HOW AN INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE CONTRIBUTED TO MY PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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Overview
OVERVIEW

Education for learning and knowledge is the foundation upon which society stands. Humanity meets each new day, year, and decade with a different understanding of life itself. Education throughout the world is a process through which individuals discover, contemplate, solve, create, and develop. Knowing how other people live, work, play, and learn will help mankind to meet the future with an integrated perspective and deeper understanding.

The purpose of this thesis is to discuss how an international experience contributed to my professional development as an educator. During the summer months of 1995, I participated in a study, teach, and travel abroad experience in Britain and Europe. The learning opportunities and remarkable experiences of this trip were the inspiration for the writing of this thesis. The first section of the thesis will give a brief historical overview of both the educational systems in America as well as those established in Britain. In addition, the similarities and differences in the areas of curriculum, calendar length, administration structure, school choice, children with special needs, and parent involvement of these two educational systems will be discussed. The second section of the thesis will involve an illustrated journal interpretation of my studying and teaching experiences while in England, and traveling throughout Western Europe. The final section of my thesis will impart what learning experiences occurred while studying, teaching, and traveling abroad that will contribute to my professional development as an educator and complement my teaching abilities in an American classroom. An individual that grows, learns, and develops as a person, also grows, learns, and develops as a professional.
How An International Experience Contributed To My Professional Development

*Part I: Description and Comparison of Educational Systems in England and America*
PART I: DESCRIPTION AND COMPARISON OF EDUCATIONAL SYSTEMS IN ENGLAND AND AMERICA

Education is the hand by which learning becomes possible. Administrators, teachers, and concerned citizens represent the tools that shape and mold the learning of students in classrooms. Whether an individual is in America, England, or any other country in the world, the goals of education remain similar. Professional educators everywhere strive to develop competent, caring citizens. The educational system established by each individual state in America is comparable to the British National Curriculum due to the number of children affected by each system. There are many similarities and differences between the educational system in the United States and that present in England.

The history and present educational systems of both America and Britain are important, as well as several other vital aspects of the education system. The following paragraphs will relate specific ways in which the Indiana state curriculum compares with the British National Curriculum. The similarities and differences in the areas of calendar length, administrative structure, children with special needs, and parent involvement of these two educational systems will also be described.

INDIANA STATE CURRICULUM

Formulating and understanding educational curriculum in America was at times a historical struggle. The state of Indiana grew along with the rest of the United States. Indiana began as a wilderness and the practices of hunting and gathering served as the mode of survival for the early settlers. In 1784 the Federal government wrote an ordinance that decided ways to settle the land and organize communities west of the Appalachian...
Mountains. The May 1785 land ordinance proposed "when population in an area grew to a particular amount, then a small formal government could be established" (Reed & Sayers, 1995). The development of the Federal Constitution in 1787 included the Northwest Ordinance which called for land to be divided into thirty-six townships, each block being six miles square. Besides dividing land, the Northwest Ordinance also related how "morality, religion, and knowledge are all necessary to the happiness of mankind...education shall be forever encouraged" (Reed and Sayers, 1995). The sixteenth section of each developing township was set aside for the building of a school. This was the beginning of the first Indiana system of schools. The Constitution is what made it possible for states and local governments to be in charge of the development of the education system as we know it today in Indiana (Reed and Sayers, 1995).

Many of the early schools in the United States and specifically in Indiana were centered around Sunday Schools--run by preachers or masters. Two of the most important activities in school centered around learning to read the Bible and learning to cipher in order to perform business transactions. The schoolmaster also taught spelling, reading, geography, and history. The most important subject at the time was spelling. Moral values formed a strong structural basis for school instruction. Family homes provided the rest of the instruction in specific skills and knowledge needed to find a job and to work in an agrarian society. At this time only about one quarter of the children in a population went to school year-round due to spring plowing and fall harvest. The focus of society was on survival (Reed and Sayers, 1995).

On December 11, 1816 Indiana became a state. The 1851 Indiana Constitution took out the clause about free university education and stated that there would be a "uniform
celebration. For those individuals who wish to continue their education there is post-secondary education at the university or college level.

Curriculum can encompass all of humankind or it may simply reflect the instructional methods of a classroom teacher (R. Burke, personal communication, April 25, 1996). The United States is currently writing National Curriculum standards as guidelines for each state. Within the state of Indiana, the development of the *Indiana Curriculum Proficiency Guide* has been viewed as a continuous process of research, preparation, review, implementation, and revision. The was developed by request of the Indiana State Board of Education in order to develop proficiencies for each of the curricular disciplines: English/language arts, reading, mathematics, social studies, science, fine arts, health education, physical education, foreign language, and practical arts/industrial technology education. The *Indiana Curriculum Proficiency Guide* was first published officially in 1987. It presented a broad curriculum framework for educational programming. It was a sound document for curriculum instruction at the local level. While the 1987 *Proficiency Guide* was widely used and valued as a tool for curriculum planning, many Indiana citizens and educators continued to inquire about the knowledge which students would apply to life in the future. The 1992 revision and publication of the *Indiana Curriculum Proficiency Guide* is an answer to those inquires. This 1992 *Curriculum Proficiency Guide* for the state of Indiana was to be used as a resource for local school corporations as they developed, reviewed, and revised their own curriculum. It is a guide that can be used to determine what knowledge, what skills and processes, and what attitudes are needed by students for them to become considerate, interactive, and responsible citizens in the democratic society of America (Proficiency Guide, 1992).
system of common schools wherein tuition shall be without charge and equally open to all" (Reed and Sayers, 1995). The Constitution of 1851 established the formal means of funding the public schools of Indiana by creating the organization titled Indiana Department of Education, creating the position of Superintendent of Public Instruction, organizing the State Board of Education, and implementing the legislative methods of supporting schools by levying taxes to cover the expenditures for education. These organizations work together to monitor the development and enforce the implementation of all legislative laws and administrative codes for the educational curriculum of the state of Indiana (Reed and Sayers, 1995).

The greatest conflict has always arisen over the amount of control the federal government should have over individual state education. Ever since the establishment of a federal constitution in America, the state of Indiana has carefully monitored the actions of the federal government concerning the needs of education. The state educational system has proven to be a firm foundation for the continual development of educational curriculum in the United States of America (Reed and Sayers, 1995).

The educational system in the United States is separated into different levels of instruction. The curriculum is thus geared accordingly. Preschool children are ages three and four. Elementary education comprises grades Kindergarten through Fifth. The students are usually five or six when they enter kindergarten and are usually eleven or twelve when they leave elementary school. Middle School incorporates grades six through eight. Finally, high school completes the required formal education of a student as they pass through grades nine through twelve. The day of high school graduation is one of great
curriculum goals of the state are identified, and the learning experiences which are to be provided for the different disciplines for various different years of schooling are explained. For example, in the area of English Language Arts: by the end of elementary school, students should be able to fluently read and accurately comprehend a composition for interpretation, distinguish between appropriate types of listening—for enjoyment and for critical activities, expressively participate in creative dramatics, clearly and effectively discuss a topic, have an understanding of the writing process, and write using several different structures. After completing middle school students should also be able to: select reading materials from classroom libraries and school library media centers, critically discuss printed materials, and write coherently using the different structures—biography, journal, persuasive speech, letters, research papers, etc. Upon completion of high school, students should be able to: initiate and participate in conversations and discussion about reading, writing, and language; submit works of writing for contests or publication, listen for interpretation during class discussion, and creatively or critically analyze a world situation through writing (Proficiency Guide, 23).

The next portion of the Curriculum Proficiency Guide is a Resource Book for Curricular Planning. This portion of the guide is utilized by administrators and teachers for instructional classroom planning. The Resource Book for Curricular Planning also lists additional skills that can be developed for early and late elementary school. The guide provides critical questions for each discipline that can be used to evaluate existing curriculum programs. Finally, the Resource Book includes a plan for curricular program improvement. The guide listed evaluative questions about strengths, concerns, short-term goals, and long-term goals.
General curriculum goals were guides for the writing of specific foundation proficiency statements for each subject area. Across all curricular areas, students are taught to think and learn independently and to grow personally. The goals describe in general terms what types of instruction and activities are to be provided in order to prepare students for life. The curriculum guide then lists a proficiency statement for each of the separate disciplines. An example proficiency statement from the *Indiana Curriculum Proficiency Guide* for *English Language Arts* is stated:

Students in Indiana schools will be provided learning experiences in the English language arts which allow them to:

1. develop reading processes for the purposes of comprehending, enjoying, and using printed materials.
2. understand and experience the ways in which literature enriches life.
3. appreciate and understand the English language and its relationship to culture and human experience.
4. acquire speaking skills for the purposes of communicating ideas and experiences in both formal and informal situations.
5. develop aesthetic and critical listening skills for the purposes of understanding, appreciating, and responding to oral language.
6. use writing for the purposes of discovering and expressing feelings and ideas while acquiring the technical skills necessary for effective written communication.

(Proficiency Guide, 19)

There are similar proficiency statements written for all of the other curriculum subjects. The focus of each discipline is clearly defined, the contributions of each discipline to the
The Indiana Curriculum Proficiency Guide is divided into each of the specific disciplines and then within each discipline the grade levels (K-12) are individualized. An introduction involving a written definition, rationale, and philosophy of a particular discipline are included. The basic foundation proficiency statements are listed again. In addition, guidelines are listed as methods in which students can achieve the objective of the proficiency statement. A general list of equipment and materials necessary for instruction is included in some of the individual discipline descriptions. The grade levels are grouped accordingly: Primary (K-2), Upper Elementary (3-5), Middle School (6-8), and High School (9-12). Even though the grade levels are grouped, each level still has its own interpretation of the proficiency statement and specific stated objectives and activities established for learning (Proficiency Guide, 1992).

The proficiency statements contained in the Indiana Curriculum Proficiency Guide provide a general foundation of expected abilities which students should have the opportunity to achieve. All students have the opportunity to achieve the same level of excellence. The Indiana Curriculum Proficiency Guide is a vital resource for the development and design of educational curriculum. It serves as a valuable resource as well as a method of continual instructional recommendation and evaluation.

