

November 25, 2017

Extended Learning Opportunity Reflection

During the first trimester of my senior year I conducted an internship through the Extended Learning Opportunity program with the Spanish department at North Hampton School. Throughout this internship, I was able to observe, assist students, and teach fifth, sixth and seventh grade Spanish classes alongside Señor Johnston. I was able to complete this internship opportunity during warrior block and sixth block for one trimester with student, Taylor Yeley.

I have been speaking and learning Spanish since I was in third grade at North Hampton School. I continued my Spanish language education into high school and next trimester I will be a student in Spanish 5. The immersion opportunities I have had and the great language foundation that I obtained at NHS has empowered me to want to study Spanish in college. I love the language so much I wanted to harvest my appreciation for Spanish and go back to where my Spanish education all started.

My initial goal for this ELO was to improve my Spanish language skills. I knew that I wanted to study Spanish going into this internship. I was already enrolled in Spanish 5 but I wanted to do more when I had a trimester off from Spanish. I hoped that this internship would improve my Spanish, since I was not getting much practice considering there is not a large Spanish speaking community in the Seacoast of New Hampshire. I knew that my Spanish language skills would not improve drastically since I was an intern in lower level Spanish classes but my conversational skills would become enhance. I went into this experience with an open mind and I knew that I would definitely be getting something out of this great opportunity whether it was improving my Spanish language skills or not.

The environment of my ELO consisted of four different classes that I worked closely with, one seventh grade class, one sixth grade class and two fifth grade classes. I would arrive about fifteen minutes into the first seventh or sixth grade class. I would take a seat and observe for a little bit. Once the students would start working on an activity such as sentence translation or reading an article, I would walk around and try to help the students and engage in their learning. Some days there would only be one class so I had a desktop computer available to work on my project when students were not there.

In the first week or so of the internship, I felt a little awkward and I did not know what my place was right away. But, one particular class activity early in the trimester really helped me to understand why I was there. Señor Johnston was passing around this stuffed animal parrot as he called on fifth grade students to explain why it's important to speak Spanish. He had done this activity with the seventh graders too but their answers weren't as interesting. The fifth graders had great responses such as, "Well if you go to restaurant and the menu is all in Spanish, and you don't know Spanish so you end up ordering something like cow liver, that would be bad!" Or "If you have a friend that only speaks Spanish, you could help them out." The best answer I heard was "It's just cool. It just sounds cool." This simple answer confirmed that Spanish is cool and it

is important to learn and to have everyone as excited about Spanish as fifth grader, Nacho, was. I was able to understand my place, I simply was helping everyone to see how cool Spanish was.

Over the course of the internship, I was able to readjust my goals. I realized that the goal of my ELO was to help students to improve their Spanish, but as well get them excited about what the Spanish language has to offer, for example, traveling. I have had the opportunity to travel to two Spanish speaking countries, Costa Rica and Peru. As well, Señor Johnston has traveled and lived in many Spanish speaking countries such as Venezuela, Costa Rica, Spain, Mexico, Panama and many more. Through both of our travels we were able to show student how Spanish can allow you to become a better global citizen. For my ELO final, I shared with the three eighth grade classes and one seventh grade class about my trip to Peru. Señor Johnston and I decided that the older grades would be able to understand the presentation much better and find benefit in it since they are the students closest to becoming high schoolers. I shared about the culture and created three culture specific stations to engage the students more. Other than sharing about my amazing opportunity, I wanted the students to understand that it is possible for students to travel at their age. The fact that they are learning Spanish now opens up so many opportunities for them and the connections that can be made within the language are incredible and unforgettable.

Definitely what I liked the best about this experience was the ability to make relationships and connect with the students. I really liked helping the students to study their vocabulary, practice their skills checklists and teach them about new words in the Spanish language for example. I think I got a good response from the students and they liked having me in class. I really enjoyed seeing these middle schoolers as passionate about improving their Spanish, as I was at this age.

Overall, this was a great opportunity and I am so glad that I was able to go back to the place where my Spanish education all started. Sometimes it was difficult to balance the internship with other club meetings or sports but I always made it work even if I could only come for a short amount of time. I am glad that I was able to have this opportunity during my time in high school. I think the knowledge I have gained from the students, Señor Johnston and Spanish overall has helped me to determine where I want to focus my education for the next four years. I plan to study Spanish and International Studies in college but becoming a Spanish teacher is not particularly the exact profession I desire. For a long time, I wanted to be a Spanish teacher but now I am more interested in working for a non-profit relating to access to global education or working in an aspect of international affairs. After, completing my Extended Learning Opportunity, I got a taste of teaching and realized that I think it would be of value to me to get my teaching certificate in addition to whatever career I pursue, in either teaching Spanish or teaching English as a Second Language.