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WLC 400

Overall Integrative Narrative

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When I started out in community college, I was originally a Chicano Studies Major, and as a requirement I needed to take a language class. I decided on taking Spanish because I thought *this must be an easy class, I already know Spanish*. But I was wrong. Spanish is not easy, and suddenly I found myself questioning everything I thought I knew. My first Spanish class opened my eyes to a world I was unaware of. After I read *The House on Mango Street* by Sandra Cisneros, among other Latin American & Chicana/o writers, I felt a sense of belonging. Professor Vacaflor, introduced me to many writers I could identify myself with. I decided to change majors at the end of the semester because I wanted to rediscover who I really was. Even though I grew up in the U.S, I didn't have knowledge of my parent's native country, and for most of my childhood & adolescence I felt like a person without an identity. I didn't feel pride in being the descendant of Mexican parents, and this country shamed me for it. When I began reading literature, and poems about my cultural identity, I felt I had a place and a home. Up to this point my family shames me for being a Spanish major but what I can't make them understand is that the Spanish major has taught me more about myself than they have.

Growing up, I never saw Spanish as an attribute because it was my first language and mainly because throughout middle school and high school I got shamed for it. I realize now that Spanish is a positive in my life and I am so proud of myself for not getting discouraged in the process.

My journey at Cal State Monterey Bay has been extraordinary. I've learned so many things from this major on a social, political, historical and especially cultural level. I've learned things that I will carry with me throughout my life. A class that had a huge impact on me was my Service Learning Course. It inspired me to be more active in my community, to

be engaged, and mostly to be aware of the social issues affecting Latinos. I'm so proud of the impact I had on my Service Learning site and that in one way or another I could help the ESL students at Cesar Chavez Library. The Spanish major spans from a variety of political, historical and cultural aspects, and they can all be applied in all the courses I've taken. Aside from learning about myself as an individual and my roots, this major has also taught me how to think critically, how to write clearly and how to communicate well with others. Perhaps the most important lesson I've learned is to appreciate and understand other Latin American cultures besides my own.

All the courses I've taken at CSUMB have helped me grow academically and thanks to all my professors, fellow students and my capstone advisor, I feel motivated to continue pursuing higher education. Once I graduate in the Spring of 2018, I hope to get accepted into the AmeriCorps program for the Monterey County. If I do get accepted, my plan is to go to grad school in the Fall of 2019, since the programs runs for a school year. At this moment, I just want to gain more experience before I dive into grad school.