**BRITISH NATIONAL CURRICULUM IN ENGLAND**

The country, and therefore the history of England itself, is much older than that of the United States. As a result, the history of education in England spans over a great amount of time. The earliest surviving schools, such as those at Canterbury and York, can trace their histories back to the sixth and seventh centuries A.D., what is commonly referred to as
the Middle Ages. These were not "schools" like might be thought of today—the "schools" were more like monastic or cathedral centers. As long ago as these schools might have begun, they still left their mark on the current British educational system. The formal education offered by the earliest teachers was essentially literary and classical. The advance of knowledge in the twelfth century, together with increasing economic activity and specialization, was associated with the rise of universities—specifically Oxford and Cambridge. Education for the young minds of England developed through the practice of apprenticeship. The seven year apprenticeship involved vocational as well as moral training. By the fifteenth century, small private schools began to develop across the country. The diffusion of printed materials during the Elizabethan times revolutionized the techniques of education (Seaborne, 1966).

The Education acts of 1870, 1899, 1902, 1918, 1936, and 1944 helped form the structure of education in England. The Central Advisory Council for Education played a major role in the assisted development of education in Britain during the twentieth century. However, the Education Reform Act of 1988 was the most important and far-reaching piece of educational law-making for Britain since the Education Act of 1944. The Act altered the basic power structure of the education system by introducing a clearly defined National Curriculum for most schools. The British National Curriculum does not apply to independent schools (Wallis, 1991). This Act restored the central government's (Secretary of State) powers over the educational curriculum and limited the responsibilities of local governments. This brought great controversy to the forefront, but the Education Act of 1988 produced overall positive results for the education system in England (Maclure, 1988).
Throughout the history of Britain, great strides were made to improve the quality of education.

The National Curriculum was introduced as a result of low standards of achievement, teacher expectations being too low, and having a narrow and unbalanced curriculum. The present National Curriculum is designed to provide breadth of knowledge, balance between individual county school curriculums, and relevance to current information and technology. The curriculum raised the standards of achievement in preparation for life as an adult through spiritual, moral, cultural, mental, and physical study (Macleur, 1988).

The introduction of the National Curriculum into primary and secondary schools was phased in over a number of years, having commenced with children aged five in September 1989. The National Curriculum will most likely not be fully implemented until 1996. Every maintained school is required by law to provide a basic curriculum consisting of religious education and subject-area requirements in the National Curriculum (Wallis, 1991). The National Curriculum defines four key stages and ten statutory subjects:

- Key Stage 1 - age 5 to 7 (infants) [children age 3 & 4 can start school early]
- Key Stage 2 - age 7 to 11 (juniors)
- Key Stage 3 - age 11 to 14 [pre-GCSE (test for post-secondary schooling)]
- Key Stage 4 - age 14 to 16 (GCSE and equivalent vocational pathways)

(Education in Britain, date unknown)

Key Stages 1 and 2 are the primary phase and the key stages 3 and 4 constitute the secondary phase. The three "core" subjects studied are English, mathematics, and science. In addition, there are seven other "foundation" subjects—technology, history, geography, music, art, physical education, and a modern foreign language. All students in
Key Stages 1 through 3 must study the first nine of the above listed subjects. Students in Key Stage 3 must also take a modern foreign language course. Students in Key Stage 4 must study the core subjects, technology, a modern foreign language, physical education, and a course in either history or geography (Education in Britain, date unknown). Programs of study have been developed for the core subjects as well as for technology, history, geography, music, art, and physical education for Key Stages 1 through 4.

Attainment targets are set for each National Curriculum subject. Attainment targets are defined as "knowledge", "skills", and understanding." For each attainment target, there are ten levels of attainment. Towards the end of each of the first three key stages, students are assessed against attainment targets with a combination of teacher assessment and nationally designed tests. At the end of key Stage 4, GCSE's (General Certificate of Secondary) are the principal means of National Curriculum assessment. In addition, parents must be sent an annual written report on their child's progress at school (Wallis, 1991).

There are several main authorities which are in charge of the education system in Britain. All National Curriculum matters are overseen by two independent statutory bodies, the School Curriculum and Assessment Authority (SCAA) in England and the Curriculum and Assessment Authority for Wales (ACAC) in Wales (Education in Britain, date unknown). The Secretary of State also assists with the implementation and enforcement of the National Curriculum. One of the important jobs of the Secretary of State is holding elections for the committee called the Local Education Authority. The education committee is served by a permanent chief officer, normally called Chief Education Officer (CEO). The
CEO has a permanent staff of officers which serve as inspectors in schools to ensure that the *National Curriculum* is being properly implemented (Wallis, 1991).

Curriculum greatly influences the ways in which teachers implement instruction in the classroom. In Indiana the *Indiana Curriculum Proficiency Guide* serves as a useful tool and information resource for administrators and teachers. It is relied upon merely as a guiding framework for structuring the individual classroom curriculum, making adjustments for the specific needs of students. Specific levels of learning are to be reached, but the system is not taken to the extreme. The *Indiana Curriculum Proficiency Guide* is used indirectly as the teacher takes the curriculum ideas and then develops his/her own methods of instruction and assessment. However, teachers in England are made to take a different viewpoint. The *National Curriculum* is a useful resource for the British teacher, but it is followed more like a "religious handbook." The guidelines of the *National Curriculum* are stringently followed for each of the core and foundation subjects. The program study statements and attainment levels are strictly enforced through teacher inspection agencies. Teachers usually receive a good review for creative and discovery learning activities as long as the specified content is covered. Curriculum guides are important for establishing foundation educational goals and objectives, but these guides should not dictate all events that occur in the classroom. A professional educator must recognize and properly evaluate the ultimate impact upon student learning of such educational curriculums.

The *British National Curriculum* is a modern structural plan which describes the educational curriculum established for specific subject areas and grade levels. For each subject and for each Key Stage, programs of study set out what the pupils should be taught and attainment targets set out the expected standards of pupils' performance. The *National
Curriculum provides learning experiences for life through core and foundation subject instruction and religious education. The needs of students are met intellectually, morally, physically, mentally, and culturally.

**CALENDAR LENGTH**

There is much similarity between the calendar length in England and that in America, however there are a few differences. The time of daily school sessions is approximately the same. Most schools in both England and America start about eight or nine in the morning and end about three or four in the afternoon. Students in America attend school for a total of 180 days according to mandated state law. The school year usually falls from late August to the middle of June. Most American schools have an extended break during the summer of about two and a half months. During the academic year, there is a winter break which lasts approximately two weeks, a spring break that lasts one week, and several other one-day holidays that create three-day weekends.

In England, school is in session year-round for about 220 days. The students have an autumn term that lasts from September to December, a spring term that lasts from January to April, and a summer term that lasts from the middle of April to the middle of July. The American system may present the opportunity for a great summer vacation, but there are many problems with time lapse and lack of information retention. Teachers sometimes spend almost a month reviewing concepts studied the previous year. The year-round cycle of the British system seemed very effective for information retention by the students and planning by the teachers and administrators.
ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE

The hierarchy of administration in England and America is more similar than different. In America, the curriculum is established centrally through the State Board of Education. A Superintendent in is charge of a local school district. Each of the schools within the district are then headed by what is termed a Principal. An assistant principal may also serve with the principal, but it is not required. The structural hierarchy moves down from there to the teachers whose job it is to implement instruction in the classroom. The teachers and the principal work together to build an effective school community (Wallis 1991).

In England, the curriculum is established centrally through a British National Curriculum. Governors are established for each school by the Local Education Authorities. These elected officials ultimately control a particular local school. Schools are managed by a combination of the board of Governors and what is titled a Head Teacher. This position is equivalent to the Principal. The Deputy Head fulfills the duties of an American Assistant Principal and then all of the teachers work together with the administration to build an effective learning environment in the school. Both systems appear to be effectively managed considering their current hierarchical structure. Effective schools are friendly, supportive environments led by Head Teachers and Principals who are not afraid to assert their views, yet are able to share management and decision-making with the entire staff of the school (Wallis, 1991).
SCHOOL CHOICE

The present educational systems for England and America differ upon the subject of school choice, however America is developing systems that will soon match the aspects of school choice in England (Paulu, 1989). American school systems generally operate under direct funding that comes straight from the federal and state governments to be used for specific educational programs. This is sometimes termed as categorical funding. Also, blocks of money come to the states and they are allowed to determine usage and distribution of money for education. Free public education in America is determined by the district in which one lives. If a student does not want to attend a particular public school, then the parents must usually pay a monetary amount for the student to attend a private school or another public school.

In England, parents choose the school which their children will attend (Wallis, 1991). Interviews between the school and the parents are conducted and monetary requirements for schooling are discussed. It is a very important process of induction for the student into the new school. School choice is a positive move in that it tends to make schools evaluate themselves and their success in producing competent citizens. Schools will re-evaluate their standards and increase their contact with the community. These changes can only benefit the learning of students.

CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

There are also many similarities and differences concerning English and American children with special needs. The landmark law in America for protecting children with special needs is the Education For All Handicapped Children Act (EHA), Public Law (PL)
94-142. It was passed in 1975 and is now the law called Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). This law provides free and appropriate public education, mandates the writing of an Individualized Education Program (IEP), and places the student in the least restrictive environment (Luckasson & Smith, 1995). Assessment tests and written reports must be documented for special needs children. Separate objectives and goals are set for individual special needs students and these students are included within the classroom as much as possible. Contact with the events of real life are very important.

Based upon teaching experiences in America as well as in England, I believe that the American special education system is more accommodating in general for student differences. Too many times while in England, I saw teachers reprimand students for not answering a question quickly or for misbehaving due to what I thought mute be an attention deficit disorder. It seems to me that a larger number of students prove to be successful later in life because someone cared enough along the way. The amount, and vast development, of remedial programs present in the United States speak for themselves.

