Kasandra Moreno

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SPAN 301S

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Mi viaje hacia el bialfabetismo

Dear Kasandra,

 You have completed your service learning at Palenke Arts and it have been a journey from start to finish. This is not your first time doing service learning in fact it is your third semester doing service learning. So you did have a general idea of how things were going to go but this time was different because you worked in a bilingual environment and you saw how bilingualism affect the community and the arts. During this time that you served you learned a lot, how spanish is integrated with english, the importance of bilingualism and how it is an important part of your own life.

 I want to start with when you started speaking and learning spanish. There was not a specific moment that you can remember when you learned spanish, it was always a part of your life along with english. With the language survey, you learned a lot about yourself from a different perspective because you never thought about those types of questions to ask yourself. You can see how spanish in your education was not a prominent aspect of your life until high school, you found that out from question 51. Did you have Spanish as a foreign/second language in high school?, you have realized that it has affected your spanish because up until that point you were learning from your family it was not “proper spanish”. The language survey also made you realize that although you consider yourself of a native speaker you have trouble expressing yourself, reading and writing and even talking at times. The survey has made you realized that you have a lot to learn in regards to furthering your own spanish.

 Your own comprehension of what it means to learn and study other languages has been added to. The reason that I say that is because when reading “Words Were All we Had”, you were able to see how people were learning and studying spanish. You were able to see the similarities and differences from how they learned spanish compared to how you learned spanish and english. You saw that they learned spanish at home just like how you did when you were younger, that they mainly learned english in the classroom, and how some found their passion for spanish in college and decided to study it just like how you are doing it. You also saw how they were different in how they learned as well, you saw that some learned from magazines and the bible, that they lived a dominant spanish speaking household.

Your personal comprehension of service learning has changed through the semester from what you knew from previous semesters where you have also done service learning. Past semesters you did my service learning in regards to building the community through the arts and teaching. Something that you noticed through all three semesters is that they all had the theme of bilingualism even if it was not prominent in the first two semesters that you took service learning. When you first took service learning your spring semester of freshman year you were naive to what it meant to serve the community around you, you learned that service can either be harmful or helpful, that it is better to pay attention to what the community needs rather than putting your thoughts and actions into place. When it came to taking your second class of service learning you took what you learned from the previous service learning class and you integrated it into the new class. During this service learning experience you learned that there is an importance from ESL teachers especially in areas that is dominated by a spanish speaking environment and it helped you with finding your passion of wanting to become an ESL teacher because you already have the knowledge of bilingualism. For this class you integrated what you learned from your previous service learning experiences and brought it to a higher level because you already had a solid idea of what it meant to serve the community. This time was different because you were to really focus on using bilingualism during your service. By the end of your service, your definition of service has changed yet again. At first it was how can you service the community around you then to how could your career path help service the community and now it is how can you integrate bilingualism with serving the community, especially those in dominant spanish speaking areas.

Through your service learning you learned so much in regards to how bilingualism is integrated with art and how it plays a major role in the life of the students and even yourself. You saw how the students were given the opportunity to integrate both english and spanish, something that you did not have because it was not there for you. You also saw how important Palenke Arts is for the community in regards to helping students have a creative outlet to express themselves and to be able to learn about culture through various art mediums.

In conclusion you’ve learned and gained a new insight on life. You are a student who has learned the value of bilingualism in the arts and service. I would have to say that the most important insights that you have gained is that bilingualism is always going to be integrated in every aspect of your life from when you become a teacher to when you are having a casual conversation with your friends. The area that you experienced the greatest intellectual growth is your overall access to knowledge, especially when it came to subjects that you did not know very well. You learned about different perspectives and values, you were able to hear from people’s personal lives and how they see things versus how you see things. I believe that the area that you still want to learn more about is having a greater comfort level with having open discussion with others in spanish because I know that you are nervous that people will judge your spanish because you are suppose to be a native speaker who knows how to speak her own native tongue. I know that your goals that you would like to fulfill during your vacation toward bilingualism is be confident in spanish just like how you are with english. You want to be able to speak without being shy about responses or afraid that others are going to judge how well your spanish is. I know that you would also like to improve your writing because I know that it is not the best and it can use some improvement.