Essay: “Outline and discuss your academic and personal reasons for choosing to spend a term at Urban Life Center. What do you hope to achieve while you are here?”

I am applying to the Urban Life Center in hopes of having the privilege to complete my student teaching this spring in one of Chicago’s elementary schools. I grew up on a farm in a small, rural town in Indiana. My school system was not very diverse in that most of the children and adults were white, middle class. Also, most of Indiana’s schools are rural; therefore, the majority of my observations in teaching have been in similar settings. I realize that some of the children in the urban schools are forced to undergo more lifestyle stress than the average child, and I would like to prepare myself for these kinds of situations.

Not only would I like to experience the urban school setting, but I would also like to experience the urban lifestyle like that of Chicago. I have never lived in a big city and would like to determine whether a large city would be somewhere I would like to live in the future. I have worked in Indianapolis for a summer; however, I lived with my brother in a small town outside of the city. I received the experience of working in a city, but I still do not know what the “city life” is like. I also spent the last summer in Marburg, Germany, which allowed me to have more diverse experiences in education and culture; however, I would still like to expound upon the diversity of my experiences.

I intend to be ready for any type of teaching job I might encounter, and an urban school setting is one area in which I feel I would be unprepared without the experience gained through the Urban Life Center. Also, I feel the Urban Life Center is a safe way for me to test whether the urban school systems are where I should teach.