The schools in England have a separate special needs policy. When teachers detect problems, parents, Special Needs Coordinator, Headteacher, Educational Psychologist, and the Learning Development Service work together to determine student needs and the most suitable environment in which the student should be placed. From my observations, the “cream of the crop” students are encouraged, and significant effort is not put forth to rescue those students who fall behind. The very intelligent students are prepared for further education at the university level, but those students with special needs are sometimes left to acquire vocational training. There has been increased development of new programs in England, such as Reading Recovery, so that the gap between
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successful and unsuccessful students will decrease. On the whole, it seems that a fewer number of students are successful. Perhaps one solution to this problem would be parent involvement in the classroom as well as in the community.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Good lines of communication between the teacher in the classroom and the parents are essential to an effective school. In my experience, parent involvement is very similar in both England and America. Participation by the parents in the classroom is common. Parents may be asked to assist with grading, plan classroom activities, chaperone field trips, participate in class celebrations, attend school-wide activities, or volunteer to read to the class or describe their career or favorite hobby. Parents enhance community involvement with the class. Parents help teachers organize trips or bring the ideas of the community to the classroom in a presentation and discussion. Families of different backgrounds share their traditions in order to contribute to the cultural experiences of the class. Involving parents in the classroom opens many doors of opportunity that would not otherwise be possible.

CONCLUSIONS

Education, no matter where in the world it occurs, is learning for knowledge. There may be slight similarities and differences among the various educational systems, but each country is aiming for the same basic objectives of education—learning. Humankind has experimented through trial and error, learned from mistakes, and applied that knowledge to the development of new ideas and concepts. Children are the voices and the minds of the
future. Humankind must take hold of that responsibility and enlighten the minds of the future.
Sunday May 14, 1995

Today is Mother's Day! My mom spent a very nice time with her family today. Her most favorite gift from all of us is that we volunteered to clean the house a few times for her upon her request. She loved it! Not only because it was Mother's Day, but also because I would be leaving for England the next day, did it seem like time well spent together as a family. Later I worked on finishing up some last minute lesson plan ideas for teaching and then completed my packing plans. I will be leaving tomorrow for a ten week trip to Europe. I still have some mixed feelings about the entire trip. I believe that the trip will be an unforgettable experience of a lifetime, however, I am still apprehensive about visiting a foreign country and a bit sad about leaving my family and friends here in America. I felt much better later that evening when my boyfriend Matthew James Gumbel called me on the telephone to talk for a while. He is so good to me. His calm manner put me at ease and made the dull situation look a little brighter. I will certainly miss that man while I'm away in Europe. Matthew is a wonderful part of my life. It shall be my last night of sleep in America for quite some time...

Monday May 15, 1995

Today was the beginning of wondrous studying and teaching experiences in England, in addition to exciting travel adventures throughout Western Europe. With the EDEL-O program at Ball State University, I am getting the opportunity to attend summer school at Edge Hill University College, teach in British elementary schools, and
independently travel in Western Europe. This opportunity will only increase my career possibilities. A chance like this only comes once in a lifetime—I’m very thankful for my parents providing the financial sustenance so that I can take advantage of such an enjoyable and educational trip. Ormskirk, where Edge Hill College University is located, is between Liverpool and Manchester and situated by train about two hours north of London. Just think, I will be arriving in Northwest England in just a matter of hours...it is no longer left to the counting of days.

This morning I woke up at about 6:30 a.m. to see my sister off to school and to say good-bye to her. Then I had breakfast with my parents. Upon showering, dressing, and finishing some last minute packing I ventured to Matt Gumbel’s house about 8 a.m. to say “good-bye.” Since he could not come with us to the airport in Chicago (where I was departing from for my flight to Europe), I was spending about two hours with him this morning. We talked for what seemed to be the longest time and just enjoyed one another’s company and friendship. It felt good to be in his arms and close by his side. It felt good to be loved, but sad to know that I was leaving that love for a summer of adventures in Europe. We were both rather upset to be parting for ten whole weeks, but we both knew that the time would pass and that we would soon be together again. Matt gave me a going away gift that morning that I will never forget as long as I live. That present is what would keep me together emotionally while I was away from home—it was a connection to the life that I would leave so many miles behind me in Ft. Wayne, Indiana. This was a special present, not only because it reflected his love for me but also because it satisfied my love for music that otherwise would have been lost during the next ten weeks. The gift was a collection of songs that he had recorded for me on a cassette tape titled Love and
Romance... The tape contained some of my most favorite songs—I simply could not ask for a more perfect present. This was exactly what I needed to keep my heart company while in Europe. I am really going to miss that man.

I returned home about 10 a.m. and my parents and I set out for Chicago. I packed all of my belongings in one carry-on and two large suitcases. It was truly amazing that it all fit. The trip to O'Hare Airport was good. The three of us stopped on the way to eat my last American meal at Applebee's and then we proceeded on to Chicago. I had never been to Chicago before, so this portion of the trip was also new. As we grew closer, the city air was very polluted—the sky was a "gray" color rather than "blue." I could not believe my eyes. Approaching the city, the traffic got heavier and heavier. It was all very nerve-wracking!

We finally reached O'Hare Airport. It was the largest airport that I had ever seen. We found our check-in area and then proceeded to the International Gates. I met up with many of the other students going on the trip as well—Jennifer, Emily, Laura, Brenda, Nicole, Dr. Nierenberg, and several others. The International portion of the airport was so beautifully decorated with flags of various countries. Friends and parents visited until it was time to board the British Airways plane at 4:40 p.m. The students said good-bye to their parents and began to embark on the trip of a lifetime to a foreign country. It all didn't seem real until I had boarded the plane, settled into our seats, and were heading down the runway. Soon the plane was way up high in the sky—soaring like a bird high above the clouds and turning east.

I had two very nice seat partners for the flight to London, England. They were both young men who were venturing to Europe for travel and study as well. It was quite interesting to talk with them and for us to share our experiences. It also made the flight not
seem so long and lonely. I believe that the stewardesses were our first British contacts. They spoke with a British accent and all of the meals and drinks that we were served we from Britain too. I soon found out that lemonade was really called Sprite in Britain. We received some peanuts and later a fairly decent meal. Alcoholic drinks were also passed out to all individuals indicating interest. I had to remember that the drinking age in Europe is eighteen and that wine is more of a socially accepted drink like pop or milk is in America. I am quite fond of the accent which is common for the British. Sometimes I have trouble understanding all that is said, but I'm sure that I'll get the hang of it. Maybe I will even pick up a slight accent myself—that would be neat. The flight has seemed to take forever—you don't realize how long eight hours is until you spend that time cooped up in a chair on an airplane. It has taken much courage for me to endure this—I possess a rather energetic spirit that needs to be free.

About 9:30 p.m. I tried to get some sleep on the plane. We are losing six hours as we fly eastward, so when we arrive in London, England it will be very early in the morning. While falling asleep I decided to play Matthew's cassette tape that he gave to me before I left Ft. Wayne. The experience was most special not only because of his words, but also because no one else had ever made a musical tape to express their feelings of love for me. Matt's voice introduction on the tape was more beautiful and meaningful to my heart than I can describe. His words made me cry gentle tears of joy, laugh in his comedy, and become overwhelmed in my heart with pride and true love. I had never heard Matthew speak such wonderful words—music to my ears. He also spoke of his and our joined belief and trust in God. I cannot describe the lifted spirit of praise and thanks that I was feeling. I certainly
love Matthew James Gumbel with all of my heart!! I can’t wait to return and jump into his arms with a big hug and a kiss.

**Tuesday May 16, 1995**

“Rise and shine all of you travelers bound for London, England,” were the first words I heard that next morning. It was 6 a.m., the sun was rising as we were flying above the clouds, and breakfast was being served. Ah yes, my favorite type of food! I was very hungry. We had corn flakes, orange juice, milk, a banana, tea, and some type of role (crumpet). Since we were officially flying over Britain, I thought it fair to be having tea and crumpets! Ha! Ha! It's almost 1 a.m. in Indiana, whereas it is nearly 7 a.m. here in Britain. Well, we have now officially begun our descent from the clouds to touch the good green earth once again. I knew it because I could feel it in my stomach! The plane trip was long, but I think that it will be well worth the next week's adventures. Yeehaw! England! Here I come! We touched ground and were given the official British greeting, time, and temperature. Finally, we made it off the plane and entered London Heathrow Airport. Goodness gracious—it was so humungous! Without the guidance of Dr. Nierenberg, I'm not sure that I could have found my way. After checking through customs, we even had to take a shuttle to another portion of the airport to catch our next flight to Manchester, England. We traveled for nearly twenty minutes on the shuttle. Can you believe it? I really had a hard time imagining how large the airport must really be. A man from Scotland who sat near us on the shuttle recognized that we were Americans and was telling us a few stories about sheep and English history (points he thought we should know about). I did not catch the whole story, but he was a very interesting man! We waited at the next gate for about
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forty-five minutes and then boarded our plane bound for Manchester, England. By this time I was tired, sore, and achy all over my body. I think that I was still sick with a swollen throat and headache from last week. I hope that I start feeling better soon! I could have used a good back rub and hug from Matt right about now. Matt and the rest of my family and friends seemed to be on my mind a lot today, but I knew what I was doing was going to a very worthwhile experience. The flight from London to Manchester was only an hour long and went well. Upon arriving in Manchester Airport, we went to pick up our baggage. We loaded our luggage onto carts and made it to the exit of the airport. Dr. Nierenberg had rented a touring bus for us to ride to Edge Hill College in Ormskirk. It was actually quite a treat—with all of that space I could stretch out by myself on two seats. The little bit of countryside and architecture of buildings that I saw was magnificent. (I think that I was dozing off more than I was awake.) For as far north as England is, I was amazed at how many trees and bushes are fully leafed out in May. It was also only a chilly forty degrees today and rainy—typical England weather. It was such a different feeling to see cars driving on the opposite side of the street from in America. However, I think that the little cars that are driven are cute and the highway system seems to be very efficient. There were so many new and interesting sights and I was so tired...

