

Personal Statement

I always knew I wanted to pursue a higher learning education but I was unsure of what exactly I wanted to study. I decided to go into a community college, hoping I would find something of interest and fortunately I did. I always showed interest in language & history, specifically Chicano/a Studies. Through the major of Spanish Language & Hispanic Cultures, I was able to integrate both of these.

I grew up in the United States without much knowledge of my Mexican identity or heritage. All I knew was based on the few stories my parents told me as a child and the books I began to read where I could identify myself. It's been hard to retain those memories, which is why I've made it a habit to document everything in a journal. I learned about my identity through literature, poetry, and expressing those emotions by writing my own poetry. At the same time while doing so, I had a culture shock because the more I read, the more I wanted to know. This led me to study Spanish not because it is my native language but because I wanted to immerse myself in a culture that had been denied to me by society. In elementary school I had a teacher who was unwilling to help me with the language barrier I was facing. It was until my mom transferred me to a bilingual school that I was able to receive the help I deserved. In second grade I had a teacher who was passionate about education and who took her time in teaching me how to read in both English and Spanish. I am so grateful she cared about my learning and thanks to her my love for books and language has grown.

While being at CSUMB and Hartnell College, I have learned so much more than I expected. I thought I knew Spanish and although I can speak it, there is always something to learn. My experience at CSUMB has been rewarding. The Spanish language is so rich, it has so much history and culture like other languages. One of the courses I've enjoyed as an upper division student is my Service Learning. Last fall I volunteered at the Cesar Chavez Library in Salinas doing different activities. From assisting a teacher with his ESL students, helping children in the homework center to helping adults study for their citizenship test. My language is an integral part of my

service learning and I like using it to my advantage to help others because I know the difficulty of learning a new language while trying to maintain the native one. In my History & Politics of Mexico course, I was able to understand about the different civilizations that existed in Mexico before the Spanish conquest/invasion & how they impacted the history of Mexico. This was the first class I took where I felt my voice and opinion mattered. Throughout my literature courses and the other courses I've taken, I've found many connections that are relevant.

After CSUMB, I plan on going to Mexico for a while, to immerse myself in the language and culture. My long-term plan is to go to grad school, so maybe next year I'll come back to the states or I might stay in Mexico for grad school. In the long run, I want to motivate first generation students, and help English Language Learners adapt to the culture, as well as help them with their speaking. Being a Spanish & ELL tutor at CSUMB has given me a variety of options for my career.