Maggie Knier

Critical Incident Journal

Language Partner Program

Early in the Fall 2016 semester my FYEX class was visited by Jean Floyd from the IEP/Language Partners program at Minnesota State Mankato University. She advertised that the Language Partner program was in need of Honors students to meet with international students twice a week as conversation partners for them. During these meetings, partners would discuss culture, politics, and other relevant topics of our times. I signed up for the program but was only able to meet with my partner, a man from the Ivory Coast, once because he was often absent. During this meeting we discussed the Common Read Event and Japanese Internment.

Even though I was unable to experience the full benefits of the program due to my partner’s unwillingness to participate, I still think it was a valuable experience to have and hope to participate again next semester. The time I spent engaging with my partner, though brief, helped me to understand his culture a little bit better and I was able to spot several noticeable differences between his culture and mine. Being able to recognize and accept differences in culture is a big step in becoming culturally competent.