South Korea Student Teaching

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One week ago today, nearly 40 WKU students were flying home from their student teaching assignments in six different countries.

In this week’s View from the Hill, Amy Bingham has an up-close look at one of the amazing experiences.

Now that they’ve returned home and graduated, the job search is in high gear for these International student teachers. But the invaluable time spent teaching abroad will easily set them apart from other candidates.

This is Kyung Hee Elementary School in South Korea where Natasha Bridges spent four weeks teaching art.

“I had to figure out methods and strategies and test out what functioned best.”

She says the biggest obstacle was the language barrier.

“Sometimes I would use a lot of body language, I would get up and physically show them and be dramatic about my movements.”

It took a while for Natasha’s love of drawing to turn into a career choice.

“I know that I enjoy teaching and I knew I enjoy art a lot, but I hadn’t come to the realization that I could combine the two.”

Another passion of hers is travel.

“When I got to college, I really wanted to go abroad so that had always been my plan since I was young.”

Another reason WKU fit into her plans so perfectly, with an international student teaching program that provides a definite edge in the hiring process.

“The employment rate is so much higher for those who’ve had this experience verses those who have not.”

The program director, Dr. Fred Carter and two of his colleagues were able to observe WKU’s student teachers in three of the six countries they were in.

“If your willing to take a leap of faith and spend this short amount of time in an international classroom…your so much more able to deal with diversity in all of it’s phases.”

After her experience, Natasha couldn’t agree more.

“Lots of kids from all over the world come into our classroom and they don’t understand our culture off the bat, I think it’s really prepared me to work with those children.”

Bridges is currently weighing a job offer she’s received from the school in South Korea. The number of international student teachers has grown in large part to a grant received last fall from the WKU Sisterhood.

With this week’s View from the Hill, I’m Amy Bingham

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