We arrived at Edge Hill and I was about draggin’ my feet. Sue Claridge, our Edge Hill program director, met us at the administrative entrance and then took us to the residence halls in which we would be residing for the time we were in Britain. Along with three of my other fellow college friends, I was staying in a hall by the name of Lady Ophelia. All of my fellow American teaching students were not residing in the same residence hall. Living on the second floor in my hall, I had to use all of my muscles to get
my luggage up the stairs. Whew—who packed all of the stuff anyway? I am staying in Room 10—we each received our own single room. I thought that I would like this very much—I would always have a place to go when I wanted to be by myself. After taking our luggage to our rooms, we [the American teaching students] gathered to eat our first meal (lunch) at Edge Hill University College. I was so tired that I thought just about anything would be good, but I can also be wrong sometimes. I will leave it at the fact that we were not overly impressed with the meal. It was some kind of ham and corn breaded casserole, but there were such large chunks of fat mixed in that it was nearly impossible to swallow. The food totally turned me off and I do not consider myself a picky eater. I resolved myself with the positive outlook that perhaps we just need to adjust to the new style of food. After lunch I worked on unpacking. Then at 2:30 p.m. we met with some Edge Hill computer instructors to learn how to operate the computer system for e-mail and word processing purposes. Even though I had to fight to stay awake—I found it to be very informative. The British have almost exact computer systems as the Americans. I sent an e-mail message to friends of the family back home in Ft. Wayne, Indiana announcing my safe arrival on British soil. After the computer session, I went to buy stamps and air mail stationery at the small supply store on-campus. I then returned to my room to finish unpacking. About 6 p.m. our group went to eat at the school cafeteria once again with our English identification meal cards (temporary white slips of paper). The food was once again not so good. They had fish. Now I like fish, but this was uncooked, gushy, and had a gray color. In addition, my server ruined my french fries (called chips in England) by plopping baked beans on top of them. That may be a favorite English tradition, but I still wanted mine separate. I dabbled on each
a little and finished up my meal by eating the blueberry bread pudding and drinking both my milk and hot chocolate. Following an attempted dinner, we returned to our rooms.

Something definitely strange has occurred with our room arrangements. The four "American girls on my floor—we are floormates living with a group of international male students from Pakistan. Now, I have nothing against that race, but the fact that they are living on the same floor as us, also appearing older than us, made me a little leery. I thought that I could most definitely live on the same floor as them, but sharing the same single shower and bathroom with them was pushing my positive feelings on the matter. I don't think that Dr. Nierenberg knew about the situation, so a couple of the girls were going to talk to her the next day. I really hoped that we didn't have to move all of our stuff again to another hall—I finally got unpacked and settled. Already having been attending school, perhaps they would be leaving in the next couple weeks after completing finals. Then, the only students left on campus will be those attending summer classes. I just hope that events turn out for the best. I was in great need of sleep at this point in time, so I actually crawled in bed at 7 p.m. (1 p.m. in Indiana) at night and went to sleep. I planned on sleeping soundly all the way until my alarm clock went off the next morning. I hoped to see some sunshine the next day. What was I thinking—had I forgotten—this is ENGLAND! I think that we probably see more sunshine in Muncie than I would in England.
Wednesday May 17, 1995

This morning I got up about 8 a.m. I slept fairly well last night. However, still feeling some cold symptoms, it seemed as though I was either chilled or burning hot with fever. It was hard to sleep cause I felt so awful from the virus I had caught. I also wondered if I was not a little sick as a result of jet-lag. I'm just praying that I will feel well again real soon. I went to eat breakfast with everyone else at about 9 a.m. The food that we had for breakfast was actually descent. We had cereal, toast, and juice. I tried to eat some yogurt, but it was already sour as if it were spoiled. I did not like it. At 10 a.m. our group met with Dr. Nierenberg and Dr. Miels in MAC2, one of the academic buildings on-campus, and listened to a lecture by Dr. Harry Foster about the English Education system. I had some trouble staying awake, but the information was useful.

I couldn't believe how cold it was in England--today only about thirty to forty degrees and it was of course raining. I thought that it was unfortunate to travel away from home and not experience some warm weather. I suppose that it is all part of experiencing the cultures of various different countries. I mean I think that visiting Alaska would be a wonderful time, but it would certainly not be warm there. For lunch I bought a carton of milk, some Dorito chips (American food!), and a tuna cucumber sandwich. The sandwich was very different, but tolerable. I also ate all of my chips and drank all of my milk like a good little girl. My American mummy would be proud!

At 2 p.m. we had another lecture at MAC2 by Mr. Philip Friend on the topic of English National Curriculum. He is a principal at Eccleston Mere Primary School in St. Helens. His talk was very interesting. I thought that the English curriculum that the teachers must follow is very strict. The general opinion by British educators about the newly implemented
system (1991) has been that it is overloaded and that some parts are ill-conceived. The teachers must do much meticulous planning and there is not enough time to fit in all of the requirements in one school year. The teachers must stick to the planned agenda as a result of unplanned visits to schools by educational inspectors called OFSTED (Office of Standards of Education). This group examines teachers intermittently for a period of one week. I thought the whole idea was kind of humorous. It sounds like some type of secret service organizations that examines teachers. Can you imagine? The inspectors used to be called HMI's (Her Majesty's Inspector's). Teaching in England is not thought of as an "anybody" position for unintelligent citizens. It seems to me that it is rather considered a great privilege to be granted the opportunity to serve as a teacher in Britain. Wow! I sure wish that teachers were valued like this in America. Seriously, where would our "great nation" be if it were not for the educational foundations that they work so hard each day to construct? Today we also learned that the British students are much more behaviorally disciplined. The students wear uniforms and have great respect for the teacher or other authority figure. I admire this type of behavior in young students. I can't wait until we receive our school and teacher assignment and actually visit the schools in person. After the seminar we received a tour of the general areas on-campus. It was rather small—I think that I could walk across it in nearly five minutes. After the tour, several of us went to the library to work on the e-mail system. I was anxious to send another introductory letter to my parents to tell them of the events that had thus far transpired. At 5:30 p.m. we all ventured to the lovely dining cafeteria to attempt to eat that yucky food! Tonight I had pasta with ham pieces, some raisin-lettuce salad, and imitation chocolate cake for dessert. I nibbled on all of it a bit. It just didn't taste good. After we finished eating supper, I said good-bye to
everyone and returned to my room. Tonight I worked on writing some letters, reading the fifty million or so pages that we are supposed to have read for Thursday, and getting some good sleep. I've been thinking about Matthew a lot today and it would sure make me feel better to write him a letter. The neatest thing happened this evening...I got a little tired of sitting and reading all of my homework this evening so I decided to put on my headphones and hunt for a radio station. One of the next songs that came on was Amy Grant's Paved Paradise. I couldn't believe my ears—music that I hear everyday in America. My favorite line in that song is, "You don't know what ya got 'til it's gone." That is very true—humanity should never take things for granted, especially the love of friends like Matthew and the love of my family. The evening turned out to be quite a fun British experience.

Thursday May 18, 1995

This morning I got up at about 8 a.m. (it is only 2 a.m. in America). I'm telling you—it was quite a struggle to get myself out of bed. I met some of my friends for breakfast at 8:45 a.m. and then we had our teaching seminar with Dr. Nierenberg at 9:30 a.m. We finally all got settled into the tiny little room which had been reserved for us and we began to talk about our adventures at Edge Hill thus far. Some stories were unbelievable and others were hilarious. Overall, our group had been adjusting well. I believe that we could all agree that we feel like freshman at a new university. Ah well, we will get the hang of it yet. We then moved on to plan part of our next group trip weekend in London. We are leaving out of Ormskirk on Friday at 7:30 a.m. It should be quite an exciting weekend in London. Finally, we got down to business talking about teaching in the English schools. Using a KWL Chart we compared the two school systems and also learned more about the English
schools. The discussion was perfect for it was exactly what I needed to gain some starter ideas for my thesis. Wonderful! After seminar I returned to my room to get my camera. Since it was the first semi-warm, sunny, fluffy cloud day (and perhaps the last for some time) we had experienced, I decided to grab some pictures of the campus. I visited the Math building, the soccer fields, the reception desk, and our dorms. I also took pictures of some English traditions—like the “Litter” basket and some students that were drying their shoes by hanging them on an open window. I thought it was hilarious! After eating a bite for lunch we met at 1:00 p.m. to catch a coach that was taking us to visit Eccleston Mere Primary School in St. Helens. This was one of the schools at which a portion of the Ball State student teachers were going to be working. I was fascinated by the countryside and road system. I felt as excited as a little kid. We arrived at the school and Mr. Friend happily greeted us. He is the speaker who came to Edge Hill College to speak with us about the National Curriculum the other day. He is also the Head Teacher (principal) of Eccleston Mere Primary School. This school educates about 250 children who range from ages three to eleven. The classrooms are small, but adequate. Each classroom is beautifully decorated with artwork, stories, researched history and science projects, and all types of artwork projects. It was great how the children’s work plastered, in a very organized manner, all the classroom walls. Projects also hung from the ceiling and the students recreated jungles, foreign cultures, imaginary lands with cardboard, paint, and construction paper to use as places for story time. It was all such a different experience to visit an English school. I can see with my own eyes that the students are educated in a more disciplined environment. This English school was top of the line. I’m so glad that I had the opportunity to visit such a wonderful educating world as Eccleston Mere. Starting next
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Monday, we begin teaching and working in our very own English classrooms. Considering today, I can see that it is going to be a challenge understanding what the students are always saying with their British accent. However, I think that this challenge will provide a valuable cultural language interpretation experience. When we returned to the college, I worked on writing a few more letters to some of my friends in America that we waiting to hear from me. Then at 5:30 p.m. my friends and I went to eat supper. It has helped already knowing Emily, Jennifer, and Laura from previous classes I took at Ball State. However, even knowing some people, I still feel like I am all alone. After supper I finished my letters and worked on some homework, I then packed for our London trip that began the next morning. I am excited! I need to get to bed early, considering how early we have to get up to catch the train for London. Goodnight...

Friday May 19, 1995

This morning I got up early at 6 a.m., took a shower, got dressed, and then grabbed a few last minute items to pack for my trip to London. We all met at 7 a.m. with our layers of clothing and traveling backpacks. Then we set out walking for the town of Ormskirk. It turned out to be about a fifteen minute hike to Ormskirk. This was the first time that I had ventured from the college. We found the train station, met up with Dr. Nierenberg and Dr. Miels, and then boarded the train with our ticket in hand. Since I had never ridden a train before, especially a train in Europe, this was going to be a very fun experience. The train at Ormskirk took us to the Central stop in Liverpool. Liverpool is a city about the size of Manchester. We walked from the train station to the Liverpool Lime Street train station. The train station was very large. We found our 8:45 a.m. departure train for London and
gathered at station seven for boarding. The train was very long with many, many cars. We sat second class, non-smoking at the table seats. I sat with Emily, Jennifer, and Laura. We got breakfast as the train set out of the station for London. The rest of the trip I talked to my neighbors, wrote some letters, worked on planning our weekend in London and future excursions to Scotland and southern England. I am getting very excited.

