Each boy is a member of one of the four "houses" within the school. Throughout the year the boys compete for house points by doing good works around the school, helping teachers, competing in house sports, and even dressing quickly after PE in years 1-3.

In the past I have been guilty of approaching most things with a one-dimensional mind, and I used to think there was only one way to go about things. However, as a result of student teaching overseas, my perception, and the approach I take to thinking through situations, has changed. I loved learning from my professors at UK, and I would have enjoyed working at any school in Lexington, but my experience abroad forced me to think outside the box.

During my preparation program I was taught not to put much emphasis on sports and winning or losing, and I still think this is a good idea to some extent. However, after being in a school where sports are a high priority, I can see how it can be beneficial as well. The approach this school takes with regard to their curriculum is unique, and I have loved learning about how Saint Kentigern functions and operates. For instance, because it is a private school, they are able to have a large focus on sports. In fact, when I first arrived at the school they were in the middle of their cross-country training, so every single boy in every grade level ran during PE class.

On my first Friday there, I experienced my first cross-country day. Every boy in years 4-8 went out to the college and ran in a cross-country race. This was so foreign to me, because I was used to activities like cross-country being extracurricular (and therefore after-school) activities. Not only do the boys participate in PE four times over a

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## Skydiving in Sweden: The Tale of a "Fish Out of Ice"

Rachel Allgeier, MIC English  
Linköping, Sweden

Have you ever felt the urge to do something totally crazy--an impulse to give in to spontaneity and abandon all comfort of the "normal" for the thrill exploring uncharted territory? Has the desire for a challenge ever led you to some destination you never dreamed you would see? This happened to me.

I fell hard for the allure of the unknown, for the temptation of challenge. It may sound daring and reckless, like I'm an adrenaline junky, but I'm not. In fact, when this thirst for adventure struck, I was just an ordinary 22-year-old American graduate student, looking for a way to delay my inevitable entrance into the "real world".

I suppose, in part, that's why I answered adventure's call. A year from taking on the full responsibility of adulthood, I felt incomplete--even though I had seen and done many things that, statistically, a person like me never should have. As a first-generation college student who received free and reduced lunch throughout my K-12 education, even making it to college was against the odds for me. However, not only did I make it to college, I earned a full-ride scholarship for my studies and graduated summa cum laude with my bachelor's degree from the University of Kentucky. While it turns out that I'm not an adrenaline junky, I was seeking an adventure I thought would "complete" me. I was determined to student teach overseas.

Coming from my small hometown of Mount Washington, KY, my experiences at UK introduced me to a wealth of diversity I had never had the opportunity to experience before. I met people with backgrounds completely different from my own, exposing me to ideas and understandings of the world that transformed me as a person. As a future teacher, I want to be able to teach all of my students, not just those who hold the same life experiences and views that I do. I wanted to become a more global-minded, compassionate teacher, and student teaching abroad seemed like an ideal way to achieve those goals.

Though I've never gone skydiving, I imagine that the seconds just before jumping are the hardest. You're already up in the airplane, all suited up. Everyone saw the 15 Instagram posts leading up to this moment, and if you back out now you will be viewed as a total failure. At the same time, you're absolutely terror-stricken, and being a failure doesn't seem like such a bad thing compared to jumping off an airplane. That was how I felt on January 10th, 2016.

Exhausted, I stepped off the plane and nervously entered the Arlanda Airport in Stockholm, Sweden. I had never been out of the country



*Rachel Allgeier leading a class at Katedralskolan in Sweden. Photo by Stefan Gustafsson of Linköping University.*

## Congratulations!

The UK Office of Clinical Practices and School Partnerships is proud to recognize Spring 2017 student teacher Courtney Eaton who is one of only two UK students selected this semester for a Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship.

Courtney is an Elementary Education major from Louisville, KY. She will receive \$1,000 to put toward her student teaching semester in South Africa.

This national award is very prestigious, and the selection process is extremely competitive. The current application window closes on March 7, 2017.

We wish a hearty congratulations to Courtney on winning this award and look forward to hearing about her overseas experiences upon her return.

before. I felt completely lost and alone with people speeding around me speaking in unfamiliar languages. Honestly, hiding in the cargo compartment of the plane and heading back to the States seemed like a viable alternative to facing the challenge of living and teaching abroad for the next five months.

Instead I shuffled my way to the passport check, nervously flipping through the dozens of papers I thought the intimidating immigration officer might require. The rest of the day was a blur of complete awkwardness. I would say that I felt like a fish out of water, but since it felt like ten below zero outside, a fish out of ice would be more appropriate.

After a three-hour train ride, I made it to Linköping, Sweden, my home for the next several months. It felt like it must be ten or eleven o'clock at night, judging by the utter darkness and my exhaustion; it was only 4:30 in the afternoon.

