

Honors Enrichment Award Report

At the end of May 2019, I had the opportunity to travel to Italy with the Colorado State University Concert and Chamber Choirs. This trip was not only personally fulfilling, but also educationally fulfilling in several ways. As a History and Social Studies Teaching student, it was exceptional to see the monuments and locations from history that I had previously just read about in books. Some of my favorite places I attended were the Colosseum, Sistine Chapel, L'Accademia, and St. Mark's Square. The entire trip was awe-inspiring in many ways and the experience has been difficult to put into words. When it all comes down to it, there were two broad categories which made the largest impact on me as a future teacher, singer, and person: living history and experiencing new cultures.

Colorado is a beautiful and amazing place to live, but there is one thing area it has a deficit in: older historical sights. Going to Italy and being around ancient, pre-modern, and modern history completely changed my perspective on learning and teaching history. It can be an overwhelming experience to live among history, but it showed the ways in which history both changes and endures. Take, for example, the Roman Forums contained buildings from disparate time periods. Seeing these different time periods gave me a couple of ideas for how I could teach the ways in which history interacts and flows within itself. One of these ideas is to use VR technology, which is becoming increasingly available in secondary schools, to allow students to walk around the places we are studying in class. This can establish perspective and give students the opportunity to feel like they are actually there. Another idea I had was creating a research project for the students about the ways in which various periods of history interact with each

other in other areas of the world. This can show that the past and present can unite to create a truly globalized and historical-modern viewpoint of the world.

The second category which impacted me the most during my trip to Italy was experiencing new cultures and people. The Italian culture is similar in many ways to the culture here in the United States but contains some differences. For example, Italians tend to take long meal periods in the middle of the day, something that was made abundantly clear when we sat down for lunch one day and didn't get our check for multiple hours. Embracing that culture and taking time to get to know people in our group during this downtime was one of the most fulfilling parts of this trip. We got to know each other and the culture we were inhabiting better, making us sing together better and create a positive memory for the people who watched us. My fellow choir members and myself realized through this whole experience that music can unite cultures. Music is a language which can be understood and cherished, even if the lyrics are not in one's native tongue. Seeing the history and embracing new cultures were what made this trip so worthwhile for me. I am so grateful for the Honors Program contributing part of the cost that got me to Italy for this amazing trip.