

Summer Internship Report 2017

Kirk Murphy, C'17

Hometown: Washington, D.C.



Breakthrough Collaborative Miami, Florida

(Kirk is third from the left)

Provide an overview of the organization/research project and a summary of your responsibilities, tasks, and/or projects.

As a teaching fellow, I participated in a summer teaching and leadership experience; received 100+ hours of teaching and leadership training; taught at one of the 24 affiliates throughout the U.S. and in Hong Kong; learned lesson planning, classroom management, instructional strategies, feedback techniques, and other essential teaching tools; taught core academic classes (math, science, writing, literature) and design enrichment classes (e.g., foreign language, dance, art); led family conferences and participate in team meetings; received coaching from professional educators; collaborated with other undergraduate teaching fellows; and worked with a diverse group of highly-motivated students from under-resourced communities.

During your internship, what did you accomplish or how did you make a difference? In what ways did you grow in your professional and technical skills?

On the fourth week, my students did a police workshop. In the workshop, students were asked to draw the first thing that came to mind when they heard the word "police". A majority of the students wrote all lives matter, blue lives matter, etc. This really upset me as a teacher because not only were they majority students of color but they did not recognize the years of brutality people who look like them have had with law enforcement. Therefore I took the initiative to teach them about social issues in America such as Colin Kaepernick, police brutality, racism, oppression and more. In the conclusion of my internship, I gave them the same assignment regarding law enforcement, however, this time many students wrote black lives matter, equity, freedom, etc. This was a very proud moment for me as a teacher.

Describe a problem that you helped to solve at your internship. What skills or knowledge from your education at Sewanee helped you address the problem?

A problem that I had to solve at my internship was that many of my students were selective in their hearing. My students were so smart that they tested their limits regarding policies. However, because I was an Assistant Proctor, I was comfortable with enforcing the law. Sewanee pushed me to stay ready. Therefore, I never had to get ready.

In what way were your teamwork skills strengthened?

I was partnered with a group of 10 other teaching fellows. We created a family culture of support, love, and positivity. My teamwork skills were improved because I discovered my preferred work environment.

How did your internship affect your career plans?

This opportunity has inspired me to be a teacher through Teach for America.

In what ways did your internship cause you to encounter people of different backgrounds from your own? What steps did you take to communicate effectively with such persons? What did you learn from such persons' perspectives?

The location of my internship allowed me to be exposed to diversity. However, instead of diversity being based upon race, it was based on ethnicity. This is the first time I was exposed to diversity within my own race. It was very intriguing to be exposed to different cultures within blackness. I even sharpened my Spanish skills with my Afro-Latino friends. Through conversation, I learned that POC struggles are very similar. Therefore, we should bring unity amongst campus to represent love.

Words of advice for future interns (housing, transportation, etc.)?

Go into Breakthrough with a mindset of always being willing to go above and beyond and never giving up! Breakthrough is one of the hardest internships I ever had. Breakthrough will push you to new limits and allow you grow! Good Luck!

Words of thanks to your internship funding donors:

Thank you so much! Without your funding, I would not have been able to have one of the best summer opportunities of my life. This experience has motivated me to be a donor as well. You are truly changing lives.