The train made stops at various other stations on the way to London. Some were small outdoor stations and others were larger indoor stations. The countryside is so beautiful. There are lush green fields of winter wheat and wonderful yellow fields of "rape" some type of clover—I'm guessing. For some time there has been a canal that is running close along the path of the train. It winds and curves, but the level stays flat and the water calm. There are cute little long boats that travel through the canal. We are traveling very fast along the rail, like a speeding train. I've seen a few cows and horses, but mostly sheep line the hillsides and graze in the green-grass fields. There are tunnels that we travel through every once in a while—I do not like them because the sudden change in pressure makes my ears pop. Today has turned out to be another sunny and gorgeous day in England. I hope that it stays like this for the rest of our time in London this weekend. I don't mind one bit needing to put on my sunglasses. We arrived in London at about 11:30 a.m. Off to London we went...our first adventure led us to the London subway called the London Tube. I had been on the subway system once before while in Washington D.C., but it had been a very long time. There needs to be some type of public transpiration system such as the Tube for a city as large as London. The walls of the subway were decorated unnaturally with posters from glamour magazines and flyers announcing various city events and theater performances. Dr. Nierenberg and her traveling partner from Ball State, Dr.
Miels, (she will be taking the EDEL-O students to Europe next summer) explained some of the elementary components of understanding needed to successfully navigate the Tube. She explained some of the most traveled lines, pointed out some important stops, and then indicated that the colored travel route on the small map we had would match the color on the top or side of the subway train. Familiarity and experience was what was need for successful navigation of the Tube. I think while I am here in London this weekend I will simply try to gain some familiarity with the system and make some successful line transfers. I was ready for the challenge!

Our first trip on the subway was on the yellow circle line which led us to the Linden Hotel. This hotel was a bed and breakfast near the Bayswater Tube stop. It also doubled as our home for the weekend—how convenient! The address read 58-60 Leicester Square and the telephone number was 0171-221-4321. The building was a tall, white, many windowed hotel. It was rather quaint. Upon arrival at about 12:10 p.m., I decided to room with Emily Huff and Jennifer Powers. Our room, 203, was neat. I had two bunk beds with ladders, a television, a shower, a dresser, and a cabinet built-in hairdryer. The room was very clean and presented all the niceties of home. I loved it! It was a lot newer and ten times cleaner than the dorm rooms and halls at Edge Hill College. By 12:30 p.m. we were off for some lunch at the local London McDonald's. The McDonald's was in a large mall called Whitely's Tower Mall. It tasted so good to at least eat some American imitation food. It least it was a lot closer to what I was used to eating than that different type of food that we were trying to eat at the Edge Hill College cafeteria. All in all, it was a good lunch. Next, we followed Dr. Mills as she navigated through the streets of London and the London Tube to reach the famous double-decker London bus tour at the Marble Arch. We waited for a
tour a little while and then hopped on a red double-decker bus. Here we go...off to see the sites of the city of London. I sat on the enclosed portion of the upper deck, not too far from Dr. Nierenberg and Dr. Mills. Our tour guide was a middle-aged English woman—she was rather humorous. It was fun to listen to her speak as she described the famous London sites and also gave some cultural history of the city. Our first site was the Marble Arch and then we passed by George Handle's house and the American Embassy. She told us that the American Embassy was the largest in the entire world—I can't imagine why?! Next we were introduced to the location of the Piccadelli shops. We also learned that if a shop contained these figures somewhere in their awning (elephants), then it meant that the queen of England officially shops in that particular store. I thought that was a pretty neat little fact! Next we viewed the London Pavilion which houses the “Rock Circus” and then drove by The National Art Gallery and Trafalgar Square. It was really nice that the tour bus was always either driving slow enough or would stop completely to allow the tourists to snap pictures. Trafalgar Square is a large social gathering area in the city of London. It is also where many, many, many pigeons in London gather for some human attention and food. The square is also marked by a very tall monument, four corner lion statues, and two central water fountains. In the sunshine of the day, it seemed like a very nice place. In Parliament Square we drove past the structure called Big Ben and watched a portion of the changing of the guard ceremony. The clock on the Big Ben Tower was immense and the whole structure was simply beautiful. Being on the Thames River only added to the magnificence of the moment. Next on our driving tour we viewed a sight beyond all sites. We were driving over London Bridge, which connects the Old London to the Modern London, and looked down the Thames River toward Tower Bridge. It was absolutely
gorgeous. The main part of Tower Bridge is made of stone. There are two large stone towers that divide the bridge into thirds. The blue and white spires stretch from the top of the tall stone towers to the main part of the bridge. It is magnificently beautiful. The decorative artwork was unbelievable. This is a site that cannot be truly rated until it is seen with one’s own eyes. I think that the city of London is very pretty near the river, for the city nearly “grew up” on the banks of the river. As we continued through the city we came upon the Europe Chunnel Tunnel—it was a blue curved-top building. The tour guide was definitely building my interest for our later trip to the mainland of Western Europe. I cannot wait! Next we drove by the White Cathedral where Jack the Ripper committed all of his murders. Then we drove by Victoria Embankment, Westminster Abbey, and Scotland Yard. We were told that the crime rate in England is relatively low, however, an individual must be aware of the common street pick-pocket—especially in crowded places. I thought that for its size, London was a very clean city. I believe that the citizens take great pride in the historical and cultural importance of the city, therefore keep it very clean. There are also large fines for littering—I think that this carefully monitored project would deter anyone. The fact that these laws are severely enforced is an important factor in their effectiveness. Next we passed St. James’ Park where a flag was flying half mast indicating that her majesty is in residence at the palace. Then, as we continued to tour the streets of London we came upon the Dorchester Club. This was the place where Michael Jackson spends his time in London. At least his nights—sleeping at the hotel. Interesting things, ah yeah, that you find out on these London tour buses. Our tour concluded back at the Marble Arch. We thanked our tour guide and said “good-bye” to our fellow English travelers that accompanied us on the tour. Just about anywhere we ventured people recognized our American traits. It had
been a joyful and fun afternoon in London, gaining familiarity with the city. After the tour we resorted to the transportation of the London Tube. Our entire group split up, but the small group of students that I was with decided to take the Tube line to Leicester Square.

At Leicester Square we explore the shops looking for London souvenirs. It was my first time to actually walk through the city of London—pretty exciting stuff, eh? After meeting back up with the group of eighteen American students, we proceeded to China town in Leicester Square to choose a place for dinner. Chinese food sounded really good to me. I got water and my favorite dish—sweet and sour chicken. I decided that I had to try my favorite American-Chinese dish to determine whether it was also my favorite British-Chinese dish. My turned out to be rather tasty! After dinner it was about 7:00 p.m. and we began to walk to the Theater Royale on Drury Lane. It did not take us very long to arrive at our destination.

This evening we were viewing the show titled Miss Saigon. The musical is set during the time of the Vietnam War and describes the events of an American soldier being married to a woman in the United States, but yet falls in love with a Vietnamese woman during the war. The Vietnamese woman ends up bearing a son. The Vietnamese woman named Miss Saigon has no knowledge of the American wife. When the soldier returns to America, he finds out that he has a son in Vietnam. When Miss Saigon finds out the soldier has an American wife, she kills herself. Miss Saigon killed herself because she claimed to love the soldier so much that she could not bear to live without his love. She died with contentment, however, knowing that her son would have a chance for a good life in America. The American soldier and wife adopted the Vietnamese boy and raised him as family in America. Many people cried throughout the show, but I did not feel any emotion. I definitely wasn't
sad! I really did not like the entire story of the musical. My dad was an active participant in the Vietnam War and it thoroughly angered me that the entire play emphasized the paths in life that resulted from the irresponsibility of some American soldiers while fighting in Vietnam. The stereotype of sex-raging American soldiers for Vietnamese women angers me! My dad respectively and dutifully served in the United States Army and also in the country of Vietnam. It was a possible accomplishment. No matter how lonely a person may be (American soldier in Vietnam), they should still act in a responsible and honorable manner and retain dignity while representing his/her home country. The sometimes extreme and harsh conditions of life do not allow for fallible choices. However, the overall effects of the musical were astounding! The special effects were theatrically fantastic! Both the props and the singing were great. In one particular scene a helicopter came down from up above the theater down onto the stage with the most realistic sound effects. I would venture to say that the entire theater was shaking from the enormity of the sound. All of the scenes in the play flowed smoothly. Even though the content of the musical was less than pleasing, I thought that it was an absolutely wonderful opportunity to view a professional show and even more to view that show in none other than London, England. After the performance was ever, our EDEL-O group took the Tube back to the Bayswater stop and then walked to our bed and breakfast. It felt very good to wash up and crawl into a nice, warm, clean bed.

**Saturday May 20, 1995**

This morning I got up about 6:30 a.m.--yes, I was quite an early bird! Hey, my mama always taught me that the “early bird gets the worm.” Hey, I was simply excited about
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touring the London sites! Emily Huff and I set out from the Linden Hotel about 8 a.m. and made our first stop at a small film and souvenir shop--before we even arrived at the Tube station. In a short time, Emily and I had hopped on the London Tube and made our way to the Marble Arch. We had both missed a picture of this stone structure yesterday on our double-decker bus tour, so we thought that we would make a quick photo stop this morning. Our next great point of venture through the London Tube was the Houses of Parliament and Big Ben. Both of these structures were magnificent. They had fantastic architectural characteristics and rise high into the sky. Big Ben is the name of the huge clock that decorates one of the high stone towers and keeps London time for all to see. Next, we walked across London Bridge--over the Thames River. I thought that it would be kind of neat to say that I have actually walked across London Bridge with my very own two feet. The view of the House of Parliament from the other end of London Bridge was even better. The artistic detail was absolutely unbelievable. The gold accent on Big Ben and the top spires was gorgeous! The other side of London Bridge took us the “old” portion of the city of London. This was truly evident by the architectural style of the buildings. I had just taken my art education course the previous semester before coming on this trip and the knowledge that I had gained concerning basic art and architecture styles was enormously helpful. As we headed back over London Bridge to return to the subway station the clock bells of Big Ben chimed to let the London know that it was now ten o'clock in the morning. It was a rather musical experience! We took the Victoria rail to Green Park and headed for Buckingham Palace. The trees were beautiful the way they drooped over the park path. At Buckingham Palace we witnessed the changing of the guard. This ceremony focused more on tradition that sensational excitement. Not all things in life have to be action-packed to be
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enjoyed. Nature and London parliamentary procedures fit nicely under these categories. The gates of the palace were black iron with gold trim. The road in front of the palace was laid with red bricks. I would venture to guess that the particular design in which they were laid out took some meticulous planning. In center-front of the palace was a fountain and statue made in honor of Queen Victoria and three-spire British flags line a square outside the palace. The crowds that day were very large—everyone was trying to get a peak at the spectacle. An additional treat of the day included a small British band which marched into the square and through the palace gates. They played England's national anthem and the song titled New York. It had been quite an exciting morning and I was very glad that the time had been spent with Emily. We got to know each other better and kept one another laughing the whole day through. We ended up meeting Brenda, Jennifer, and Laura for lunch in Piccadilly square. We ate at a sandwich and coffee place called the Trio Bar. It was fun getting to eat in a local London pub. For lunch I ordered a BLT, crisps (chips), a juice drink, and some fudge dessert. My meal was delicious!

