

My name is Evan, and I am a Junior here at South Portland High School. I have lived in Maine for nearly all my life, and besides from some relatives in New York, Maine culture is really the only culture I know and am regularly immersed in and exposed to. I have lots of family that came to the U.S from Ireland and Scotland, but haven't done much digging on those cultures before.

This year in my Junior/Senior seminar class at SPSHS, we have had a heavy focus on learning about other cultures. This is important because it gives us a greater understanding of different approaches to life that we might use. For example, we've learned about Italy, and one of their key life philosophies is to slow down, and appreciate life even while doing nothing. I've tried to apply this to my life, at times to put down my phone even if I'm not doing anything, and just soak in the moment.

Every day to start class, we do a section of a packet learning about life philosophies from other regions. For example, one that we've focused on is the Ubuntu philosophy of some African countries. This emphasizes "the interconnectedness of all people," and that people become who they are due to their surroundings, and very importantly the people around them. The philosophy encourages building meaningful relationships and a strong community with others to help yourself, as well as others in the community, to reach their goals. We also focused on how we already practice this philosophy. For me, this came in the form of a shoulder injury, in which I met new people with the same injury. We formed a community together where we could help one another whenever necessary.

Recently, our class was fortunate enough to interact with students from Hawaii. Each student from both states uploaded videos introducing themselves as well as asking a question about general life for a student to answer from the other region. I asked the students from Kauai High School, how the school sports experience is there, on the westernmost major island of the Hawaiian archipelago. Contrary to what I thought, they do have a good sports community. There are three other schools they play against regularly, and there is a wide variety of sports offered, including ones that we don't even have here, like Air Rifery. A question that was proposed to me was if Lobster is the main Fish that we produce and eat in Maine. Although we are the greatest producer of Lobster, I told the student that we rarely eat Lobster because it's still quite uncommon and expensive. The most common fish here is Haddock, which is actually quite common at school lunch.