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Global Citizenship Essay

FYEX

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Understanding My Global Citizenship

When starting my first semester at Minnesota State University, Mankato I had no idea of how to start my global citizenship competency for the Honors Program. I was advised at my orientation meeting that it would be a good start to take a language course my first semester to see if it was the best choice for my language competency. After one semester in my language course I can already see a difference in my global citizenship competency. Throughout my life I was never fully exposed to different cultures, and my Spanish courses in high school never went into detail about the cultural side of learning a language. My high school didn’t give as many opportunities to learn about other cultures like events at Minnesota State have. I have only been at MNSU for a semester and I have been exposed to or offered to go to multiple events about people with different backgrounds. I will develop my global citizenship competency by exploring and developing my language competency, through courses and studying abroad, by attending events like the Green Card Voices presentation, and by personally getting to know some of the international students in and out of my classes.

I took three years of Spanish in high school and looking back my teachers never taught us much about culture in the classes. When reading the article about what language you speak changes your view on the world I learned that I agree with a large part of what the article said. I feel like I am two different people when I speak the different languages, and that I am making my brain stronger by challenging it with another language. According to the article, How the Language you Speak Changes your View on the World, it states that, “going back and forth between languages appears to be a kind of brain training, pushing your brain to be flexible,” and I feel that when I switch back and forth between my two languages I am getting my brain to adapt so it can learn both languages better (p. 2). I feel that by taking more Spanish language classes and getting my mind to be more flexible I will be able to broaden my global citizenship competency. If I can get my mind to understand that there are different ways to view the world it will make me a better journalist and all around humane person. I also feel that studying abroad will help me become this person. Culture is a huge part of learning a language and by physically going to a different country and learning the culture and language my global citizenship competency will expand giving me a deeper understanding of both.

Along with studying abroad I think I would be a good idea to personally get to know some of the international students that I have met in some of my classes. In my Spanish class I got to partner with one of the international students, named Andrew, to do a cultural project over Spain. I got the chance to understand how a language barrier is hard to work around. He wasn’t as fluent in English as some of the other international students, but we managed to communicate through gestures and by asking questions to each other. It got better over time and we ended up getting an A+ on the project. The Honors Student Handbook describes that I should ask “deeper questions about other cultures and seek out answers to these questions” and “to initiate and develop interactions with culturally different others” (p. 24). By getting to personally know culturally different others in and out of my classes I will begin furthering my global citizenship competency, because I feel that they will share with me the differences and similarities of each of our cultures. If I get to know these international students at Minnesota State I will have the opportunity to understand how knowing about different cultures makes me a more humane and globally competent person.

When getting to know a person from a different culture I need to be careful that I don’t disrespect them. I feel that sometimes I do not fully understand the culture and behavior behind people I interact with every day. For example, in the Taylor Mali video we watched on the *My Cultural Encounters* website I learned something new about people in my own culture. After watching the video I started to understand how much teachers put their lives into their career choices. It made me see that even though both the teacher and I were brought up in the same culture our view of it is different. The last line of the video is a stated “I make a (explicit) difference. Now, what about you?” helped me understand that making a difference in this world is something we are all trying to do (Moody, 3:04). We may have an understanding of the subject but we understand and view it differently if we don’t share our views with everyone else. By sharing our views we can become more globally competent citizens. At Minnesota State University, Mankato I plan on sharing my views, as well as, listen and ask questions about other people’s views to understand different cultures better.

There are so many different cultures in this world. It may be a difficult challenge to learn all that I can about different cultures while studying at MNSU, but I plan to try my best so I can complete my global citizenship competency. To do that I will develop my competency by exploring and developing my language competency, through courses and studying abroad, by attending events like the Green Card Voices presentation, and by personally getting to know some of the international students in and out of my classes. I am confident that I will be able to broaden my views on the world through these steps, and I feel that by mastering this competency I will be able to become a better communicator with people from different backgrounds. I look forward to seeing where my competency in this field takes me in my career.

Works Cited

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