After lunch we proceeded to Westminster Abbey. It is one of the best-known and most-loved buildings in the English-speaking world. As I grew closer and closer I thoroughly observed the building structure. The scroll and sculpture work were unbelievable. The Westminster Abbey is the burial site of Winston Churchill. Edmund Haley, the first man to predict the return of the comet, is also buried in this magnificent building. Mr. Edmund Haley lived from 1656-1742. Also buried in the Abbey is a soldier from the war in England during the years of 1914-1918. His tomb was engraved with the saying, "A soldier who gave his life for God, king, and country in the war of 1914-1918." His tomb also commemorated the many other soldiers who died in that war. The inside of the
cathedral was beautiful. It truly was a place of religious worship—with all of its glory and splendor. I could see the lit candles which marked the darker corners of the Abbey and could hear the large organ which accompanied the Westminster Abby choir. The harmonious sounds of their voices filled the entire cathedral. Many sculptures had been carved and set in the Abbey in memory of past Catholic popes. There were also long stained glass windows which depicted the salvationary work of popes, knights, Jesus, and various biblical disciples. The cathedral had flying buttresses, gold scrollwork, painted archways, and crystal chandeliers that hung from the high ceilings. Some of these were very exciting aspects of the Abbey for I had learned about this type of material in my Art education course last semester. It is a genuine feeling when an individual can actually experience and apply in the outside world what one has learned in the college classroom.

We were told that it cost nearly 24 million per year for upkeep of the Abbey's vast and ancient tapestries. There were stone burial slots on the floor which marked the burial sites of knights, religious figures, and war heroes. Massive iron gates separated different parts of the Abby. Above one particular tomb was an inscription saying, "To the glory of God and in the memory of all those who in the face of violence haven given their lives in the service of the crown to defend freedom, justice, and peace. There were many different rooms such as the Chapter House, Pyx Chamber, and historical museum throughout the Abbey which we were allowed to view. In a particular room called the Chapter House there were 13th century floor tiles which formed intricate designs throughout the room. In this place voices hushed to barely a whisper. The painted wall art depicted glowing, gold circles around the heads of religious figures such as Jesus and Mary. There were illustrated stories of: The Last Judgment, The Great Beast, The Lamb (Jesus) and His Company, The
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Fall of Babylon, and the War of Armageddon Leading to a New Jerusalem. In the historical museum there were pictures describing the Bayeau Tapestry, the gothic abbey, floor mosaics, and other architectural features present in Westminster Abbey. In another room were the jewels of the pope, royal chairs, swords and crowns. There were also mannequins describing the typical clothing of the king and queen of England. It seems that the government part of England always kept close ties with the church. Additionally, the armor of the knights depicted late Medieval times. In the outside walkway portion of the cathedral was the Cloister Garden. It was pretty, but not accessible to the public. I thought that Westminster Abbey was an experience of quite a different kind.

The next place of interest for a visit was St. Paul’s Cathedral. I think that we were just on a cathedral kick today. The architectural styles and immenseness of the cathedral was again remarkable. First, I ventured through St. Paul’s churchyard and took some great pictures of the outside of the cathedral from across the street. I don’t believe that I would be able to reach my arms even halfway around one of the twenty front cathedral columns. The church site of St. Paul’s Cathedral has existed since the year 604 and the present-standing cathedral was designed by Sir Christopher Wren. The cathedral was built in the glory of God as a place where all may worship Him, remember Him, receive His help, and hear His word for our time and our needs. The magnificence of the cathedral should remind us of His majesty and of His mercy. Inside there was a large, high circular hall separated only by towering columns. The floor was black and white checkered marble. There were burial remembrances, candelabras, relief sculpture, statues, Corinthian arches, and large candles which helped the sunlight illuminate the large hall. One particular artwork that I
liked was a gold bordered painting depicting Jesus with a lantern, knocking on the door of a cottage. Underneath the painting was a saying by Holman Hunt titled Light of the World:

    Behold I Stand At the Door and Knock
    If Any Man Hear My Voice and
    Open the Door I Will Come Into
    Him and Will Sup With Him
    And He With Me

Genuine words indeed! On other walls were fresco paintings with beautiful gold trimming. The singing of the choir echoed in the large hall. Another inscription read, "Through the gate of death we pass in joyful resurrection." I have never seen anything like the inside of this church before—this cathedral truly represents the intention for which it was built.

After leaving St. Paul's Cathedral, we took the Tube to Victoria Plaza for supper and a 7:45 p.m. theater show called Starlight Express. We ate supper at a restaurant called Pizzaland for 3.75 Pounds which included: salad, a soft drink, and all the pizza I could eat. For England, I thought that it was a scrumptious deal I could not pass up. Finishing supper, our small group decided to go exploring and we ended up in Trafalgar Square. We then took the subway back to the Victoria connection. I think that it is so funny when the train computer says, "Mind the Gap." The "gap" is the open portion on the floor between the train and the cement walkway used for waiting to board and leave trains. We then walked from the Tube to the Apollo Victoria Theater for our show titled Starlight Express. The young man who took my ticket at the door was quite extraordinary. I was excited about getting to see the show, so I guess that I walked in through the doors with quite a large smile on my face. As I handed the man my ticket I gave him a smile and thanked him. He gently pulled
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me back and asked me to do that again—meaning the thank you and my smile. He said that my smile had made his day. Awe—I thought that was awfully sweet of the English lad! It makes me feel good to know that at times I can improve someone’s day with my demeanor.

We had main floor seats for this Broadway show. The theater was arranged differently than a traditional theater to accommodate for the roller skating actors in the show. Yes, it was hard to imagine all of the cast wearing roller skates and still performing a musical. There is a track that comes out into the center section of the theater seating and a separate track which journeys onto a second floor level around the perimeter of the theater. The costumes of the actors were representational of different types of train engines—steam, electric, and coal. These roles were played by men while the cars that hooked onto the engines were filled by women. There was one fine male engine actor named Rusty. He was my favorite character. The music was 80's style with both hip-hop and slow love songs. Both the male and female vocalists were excellent. The songs talked about reaching for the starlight and believing in yourself. It also focused on finding true love and never letting it slip away. The character, Rusty, reminded me of Matthew. He sang a song about first true loves and my thoughts drifted home to Ft. Wayne, Indiana. Matt was my first true love and I certainly hope that he is my last. I care very deeply for him and I cannot in any way, shape, or form, place a certain amount or even a limit on the love I have in my heart for him. Matt is indeed a special person. I enjoyed the musical with such emotional involvement that after the musical was over, I bought the compact disc for the musical. I could not wait to get home and listen to the compact disc of the musical called Starlight Express.
After the show there was a group of about eight of us who ventured to Tower Bridge to view a few London sights by night. The lights on Tower Bridge were very pretty. It was absolutely thrilling to walk under all of the high spires and look out to see the sparkling water of the Thames River. I then headed down what is called the Queen's Walk—it is a paved path which leads along the river to London Bridge. It was a very romantic walk—so quiet and peaceful with the sound of the water lapping up against the cement wall. I wanted very much for Matt to be walking beside me. I closed my eyes, held the necklace that he gave to me in my hand, and thought only of Matthew for a few minutes. This was definitely a great way to end a wonderful evening in London. As we continued to walk up the river we came to a ship by the name of HMS Belfast—it was larger than life. This ship participated in some of England's naval battles—it holds quite a history. The view of Tower Bridge from London Bridge was glorious. The bridge is as beautiful at night as it is during the day. The subway trip back to the bed and breakfast was relaxing and I was very tired from spending a long day in London. My sleepy thoughts drifted to all of my loved friends and family far away in America. I sure would have liked someone's shoulder to rest my weary head upon. I was very relieved when I finally stepped foot into my room at the bed and breakfast and knew that a safe, clean bed was not far away.

**Sunday May 21, 1996**

This morning I decided to sleep in a little and therefore got up at 8 a.m., ate breakfast, checked out, and set out into the city of London on my own by about 9:30 a.m. At the Bayswater Tube station I met up with a few other girls from our EDEL-O group. Together we all ventured to Euston train station to check train times and to store our
luggage for the day. After completing these tasks we took the Tube to the Tower of London. At one of our Tube transfers we met up with some elderly travelers from the states. They happened to be from Florida. It was comforting to see Americans. I think that we simply missed our families and they were a temporary grandparent substitute. We told them all about our teaching and traveling plans for Europe. They were so excited for us! It turned out the folks from Florida were also going to the Tower of London, so we traveled together for a little while. It actually turned out to be a lot of fun! By 11:30 a.m. we arrived at the Tower of London. It was right next to the Tower Bridge and ended up rising and rising as a stone castle—high into the sky. The entire experience was all so real; I felt as if I was going back in time. The Tower of London seemed like a small town inside a stone wall. The roads in the fortress were bricked and tall, tall stone buildings rose all around. Tours began as you entered the castle and the first site was the Bell Tower and then Traitor’s Gate. This gate brought supplies and convicts safely into the castle. St. Thomas’ Tower stands above the gate. Thomas A. Beckett was killed in the tower and as a result, every time the king tried to construct a new tower it toppled right back to the ground. The spirit ghost of Thomas A. Beckett was said to have a hand in the matter. The ghost did not rest until a memorial to him was built in St. Thomas’ Tower. I thought that this was an interesting tale. Should I believe it?

