

Emily Lyon

Global Citizenship Competency Essay

Dr. Dahlman

Honors First Year Experience

Becoming a Global Citizen

Throughout my time here at Minnesota State, I have had many cultural experiences that I would never have gotten if I hadn't come to a university which truly embodies the term "diverse". From working for the university's copying and printing services, taking a Spanish class, and simply being aware of the people around me, I have come to the conclusion that culture is all around us here at MSU.

Since starting classes at Minnesota State in August, I have also been working part-time for the university's copying and printing centers. This may not seem like it would have given me the opportunity to expand my knowledge of other cultures, but it definitely has. I have gotten the opportunity to interact with many international students who come with questions about how to get things copied or how to print things off, and I am more than happy to help them. Sometimes it is a challenge to try to explain to someone who is not a fluent English speaker how to do something on the computer, but it has really opened my eyes to how many international students we have here on campus. They are extremely driven individuals much like myself, and by coming to me with their questions they are able to learn more about going to school in America

and what Americans are like. I am proud to be able to provide them with that knowledge through something as simple as sitting behind a desk in the library.

The second thing that has given me a true global citizenship experience at MSU is continuing my studies in Spanish. I started taking Spanish classes as a freshman in high school, and since then my interest in the language and its associated cultures have grown immensely. However, my college experience with Spanish has been a unique one since my professor is a native speaker. The only other time I was taught by a native speaker in school was as a sophomore, but the rest of my knowledge of Spanish came from American teachers. My professor this semester is from Colombia, and her knowledge of the language and her own cultural identity has taught me so much about global citizenship in the short time I have been enrolled in the class. Her knowledge extends beyond her own culture, however. For example, a few weeks back we were learning about the country of Uruguay, where they make a type of tea drink known as *mate* ('MAH-teh'). Instead of just showing us pictures of the drink or reading about it to us, my professor actually brought in real mate! She showed us all the ingredients, made it right in front of us, and let us all try it. That experience showed me what a true global citizen is; not only being aware of, but embracing cultures that are not your own.

The final cultural experience that I have learned from here at MSU is simply experiencing the different types of people on this campus. How they talk, dress, act, and present themselves are all key components of their individual culture. For example, I often walk through the CSU and when I am on the second floor, sometimes I will see people practicing their prayer rituals in the lounge areas across from the ballroom. This shows that there is culture all around us, and religion is a large part of that culture. Other examples of culture on campus are

international students speaking their native language with other students who speak it. This is particularly fascinating to me because I believe that as native English speakers, we are very blind to the fact that people speak languages other than English. So to hear other languages being spoken all around me really gives me the sense that so much diversity can be found on this one campus.

Overall, my global citizenship experience here at MSU has been a wonderful one so far. I have encountered many different cultures at work, in class, and just around campus. These experiences have helped me grow tremendously as a global citizen because I am gathering an understanding of other cultures based on brief encounters, verbal and nonverbal communication, and all of this is helping me to understand myself in terms of my own culture. Here at Minnesota State, culture is truly all around us.