**EducationUSA - Tallinn, Estonia by Jae Jensen**

After traveling and studying abroad before, I expected my IE3 internship in Tallinn, Estonia to be a piece of cake. This assumption turned out to be false, as I found myself challenged and rewarded in completely new ways.

I chose an internship at the EducationUSA advising center in Tallinn to learn more about international education. EducationUSA is a global network that promotes U.S. universities and culture abroad. Estonia is a small, modern country in Northeastern Europe. During my internship I led an English Club, gave workshops and visited hundreds of students in schools. I assisted staff in their projects and got to create new events. The freedom and support I received from my supervisors empowered me to take on unfamiliar tasks. Working together with local people taught me a lot about the history and culture of the Baltic region; I spent my free time exploring.

This isn’t to say I never felt lost during my internship. In order to overcome problems, I had to swallow my pride and turn to my mentors and other new resources for help. This was surprisingly difficult since I thought I was so knowledgeable from my past experiences abroad. This also applied to life outside my internship. After ignoring the advice of my supervisor to wear more layers during the Estonian winter, I found myself with a nasty cold. Luckily she was there with recommendations about which teas and medicines would cure me afterwards. The more I opened my mind, the more I learned and grew as a person.

Interning abroad is different from studying abroad, just like interning is different from studying back at home. An internship is a place to apply skills learned in the classroom while gaining other totally new skills. I got to explore my strengths and weaknesses in a positive and forgiving environment, which has prepared me for my future. In my opinion, this is what made my internship the most valuable part of my undergraduate career.

I became so spellbound by Tallinn and its medieval Old Town, pristine nature and active cultural scene that I stayed for half a year after my internship, working and volunteering. My internship affirmed my interest in education and provided me with the experience I needed to apply to graduate school. A year after my internship, I’m starting a master’s program in Educational Leadership in Finland; EducationUSA was the perfect stepping stone between my undergraduate and graduate careers.