

Integrative Narrative

I grew up in a monolingual household, but my family often hosted foreign exchange students, because of this, I was always exposed to different cultures and languages. I believe this is where my fascination for learning more about other countries and languages stemmed from. I always hoped one day that I would be able to travel and possibly live in another country. In high school I was presented with this opportunity. I applied to study abroad in Spain with Rotaract my final year of high school. While I wanted to learn Spanish and Spain seeming like the best option for that, I was unexpectedly sent to Italy. While not what I wanted, this ended up being one of the best surprises. There I learned so much about the Italian culture and the Italian language. It was so much more than I had expected.

Fast forwarding a few years later, I still had no idea what I wanted to do. I attended a community college for a while and then decided on marine biology. This is the reason I applied to CSUMB, however, I almost instantly changed my major after some spontaneous research about immigration from Latin America. After learning Italian, I felt I had a good grasp on romance languages. I decided to switch my major completely and go for a Spanish degree. As I had predicted, Spanish did come easily, to an extent. What I mean is, it was a lot more effortless learning it after Italian compared to trying to learn it before learning Italian. It was still extremely difficult. Up until studying abroad in Granada, Spain, I had a lot of trouble understanding everything in my classes.

Luckily I was given the opportunity to finally study in Spain, like I had originally wanted. This was a whole other incredible experience that continuously surprised me. Up until two months in I had trouble not getting my Spanish confused with my Italian. After conquering that I was able to try and immerse myself as much as possible into the Spanish culture. I loved it so much that I am planning on going back to complete a masters in human rights and peace studies. I can't wait to get back, but I will also never forget the experience that I had at CSUMB. I have been very inspired by professors and students alike here. I feel very fortunate to have been able to be a student here.