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Contact

Melissa Weber, Director of Communications
Phone: 320-589-6414, weberm@morris.umn.edu

Jenna Ray, Editor/Writer
Phone: 320-589-6068, jrray@morris.umn.edu

Education Students Accompany 8th Grade Science Trip

Summary: Luciana Ranelli '14, Claire Goodrich '14, and Evan Beranek '14 gain experience as future educators.

(May 23, 2014)-University of Minnesota, Morris education students Luciana Ranelli '14, Claire Goodrich '14, and Evan Beranek '14 participated in the 2014 South Dakota Field Investigations Trip. From May 12–16, they assisted 40 eighth-grade students with hands-on geological investigations throughout Badlands National Park, Wind Cave National Park, Devils Gulch, and Black Hills Formation.

The students traveled with Marlene Schoeneck, science methods instructor and Parkers Prairie High School teacher, who lead the trip. Schoeneck's eighth-grade class generated research questions, created hypotheses, and expanded perspectives on the South Dakota landscape. Ranelli, Goodrich, and Beranek accompanied them not only as chaperones, but also as future educators. By helping facilitate the expedition, they applied the lessons they learned from their time in Morris's education program.

"[The trip] reinforced and rekindled my motivation for going into science education," adds Ranelli. "Being in a field- and investigation-based environment with kids of the age that I want to work with took me back to formative outdoor learning experiences that I had and let me observe and practice how to facilitate that."

Goodrich adds, "when going through the elementary education program at Morris, I learned so much about creating hands-on, minds-on and inquiry based lessons. When we reached a site, it was my job to foster an environment of inquiry. Therefore, I would ask questions that would lead the students to determine the answers on their own."

The annual trip began when Schoeneck connected with the late Peter Whelan, professor emeritus of geology. In 2003, they began the first week-long field investigation trip with Schoeneck's eighth-grade classes through South Dakota. Since then, the expedition has become an annual opportunity for undergraduate education students to apply their teaching knowledge in the field.

"The trip gives me further interaction with Morris students that were in my science methods class in the fall and gives them the opportunity to put into action the work on inquiry-based learning and essential questions that we do in class," says Schoeneck. "It is an invaluable experience for the students in education and will generally impresses potential employers."

The South Dakota Field Investigations Trip is a collaboration between the University of Minnesota, Morris and the Parkers Prairie community. For more information, visit [their website](http://theirwebsite) or contact Schoeneck at mschoeneck@pp.k12.mn.us.

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