Completely frozen and lost, I finally made it to my dark room, wondering why in the world I chose to move to Sweden in the middle of January--a question asked frequently by practically everyone I met for the next few weeks.

I had the option to student teach in other areas of the world, including South Africa, Australia, Costa Rica, Spain, Germany, or Mexico. Of all the places on the list, it was the frozen, dark, vast wilderness of Sweden that called my name. On paper, it seemed like such an ideal place: Sweden consistently ranks among one of the happiest countries in the world, promoting progressive ideas of equality and a sound public education system.

And so, I continued being that "fish out of ice" for the next few weeks, failing at everyday tasks like walking (slipping repeatedly on ice), buying groceries, and even operating simple appliances such as a microwave. When my host teacher said that I would begin teaching lead during my second week, I thought my little fish heart would drop right out of my body and become just another frozen pebble on the side of the road.

However, during my first weeks I also discovered what keeps the Swedes going during the darkest days of winter: fika. Fika is basically a coffee break, but the coffee is as black as the Swedish winter, and instead of sipping while you grade papers, like we do in the States, you actually take 20-30 minutes to completely unwind while socializing with colleagues. Fika held me together. I don't know if it was the caffeine or the company that kept me going those first few weeks, but I survived.



*Rachel is pictured above and below with her International Baccalaureate students at Katedralskolan (below) in Linköping, Sweden. Rachel's mentor teachers were Dennis Östryd (back right) and Victoria Rindo.*

Soon time began to fly. I made friends and tried new foods and activities. I taught units I designed and implemented on my own, and what's more, the students and my host teachers actually enjoyed the work I was producing. I also learned from diverse perspectives, as I discussed cultural differences with nearly everyone I encountered. I was asked about the American presidential primaries more times than I could ever count, ate more licorice than I had in all of my life up until then, and I said "Yes" to so many opportunities that normally, back in Kentucky, I would have dismissed.



Eventually acclimating to my new surroundings, I began successfully doing things like shopping, jogging through the forest without getting lost, opening doors on the first try, and learning four Swedish words. For the first time in my life, I felt completely independent. Mom, Dad, and everyone else back home were a world away, and I was actually "adulthood" quite nicely on my own. I felt like I had conquered the world.

This is what I imagine skydiving feels like when you're free falling. It was a rush, and the view was breathtaking! During breaks I traveled and saw places I never dreamed I would see: Iceland, London, Rome, Berlin, the fjords of Norway, Dublin, Finland, and even the Northern Lights in northern Sweden.

Along the way I discovered so much--not just about the world but about who I am and my mission as an educator. During student teaching, I began to develop a sense of self-

confidence I had never had. I saw that I was capable each day of something I did not believe myself to be the day before. I learned that a good teacher's mind remains open, listening and learning from his or her students at all times, adjusting the course of learning to meet the students' needs.

We all have cultural biases, even the most open-minded of us, and this experience enabled me to see clearly that my job as a teacher is to push my students to this point of unfamiliarity where they are challenged to find themselves--to see the world through a different perspective and ask, "How can I make this world a better place for all?"

I was recently asked if student teaching abroad was really "worth it". I confidently exclaimed, "Absolutely!" In fact, the actual text message reads, "hands down, best decision I made during my college experience 😊🇸🇪!!".

I firmly believe that no other experience could have better prepared me for my job as a first-year teacher. I teach middle school, which sometimes feels like a challenge. The confidence and optimism I gained while living and teaching in Sweden has proven invaluable. I know that if I could survive the icy darkness of Sweden in January, successfully teach a room full of students from 13 different countries, and enjoy diving into an icy lake, I can successfully make it through any day that year one of teaching throws at me.

That metaphorical sky-diving plane awaits us all, each day. The more often we say "Yes, we want to jump out of that plane," the more often we learn and grow, and the more of this big, beautiful world we see and experience, the closer we become to our fellow human beings.

The known is comfortable, safe, and inviting. However, we learn best when pushed from our nests of familiarity into the free fall of something new. I believe I am a better, more compassionate, teacher and person because I chose to say yes to this challenge. I pushed myself, and in doing so, I developed the confidence to follow my dreams, wherever they may lead.



two-week period, years 5 and 6 spend the last two periods of every Tuesday doing sports. In the summer months, they compete against other schools in summer sports, and in winter they compete in winter sports. The same happens for years 7 and 8 on Wednesday afternoons. The boys take great pride in their sport and winning for their team, house, and school.



