

The decision to study abroad was very difficult for me. When it came down to only about a month's time before leaving, I almost choose not to go. Just the thought of being in a foreign country, town, and school terrified me. Choosing to follow through once I had been excepted into the study abroad program was the most difficult, but the best decision I ever made. This experience not only has been one of the hardest things I have ever done, but it has been the most rewarding experience towards my teaching career.



I had many reasons for choosing Spain as my study abroad program, but it became all the more meaningful as I was there, experiencing it firsthand. Before going to Spain, I was up to date on all the required and needed coursework. The biggest challenge for me however, was it had been over a year since my last Spanish course. I would say that I wasn't near as prepared as I wanted to be or should have been before leaving, but that only made me struggle and work harder.

Every day immigrant students come into our classrooms, not knowing the language, being in an entirely new country, new school and they feel so lost. That is exactly how I felt. And honestly, the first week I did not want to be there. I missed everything about home. Everything was so much harder for me than the other students and I had an incredibly hard time communicating with my teachers and my host family. But this struggle helped me in so many ways. Every day became easier, little by little. My teachers knew I was struggling, and they did whatever they could to help me, as did my host family. Half way through I was doing much better. And by the third week I knew I had improved so much.



The study abroad program to Avila, Spain was very educational, yet very enlightening and an eye-opening experience. This specific study abroad program was only four weeks long, included six Spanish credit hours and two excursions per week, with optional weekend trips to explore other cities in Spain. The after school excursions were very educational and beautiful. As a class, we were taken to see different parts of our study abroad city, learn the history, explore the culture, all while taking in the beautiful, unique and ancient architecture. My favorite weekend trip was to Sevilla. This city was very beautiful and I was able to explore so much. The Flamenco show really showed the beauty and uniqueness of Spanish dancing. It was so incredible to explore and see so much abroad.

This experience has not made me fluent in a second language, but I was given exactly what I wanted to out of the experience. This experience will only help me as a future educator. I will be able to relate to my students who come into my classroom struggling with the language, experiencing a new country, new school, new classroom, and a teacher that may or may not understand them. I will do whatever it takes to help my students get the most out of learning in my classroom, whether that means communicating in gestures or body language or using technology to get



through to them. I hope to be the best teacher I can be, for I want my students to succeed every day. I recommend this experience for all future educators. This experience has shown me a new light. I will be able to draw on this experience throughout my life, and I hope to make others aware as to how much bigger the world is than what is recognized and especially how much we have in common with people who live half across the world or more away.



I would like to thank the college of education, my donors, my teachers, especially Dr. Davis, the support of my family and friends, and my host family for making this experience possible.