My friends and I then ventured to the Bloody Tower where we were told that many murders occurred in the upper room of the tower. The four ton iron gates situated under the tower carried a great tale as well. Apparently in the newest Robinhood movie starring Kevin Costner, one of the characters attempts to hold up this very gate with one hand as his friends run under. It sounds to me as if it is a rather farfetched stunt, considering how
heavy the iron is. I will have to keep my eye out for that the next time I watch that movie. The next sight was the White Tower. The tower took twenty years to build and is about 92 ft. high—unbelievable! Next, we went to the Queen's House and viewed the Jewel House. The particular display was opened to the public on the 24th of March, 1994. The first room showed us chairs which contained name labels and the seals of all of the past kings of England. We wound around in a circle in the next room to view a coronation ceremony movie. The movie was so grand that it gave you the feeling of great country pride. There was also a film which showed each of the crown jewels and various other royal objects. In the final room (vaulted room), there were large glass-encased displays of the crown jewels. The jewels reflected light in every possible direction—illuminating the entire room. Some of the jewels included: Armills of Elizabeth (1953, bracelets), the 1820 jeweled sword of offering, coronation robes, crowns, scepters, orbs, and the imperial state crown reserved for the lady residing over the House of Commons. It was quite a gallant display. The next place to visit was the Wardrobe Tower. This displayed the Royal Armies of England. The metal armor that the soldiers wore was heavy and thick. I'm not sure how they could even move after putting on all of that armored protection. Then in total silence, we visited the royal chapel of the hold St. John the Evangelist. Up and up on circular stairs we then climbed until we came to something called the fighting gallery. It was a display which included the armor of knights, swords, and torture devices—with a very interesting display in one of the corners. The special display consisted of the armor of a tiny man that was no taller than three feet. I had never seen such a small man, yet he had a specially fitted suit of armor, sword, and spear. It is recorded that he fought very bravely in several Medieval England battles. It was quite interesting!
Then down, down, down we ventured into the basement of the Wardrobe Tower. There we saw where most of the armory supplies were kept. Also, there were stalls for the keeping of horses and a well for the drawing of water. It was a very unique and convenient setup. At the top of that same hill in the courtyard square we visited a scaffold site where six private beheadings took place. It was good to turn around 180 degrees for the site was unbelievable! From the top of the hill, toward the Thames River, a beautiful view of Tower Bridge could be seen. It was magnificently breathtaking! We then briefly visited the Field Guns and the Medieval Palace, which gave an idea of life at that time period. My final excursion at the Tower of London took me to a "Walk Along the Wall" of the Tower of London. Level with the treetops, I walked freely, experiencing the history of Medieval England. Walking on the top of the outside castle wall, I could imagine myself as a guard in medieval times patrolling the perimeter of the castle—making sure that all was safe. Even though I am almost 21, I thoroughly enjoyed pretending and imagining.

By this time my friends had moved on to other London attractions and I was by myself. I actually didn't mind one bit, for it was nice to be alone for a little while and just travel the city on my own. I guess I was just flaunting those German independent qualities again. I grabbed a snack of water and brownie and then headed for more travels on the underground Tube. I made my way to Leicester Square where I ate lunch. I stopped at a small deli/sandwich shop called The Sandwich Shop and the man working there made me a cheese toastie, gave me an apple, and I bought some juice. We had a nice little international conversation. He was from the Ukraine and was here in England on a work school permit. He was thoroughly excited to be finishing college in the next few months. He said that he had the option to pick a job and basically go anywhere he chose. He said
that he certainly earned it; he always seemed to be studying and working. Sounds very familiar! We wished each other good luck with the rest of our schooling as we parted. I couldn’t wait to eat my lunch and then be off to explore the shops and street performers in Leicester Square. For some fun, I also took a lazy summer Sunday walk in the park. It was so fun to take a break on the park bench and to watch all of the people walk by. It provided some great afternoon entertainment. At about 2 p.m. I used the Tube to Trafalgar Square. I had only previously ridden by it on the bus tour, so I enjoyed walking through it. The square was filled with pigeons, families, and lovers. It was so cute when the small children would try and feed the pigeons—the pigeons would sit on their arms and eat right out of their hands. It wouldn’t have been my choice of a thrilling time (pigeons sitting on me), but it provided for a very cute scene. Also in the square were several large, stone lion statues. Accompanying the statues were beautiful waterfalls. I just love London!

I met up with a few of my EDEL-O travelers at the National Art Gallery while in Trafalgar Square. We decided to tour the art gallery, for we had about two hours before our train left London for Liverpool. The art gallery was an enjoyable new cultural experience. I had been in some art museums before, but nothing that compared to the exquisiteness of the National Gallery. It was very comforting to recognize a few of the paintings from taking my Art Education course last semester in college. Much of the building had very decorative, yet formal gold scroll work. The ceiling was painted with gold and bright vibrant colors. The doorway frames were huge and constructed with marble—so very fancy! Swinging glass doors existed between the gallery time periods. I recognized such artist names as Degas, Monet, Picasso, Manet, and Constable’s painting titled The Haywain. As I ventured between the different gallery rooms, the different time period characteristics that I had
learned about in my college education art class became evident. The remainder of the afternoon was a definite cultural experience. I then took the Tube to Euston station and then said "good-bye" to good 'ol London. In sadness, I took one last look and then entered the train station. I picked up my luggage at the baggage counter and boarded the train headed for Liverpool. The train ride from London to Liverpool went well. I hated so much to say good-bye to the wonderful city of London. That city holds such great memories! I arrived in Liverpool at about 7:30 p.m. and then made my way to the Ormskirk train station. I only had to wait about fifteen minutes and then a train arrived that was traveling to Ormskirk. Whew, almost to the college. Knowing that most of the businesses and restaurants in England were closed after five in the evening, I just headed for Edge Hill Campus. I was so tired that I just wanted to make it to my room at the college, unpack, organize for Monday, and collapse in bed! Ah, sleep felt so good...

**Monday May 22-Wednesday May 24, 1996**

It seemed as though my alarm went off way too early (too soon) this morning when I arose from my bed at 6:15 a.m. I greeted everyone on my floor as I took my trek to the bathroom for my shower. I was amazingly ready by 7 a.m., so I sat down to work on some postcards. Today was going to be our first day in the English classroom. Wow, I was so excited inside! Our EDEL-O group left the college about 8 a.m. and the tour coach dropped small groups of us off at our respective schools. The entire group was not working all at one school, we were at three different schools in the surrounding community of Ormskirk. Five other teachers and I were dropped off at a school by the name of Rainford Brook Lodge Primary School. This school was in a nice town not far from Ormskirk named
Rainford. With a first encounter, I will briefly describe my experiences at the school. The school has children that are aged three to about twelve or thirteen. I thought that this was quite a range compared to most American schools. That morning the assistant to the school’s deputy head met with us and assigned each use of a classroom in the school. She then took us on a school tour. The classrooms were small and highly decorated, much like Eccleston Mere Primary School in the community of St. Helens. However, I thought that Rainford Brook Lodge was a little more moderate and more to my liking. For some reason the Deputy Assistant grouped the six of us as pairs in three different classrooms. It was not that we minded working in a classroom with a teacher and another college student, we were simply under the impression that with the EDEL 360 course and taking it in England we believed that we deserved an individual teaching experience. I was going to live with the situation, but it displeased me a little that we were the only six student teachers out of our entire EDEL-O group to be paired for teaching—everyone else got to work with their own teacher and own classroom. For all of my prior Ball State teaching opportunities, even being in an honorary elementary education program, I have had all of my teaching experiences with another college student present in the classroom. The experiences have developed great team-teaching skills, but the first time that I will do independent teaching in the classroom is with my student teaching. The most I would have asked is that I should have been informed that paired-teaching was the situation I was walking into. Maybe for future EDEL-O groups that travel to England this whole individual/paired teaching idea should be shared with the group before committing to attend EDEL-O. Some students may not choose to go on the trip knowing that they may not get the individual classroom time that they paid dearly for! I think that as adults we all deserve to know what’s going on and
where our money is going. My teaching partner and I are working in a fifth year primary classroom—the students are ten to eleven years old. It is a nice classroom and the students are eager to find out all about us “Americans.” I get the biggest kick out of their proper English school uniforms. My classroom teacher’s name is Mrs. Debbie Ashby. She is married and has an adorable little daughter. She has been very nice and welcomed us warmly to England and her classroom. Mrs. Ashby seemed very willing to work with us on any ideas that we might want to try in her classroom in the next seven weeks. I’m still excited about the opportunity to teach here in this English school—it will be a great opportunity and a wonderful experience. Many years ago I never thought that I would be student teaching anywhere except in America.

Our first day brought many new experiences. In my class there are forty-one smiling students jam-packed into this little classroom. Some of the students also have to sit in a small commons area in the doorway portion of the classroom, because there is not enough room in the classroom itself for all of the students. It doesn’t appear to be an easily-managed system for the classroom teacher, but Mrs. Ashby told me that this was a usual attendance number for one classroom of students in England. The first activity of the day involved the students getting changed for physical education. It was different because the children changed right in the room with classmates of the opposite sex. I wasn’t sure how to react—it was an odd feeling. However, it seemed that the students were completely comfortable with this idea. I guess that if I had changed into my gym clothes ever since I was three or four years old with my fellow classmates, I would not think twice about the situation as well.
Half of the class went out for gym while the others finished up some classroom work and then the two groups switched. The gym teacher was a very kind man who took every opportunity to explain the physical concept to me, why he was performing particular exercises, and was giving me some information on the progress of students. Today the teacher was instructing the students on the various skills needed to play the game of tennis. It was fun to watch the children play. I also found out that in addition to being a physical education teacher, he also serves as a science and industrial technology teacher for sixth year. In addition, he also sets up and maintains most of the computer equipment for the school.

A specific aspect that I have begun to notice is the school's manner of discipline—or should I call it punishment? I don't think that they have yet progressed to the true concept of the word "discipline." We discovered that the same woman who first greeted us that morning when we arrived at the school has the title of Deputy Head Teacher. All of the classes filed in quietly and waited for the program to begin.