I had the opportunity to be involved with several different sporting events over the course of my placement. Cross-country day was my first big event. After their cross-country unit was over, I started teaching volleyball to all of the boys in years 4-8. Volleyball isn't played much over there until high school age, so the boys really enjoyed learning from someone who knew a lot about the sport. Chris coached the B teams of both the year 5/6 and year 7/8 rugby players, so on Tuesdays and Wednesdays when they competed against other schools, I would either go with him to the away games or be out on our field with him during home games. This gave me the awesome experience of learning a sport that was foreign to me.

I also had an opportunity to take the non-competitive soccer D team to play in a tournament where they competed against schools in surrounding areas. I also had a really neat opportunity presented to me to go down south to Tauranga to the AIMS games where our basketball team competed against the best teams in the country, and our water polo team won the toughest tournament in all of New Zealand. In the fourth term I saw how they administer their athletics unit. During every PE class we would practice or train for each year's athletics day. The younger boys (years 1-4) had their own special athletics day at the school. The junior and senior schools took a full day out of school to go compete at Mount Smart Stadium in different events. Years 5 and 6 held a separate athletics day from years 7 and 8, and I was the marshal for both events. I loved my job organizing the boys for each running event to make sure they knew their lane assignments and stayed in the correct lanes. Working at an all-boys school was a unique and positive experience. Knowing that I was coming into a school

where the boys' families were paying tuition, I had misconceptions about how the boys would act. But they proved me wrong and reminded me I must not be so judgmental. They are some of the most well-behaved, kind, and appreciative boys I have ever met. Walking across the fields and through courtyards each day, I received many greetings of "Good morning, Miss Bergren" from the boys, and this always brightened my day. After a volleyball lesson or a day of athletics training, I heard many exclamations of "Thank you, Miss Bergren!" It was a joy and a pleasure to play a role in their lives, even if only for a short time.

Backpacking all over New Zealand for the two-week holiday break allowed me to see more of the beautiful world we live in, and further broaden my horizons. I learned more about the early New Zealand culture that started with the native Maori people; I spent time sailing on the largest lake in New Zealand; I traveled through the land of the Hobbits; and I visited many historical sites.



*Morgan is shown with her students in their team uniforms, displaying her wildcat spirit while skydiving, and contemplating what lies ahead.*

I even conquered my fear of heights by skydiving from an airplane 16,500 feet and by plummeting 439 feet to the bottom of a valley from one of the highest bungee jumps in the world. These and other cultural experiences complemented those I had in the school. Together they shaped me personally and professionally. My life has been changed forever, and for that I am very grateful.





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## Tuition Waiver Program for Cooperating and Resource Teachers

State universities provide cooperating teachers a tuition waiver for 3-6 credits depending on duration of student teaching supervision.

Resource teachers can also claim a tuition waiver for up to 6 credits for each KTIP intern supervision they complete.

To redeem your waiver at UK, you must:

- use your credits within one calendar year of completing the assignment,
  - gain admission to the university and be a student in good standing,
  - complete a tuition waiver form prior to each semester enrolled,
  - submit the waiver form to the associate dean's office prior to the first day of classes for each semester of enrollment.
- visit <http://education.uky.edu/ADeanRI/students/sb77-tuition-waiver> for contact info and an application to redeem your waiver at UK.

To claim your tuition waiver at other Kentucky universities, visit: <http://www.epsb.ky.gov/internships/tuitionwaiver.asp>.

## Collaborative Connection: Sharing Ideas

One way to sustain the collaborative connection between university and school-based partners is to share ideas with each other about teaching and learning.

- In your experience, what works to promote quality teaching and foster student learning? What doesn't work?
- What changes have you made; what challenges have you experienced that colleagues might find interesting or helpful?

Send thoughts, ideas, or suggestions to [mary.henderson@uky.edu](mailto:mary.henderson@uky.edu)

We welcome your contributions!

## Mark Your Calendar!

<b>November 30</b>	Last day to apply for May 2017 undergraduate degree (online in MyUK)
<b>January 3</b> 2:00 pm	University Supervisors meeting in 122 TEB
<b>January 4</b> 2:00 pm	ST Orientation in Taylor Ed. Auditorium
<b>January 5</b>	First day of student teaching*
<b>January 16</b>	MLK, Jr. Day (holiday)
<b>February 20</b>	Last day to apply for a May 2017 graduate degree (online in MyUK)
<b>February 28</b>	Last day to apply for an August 2017 undergraduate degree (online in MyUK)
<b>March 6</b>	Dual placement students begin 2nd half placements*
<b>April 3-7</b>	P-12 Spring Break (most districts)
<b>April 4</b>	<a href="#">KY Teachers Network Career Fair</a> -- at EKU
<b>May 5</b>	Last day of student teaching--if no make-up days needed*
<b>June 20</b>	Last day to apply for an August 2016 graduate degree (online in MyUK)

*\*For most programs. Check with your program coordinator for clarification.*