



Delving into Spanish Culture

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Cultural Exploration

SUMMARY

This past summer I went to Madrid, Spain for 2 months. My time abroad consisted of an internship and free time to explore Madrid while meeting new people. My internship was to work at a nonprofit that provided emotional and social services/workshops for people with schizophrenia (referred to as “usuarios”). My specific job was to plan and execute workshops. I hoped to improve my Spanish skills while also becoming accustomed to the Spanish lifestyle. I also wanted to work with mental health in a hands-on manner. By combining my personal and professional goals at the workplace, my Spanish speaking skills grew tremendously along with my confidence. I also reflected with my peers at work on how cultural values affected the people with schizophrenia and their treatment.



SPICES

This experience embodies the cultural exploration category. By going abroad to Spain and pushing myself to become fluent in Spanish, I explored another culture. Furthermore, I also analyzed the relationship between Spanish values and mental health while exploring.

HERBS

There were times when it was hard to speak Spanish at my nonprofit due to its niche environment but I still pushed myself, showing resilience.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

This attempt to learn and develop my Spanish to become fluent was an example of resilience. I also displayed project management in my internship because I would help to plan and execute the workshops. I even became the main leader of the English workshop for both planning and executing. I also demonstrated agency through accomplishment by feeling a tremendous amount of confidence after realizing I had the ability to stay in a different country by myself.



IMPACT

This experience benefited me because it pushed me to learn a new language, Spanish, in a completely immersive manner. Although my Spanish wasn't grammatically perfect, the manner by which I was able to navigate myself astounded me and inspired me to want to continue my use of this language in the future. I also benefited by being able to intern at the nonprofit I did. I learned how to work with mental health in a much more personal manner, which will help me in my future career aspirations. By interning at this nonprofit, I benefited the “usuarios” by introducing aspects of my own culture into the workshops.

ADVICE

I would advise other students to wholeheartedly take this opportunity. This experience allowed me to explore past my boundaries and gave me the freedom to do more than just the internship-a perfect mesh.