A WHOLE NEW WORLD PERSPECTIVE ON STEM

Britney Bockstahler is a senior at the University of Northern Iowa. Her major is in Elementary and Early Childhood Education with Math and Literacy minors.

“I have always had a passion for kids and learning, teaching is the perfect intersection of those interests.”

Britney chose UNI for its premier teacher education program. Also the size and distance from her home town was an added bonus.

“My favorite major course was Human Relations, because I was able to travel to Tanzania with a group of seven other UNI teaching majors and experience all the content first hand, it was a fantastic experience. We went for 12 days. We spent three days teaching in the schools, everyone taught one math lesson and one English lesson. I taught numeral recognition to Kindergarteners and English superlatives to 4th graders. We spent two days in Serengeti National Park and saw all sorts of animals up close, in their natural environment. The same was true in the Ngoro Ngoro Crater. We also went to a Maasai village, attended a local church, toured a banana plantation, and visited with artists making wood carvings and Tingatinga paintings. Each part of the trip was incredible and different, there is no way I could pick a favorite place.”

“I would definitely advise other students to study abroad, both my Camp Adventure experience in Japan and ‘The Ultimate Field Experience’ in Tanzania changed my perspective on the world and taught me so much that I couldn’t have learned in the classroom.”

Britney’s favorite math minor course is Math for Elementary Students with Special Needs. “This class gave me the opportunity to practically apply all the mathematical content, particularly reasoning and problem solving, that I have learned throughout my program with both students in need of remedial support and enrichment.”

One of Britney’s favorite memories at UNI is the first annual Plot Harvest Festival, which is a celebration of over a years worth of work founding a community garden on the UNI campus. “The first Panther Plot Harvest Festival was in early September 2013. At the festival there was music, garden tours, appetizers made from food harvested from the garden, and a hog roast. It was to celebrate the first summer of the on campus garden, the Panther Plot. A team of nine of sophomore students started the garden with the support of many university entities throughout the 2012-2013 school year.”

Britney’s commitment to STEM began with her work with the kids at Elk Run Elementary School, “supporting their exploration and learning about shadows. It was an experience that really confirmed my belief in the importance of hands on, integrated STEM in early childhood.”
Britney’s future plans are to teach Pre-K, Kindergarten, or First grade in Colorado Springs, where she has family.

In her free time Britney enjoys reading, scrapbooking, cooking, watching movies, playing games, and spending time with her friends. “I like trying new things, I have found lots of new recipes from the 100 Days of Real Food challenge. Some of the unique things I have tried are cauliflower pizza, homemade chicken noodle soup, and turnips with bacon.”

Britney also holds several jobs including being a STEM Ambassador for UNI, a nanny for two families and tutors elementary students in reading.

Her advice to a future panther is: “Seek out every opportunity you can and take advantage of them! At the beginning of my college career I wouldn’t have imagined all the amazing experiences I would be presented with and how impactful they would be. Never be afraid to try something new, something outside your comfort zone, it might turn out to be the best thing you’ve ever done.”

Above is a collection of photos Britney took during her trip to Tanzania

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