

STUDY ABROAD

STUDENT REFLECTIONS

SUMMER 2023



MY NAME IS PRECIOUS SPEARS, AND I AM A SENIOR CONCENTRATING IN MIDDLE GRADES EDUCATION AT ALBANY STATE UNIVERSITY. We visited Ghana, in West Africa. My study abroad program coordinator was Dr. Anthony Owusu-Ansah, who also was my instructor for the Department of Education Practicum Level 3 course I had to take.

One of the cultural tours that we took was a trip to Cape Coast to visit two of the three slave castles in West Africa. We visited the Cape Coast Castle and the Elmina Castle as well as Slave River. These tours were related to the courses I was taking because as a Middle Grades Education (MGE) major with a concentration in Social Studies and English Language Arts, it is important for me to understand the history of some of the areas that I will cover when I am teaching the lesson over Africa, which is a standard part in Georgia Middle School curriculum. I learned things about the diaspora that will help me be more effective when teaching my students about the country. During the cultural tours, I experienced several emotions. To be in the place my ancestors were taken from, sold as animals, taken thousands of miles away from home, and stripped of everything they knew was emotional. I was very thankful for the experience because I could only imagine the excitement my ancestors felt knowing that I returned to the land that they wanted so badly to return to.

Studying abroad is important because it gives you a different perspective. I know what we are taught in America about slavery but to hear it from the other side was something amazing. They gave a perspective that we were never told from this side. That can be true for any culture. In America, we are very seldom told the complete truth about things and getting information from the other side is needed. I also learned some things at the schools we visited that will help in my classroom. One major thing that I saw in the classrooms was how they utilized peer teaching. That is one thing that I would love to incorporate in my classroom, especially since studies have been done to show that students learn better from their peers.

The study abroad experience was unlike anything I have ever experienced before. The advice that I would give to other students who may be apprehensive about studying abroad is to go! I was apprehensive all the time until the time I stepped out of the airport in Accra. Once I walked outside and got a whiff of air, I knew I made the right choice and belonged there. I am so glad that I went, and I have absolutely no regrets.

