



Which Countries have you travelled to?

I've been to the Czech Republic (used to be Czechoslovakia), Austria, Poland, England, France, Italy, The Vatican, Monaco, Croatia, Switzerland, Germany, Belgium and Holland. Flights are expensive, so I always tried to stay as long as possible to make the most out of my flights! I stayed in Hostels (booked through <http://www.hostelworld.com/>) and met lots of great people. I always tried to stay as long as possible in each place so I could really get a good understanding of the culture. Some people travel only one or two days to each place, and that's not my style. It's too rushed and I think it gives a shallow impression of each place. I took lots of naps on the train, but only when I had a friend to watch my bags!

Have you eaten cuisines from those countries?

Absolutely! I love food. I think I could have been a chef if I wasn't a teacher: I love reading cookbooks and going to new restaurants. I've learned though that chefs work LONG hours and they always work holidays, so it is hard to find life-balance especially if you have a family, and can be very competitive and stressful. I know I'm a good cook, but I think I'm a better teacher! I cooked in a restaurant for my job during Grade 11-12, and continued into college. My part-time work paid for lots of my classes and travel, but I chose to teach for my career instead.

If Spaghetti and Pizza are Italian, what's French?

Poutine & Tourtière are Québécois. French foods include Tartiflette, Crêpes, Camembert, Baguettes, Crème Brûlée...

Where did you learn to speak French?

My mom was a kindergarten teacher and she taught me the alphabet and some words in French when I was a little girl. I somehow received a letter when I was in Grade 5: apparently there were spots open in a Late French Immersion program at another elementary school, so I changed schools in order to learn French! I went to Sullivan Heights Secondary in Surrey, and half of my classes were taught in French: les Sciences, Français Langue, les Sciences Humaines et l'éducation physique. I also went on two short 2-week exchanges with school: to Montreal during Grade 7, and to Paris during Grade 11.

What university / college did you go to?

I went to Simon Fraser University for four years after Grade 12. Back then the Surrey SFU only had technology courses, so I went to SFU Burnaby for my Bachelors of Arts. After graduation I took a year off to volunteer for the Olympics, work and travel, and then I went to SFU Surrey for one year to get my Bachelors of Education and become a Teacher: that year was all in French, and some of my classmates were from France! In total, I did 6 years of University (12 semesters), sometimes taking 4 classes at once, sometimes 3, and sometimes just 1 online during the summers. If you want to explore SFU's international programs you can look at www.sfu.ca/international - every university has similar programs, and you can often participate with another school as a 'visiting student'. The government also has extra bursary money for

students who travel for school - my roommate in Italy got \$4000 in bursaries so she could better afford the \$8000 program!

What did you major in?

Well, to be honest, when I first started university I had no idea what I wanted to do! So I started by doing "General Studies." I took Psychology, Math, English Fiction, English Poetry, Spanish, Economics, Nutrition, BC Literature... a huge variety of super interesting courses! I could have continued with General Studies but I ended up changing to Arts because I loved English so much. (Arts is anything that isn't Science... it's not the same as music or dance, those would be under "Fine Arts" which is different.) So eventually I declared my Major as English, and my Extended Minor as French. (An extended minor is halfway between a minor and a major)

How many languages do you speak?

I only speak English and French fluently. I took one Intro to Spanish course in my first year at SFU, but the students in that class were really distracting and I found Spanish confusing because it was both similar AND different from French. I often have to substitute teach Spanish classes now because it's usually part of the French teachers' courseloads, and I can say a few things, so I do okay... maybe I will try to learn it again! I can get by speaking in Italian because it's VERY similar to French, and I went to school in Italy for one semester so I learned a lot when I was there. Also I can have small conversations in Polish, because I learned a little while I was dating my highschool boyfriend, but it's very simple things like "How are you?" and "Please speak slowly!" and "Please pass the pierogies!" I've met people who work for the Olympics and speak 5, 6, 7 languages, so I'd love to one day be fluent in more languages than just English and French. I recently saw a YouTube video about a 16-year-old boy from New York who speaks 27 languages! Wow! He works very hard to learn each one, so it is a good example of how hard work & dedication pays off. Imagine all of the job opportunities he has now - he could pretty well work anywhere in the world! I try to learn how to say "Hello" and "Thank you" in as many languages as possible: Punjabi, Portugese, Russian, Hindi, Tagalog... it really makes people smile!

What do you enjoy most about Teaching?

Oh boy! That's a good question! There is a LOT I love about Teaching. First of all, I love learning. Being a teacher allows me to keep learning: from my courses, my students, my colleagues, and my experiences. If I ever need a challenge I can choose to teach new courses, or change Grade levels. If I want to travel I can do a Teacher Exchange pretty much anywhere in the world! I really love making a difference in my students' lives. You are the people who can change the world to be a better place, so my goal is to give you skills to be amazing innovators, thinkers, contributors, citizens, professionals. Teenagers are amazing, creative, stubborn, energetic... I really love connecting with teens and being the kind of teacher I always wished I had back when I was in school. I try to help students who struggle, and challenge students who get bored. Seeing you guys discover knowledge is the best part of my job. There are things I don't like (for example I get stressed out from marking!!!) but for now as a TOC I don't have the same workload as a regular teacher and I get to have a lot of fun in my job: for example, if I want to spend a day in Kindergarten, I can! I like Grades 8-12 the most, though. I learn something new every single day, and it makes my brain feel happy :)

DID YOU KNOW? There are people working for each university whose job it is to answer questions about their school. They're called "Advisors," and anyone can make an appointment to learn about post-secondary possibilities.