The Head Teacher started the morning school chat by discussing the assention of Jesus into Heaven and the disciples. The Deputy Head Teacher read a story to the students about the lion and the mouse and how helping one another saved both their lives in the end. She related the story to how the students should help one another at school, regardless of the reward or favor you might receive in return. I thought that it was a very nice practical application of the moralistic concepts. After the story the Head Teacher asked the students to stand up. I thought that the students were a little noisy, but nothing outrageous. The next thing I know the Head Teacher is screaming at the students to sit back down because they couldn't even stand up to return to class without excessive noise. Even my teaching
partner and I were frightened. We weren't sure what to do, so we sat down with all of the
students. She then lectured them on this "discipline" problem and also called-out several
students and embarrassed many. She commanded the students to stand up again and they
sang a song as the Year Six class accompanied. She had dampened the entire
atmosphere of the room. My teaching partner and I could just not believe our ears. The
Deputy Head Teacher had spit fire at the students and instilled fear in their hearts. The only
reason that students behave is because they are frightened of getting in trouble. I do not
think that you need to scare kids to get them to behave. If anything, scaring them will
simply make them seek more attention. After the song, the Head Teacher talked about
some upcoming school programs and then together everyone prayed and then recited the
Lord's Prayer. The orchestra played for their dismissal to return to class.

English was the next subject of the day. During English the students worked on the
formation of grammatical questions—the starting words, punctuation needed, and
judgements of the components of a good question. After English the students grabbed their
snack and went outside for recess. Mrs. Ashby and I headed to the teachers' break room
for a cup of tea. This was a relatively new custom of which I was quickly becoming fond.

I found many interesting aspects in the Year 5 (equivalency to fourth grade in
America) classroom in which I worked at Rainford Brook Lodge Primary School. Each of
the children have separate paper booklets (like a notebook in America) in which they work
for each of their different subjects. It is an interesting set-up, but I think the process saves paper and keeps work collected. The classroom itself is split into two seating areas, one being somewhat outside the open classroom and the other fitting well within the classroom. The desks are joined together to make large rectangular tables. This makes instruction
with the blackboard or overhead more difficult, but the teacher usually compensates during class discussion by walking in between the two areas. Mrs. Ashby is a fair teacher, but still yells sternly at the children for petty things--she has a pretty good teacher "stare." Sometimes I feel as if I am in a military school, rather than a public primary school. To quiet the students the teacher might count backwards or ask the students to put their hands on their head, shoulders, knees, tummy, lap, etc. These methods usually work.

The environment in the classroom is inviting and creatively stimulating. The classroom is decorated with student work and various topics of study. Above the teacher's desk is an art and craft board. At the front of the room there is a small square rolling blackboard and small bins in the cabinet area--all labeled as to their contents. On the ceiling are geometric artworks that the children have created. I get the feeling from the atmosphere of the room that Mrs. Ashby is genuinely concerned about the education of her students due to her assessment strategies and the types of activities she engages the students in and out of the classroom.

Before lunch a guest came to speak about historical sites in the city of Rainford. This man was a Rainford historian. He talked, tying in their current history lessons, to the students for a while and then offered the students time to have their questions answered. He was a very knowledgeable chap and I thought it a very good idea by the teacher to correlate the students' learning in this fashion. After the presentation, groups of students got together and discussed the information learned from the Rainford historian. Eventually, all of the groups collaborated to make a list of facts about Rainford. It was a neat process to watch the students learn so much.
Assisting the students with their homework is sometimes a tricky situation. The British accent sometimes makes the students' language difficult to understand. I can understand some of the students better than others, but they know when we are struggling and willingly help us out by paraphrasing the question or statement. As well as the British accent, I believe it is also that the students are from an area of England in which many of the people drop some of their vowels when speaking. However, the students have a very expanded vocabulary knowledge—it is exciting to listen to them speak. It is nice to know that the students have warmed up to our presence and that they like us and want very much for us to be with them. It seems that they have a million question to ask us. The students are very eager to learn and can't wait for us to teach a lesson about America.

For lunch, a few of the teachers drove us into the city of Rainford. This was the first time that I had ridden in the front seat of an English car while driving on the left side of the road. It was a little bit of an adjustment, but loads of fun! I bought some fruit at the grocery, ate lunch at the pastry shop, and then our group of six students walked back to the school together. Lunch served as a nice break to get away from the school and reflect on the events of the morning for a bit with my fellow college teachers. Ah, wasn't it wonderful to experience England?

Our teacher started off the afternoon off with a database lesson at the board. The students were working with spreadsheets and learning about sorting and classification through the study of mammals. After a short recess break the students worked on seat-work while the students came in shift pairs to complete the computer assignment. After I learned the process of the program, I worked with the pairs of students to assist them in completing the spreadsheet worksheet. It was good to ask the students questions to lead
them to the discovery of an answer. Sitting at the computer all afternoon was also a good way to get to know the names of the students, especially since there were over forty of them in this one classroom. This little activity also gave me a chance to study the learning styles and capabilities of each student. The rest of the afternoon went smoothly, and at 3:30 p.m. my teaching partner and I said good-bye to our teacher, Mrs. Ashby. All six of us (American college teachers) sat outside the school on the cement steps and we discussed the events of our day. We were all exhausted from the children, but were very excited about returning the remaining two days of this week. Upon returning to Edge Hill College I went to the library and the SIC (Student Information Center) building to apply for my library and meal cards. At that time I was told that it would be ready for me to pick up on Tuesday—Yeah!! Upon arriving at my dorm I discovered that I had received a letter. It was the first letter from home—from my mummy too! It was so comforting to hear news from the family. I wanted to be at home doing the things that they are doing and at the same time be here in England. I thought that would be a rather tough call. I believe that it might be better if summer school did not span over a ten week period. It seems like such a long time—at least in my book! Our education group ate supper together over at the school cafeteria and then I worked a little while on my homework for seminar. Later, I worked on my thematic unit with my group until about 11:15 p.m. and then went to bed shortly thereafter.

The students were glad to see us return on Tuesday. In the morning, as a result of Mrs. Ashby’s attendance at a meeting, the students worked on an industrial arts project with the male Year 6 resource/Physical Education teacher. At times, the Year 5 and Year 6 classes would participate in combined projects. This was one of those occasions. I enjoyed this activity as much or more than the children. As elementary education majors in
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America we take one industrial arts course and are taught to incorporate such projects into the classroom instruction, but I must admit that these types of projects rarely ever happen except during science fair time. I think that most American teachers think that projects such as these are too complicated for primary students or just don't want to fool with it themselves. This is unfortunate, but it still happens. Students could gain such creative fun from working with such projects. The students are studying about wheels and are trying out various types of materials to assemble wooden and poster board cars. After completing the project, the students plan to test the construction success of their cars. Each group was to build a car of endurance. It was neat to see their minds work together to produce such fantastic ideas.

Math Workshop was another big event of both Tuesday and Wednesday. Mrs. Ashby groups the students according to ability level in math. The "triangles" are the most advanced, the "squares" are the middle group, and the "rectangles" are slowest group needing the most help and encouragement. Each of the groups are studying a different topic. I do not agree with the idea of ability grouping, but instead believe that students should be grouped by mixed ability and changed in their group members every month or two months. The ability range in this class seems quite drastic, but I also think that is a result of being ability-grouped ever since they started school. All the students know exactly which group they are in and what that means. I think that an ability label, such as this one for math, has stuck with them all through their entire primary schooling years. It is rather unfortunate! The students work on their own as Mrs. Ashby works her way around to each group and teaches them a lesson. Rather than having paper, the students work out of their booklet, which is lined with graph paper. I thought that was a rather interesting idea that
really works for the students—especially for lining up numerical computation problems. If any of the groups finishes their work ahead of time, they are expected to get out their mental math booklets and work quietly. The arrangement is routine and works well with the students.

In a classroom that has movement occurring quite often, there is limited space for alternative furniture arrangements. The students carefully arrange chairs and the tables when they all must squeeze into one classroom for instruction from the board. At times, the students must also get together for group work in literature, geography, and math workshop. I have noticed that a great amount of time is spent arranging forty-one students for educational learning. The classroom can become quite congested at times. However, I believe that the classroom is effectively arranged considering the circumstances. All the ceiling and wall space is covered with interesting objects. Supplies that the students need are very accessible in bookshelves and labeled bins. With all of the students packed in so tightly, it appears easier to maintain discipline—the children are never far out of eyesight. Although, a negative aspect is the, at times, excessive talking. Being so close to a neighbor student, it is rather easy to start chatting about subjects other than school. The students and Mrs. Ashby seem to handle the situation well. The only solution that I can think of to help the overcrowding situation, would be to break some of the tables apart and sit three students to a small table. Also, the teacher's desk and filing cabinets could reside outside the main classroom and leave only a small chair and table in the room. This arrangement might allow the ten students who currently sit outside the classroom to permanently join the whole class in the main classroom. We wouldn't know for sure until it was tried.
As I left the school on Tuesday to catch the bus, I noticed a school prayer posted in the front hall area which read:

This is our School
Let peace dwell here
Let the room be full of contentment
Let love abide here
Love of one another
Love of mankind
Love of life itself
And love of God
Let us remember
That, as many hands build a house,
So many hearts build a school.
Amen

I thought that was such an inspiring poem and prayer. I like the idea that religion is a part of the educational curriculum for schools in England. The idea creates a more friendly and loving atmosphere at school. The students have the daily positive influence of a good value system. Tuesday evening I killed my first British Bug. It was one of those giant mosquitoes that had snuck its way through my screenless window. Today I also got a letter from my dear sister—yeah! The letter was about two pages long and talked about her high school awards ceremony, homework for school, phone calls from her boyfriend, and the success of her final Charisma performance. It sounded like she was doing fine—other than missing me. Later on in the evening our unit group went to the library to get some work done. It was so frustrating—the computer labs and the library close at 8:50 p.m., no ifs and or buts about it! Students cannot print any documents after 8:30 p.m. and all computer printed materials must be picked up only at "quarter past and half past" the hour. Then the library charges you five cents per page printed. It seems that by the time you get any project started after supper you might have two hours to write, format, proofread, fix