

JULIA ALVAREZ

This experience was fantastic for my roommate, Elysia, and me. This opportunity was one that I didn't know I would have. As a future English teacher and book lover, I love Alvarez. She is a writer who can change the lives of Spanish-speaking students. For Elysia, it was a life-changing experience from a young age.

The biggest thing that stuck out to me was Alvarez saying, "You don't have to choose." You don't have to choose between your culture and state. You should always choose your culture over your state. I have seen time and time again

that students' cultures are getting silenced in the classroom, and it breaks my heart. Alvarez discussed her 6th-grade teacher, who introduced her to real books and the art of writing. And I aspire to be like that for my students. I saw through her speech that teachers have to meet their students where they are, instead of trying to teach them something they don't know, which will slowly erase their culture.

I was so inspired as a future educator, and I aspire to be that one teacher. I can be that one teacher who changes a child's life for the better, like what happened to Alvarez. As an educator, you don't silence culture, you embrace it.

