

CONNECTIONS

A Publication of the World Languages Department at UNW, 2019

LEARNING TOGETHER

On November 17th, seniors in the ESL Education Licensure program attended the 2018 Minnesota English Learners Education (MELED) Conference. This is an annual event with hundreds of educators, where teacher candidates can expand on the concepts they are learning in their classes and placements by engaging with other professionals in the field.



Rebekka Schoell called it “an empowering day focused on advocacy, encouragement, and professional growth.” UNW teacher candidates were able to pick and choose which sessions they wanted to attend at the conference, with topics ranging from classroom management to the use of film in ESL classrooms. Sophia Swanson called the conference a “rich and meaningful experience” and came away with several ideas for immediate application in her classroom placements.

An emphasis of the conference’s keynote speaker was seeking to understand ESL students rather than seeking only to be understood by them, and the future educators in attendance learned the importance of meeting their students’ expectations and understanding each student’s individual story. When it came to refugee students, a takeaway for Ni Thaw Gay was the importance of building relationships with students in order to validate and support them.

Hadassah Erickson attended a number of sessions where she learned how to enable her students to tell their stories and how to empower students by giving them a voice with which to express themselves. “The learners in our classrooms are forming who they believe they are in school, at home, and within themselves. Each of them possesses their own journey and story to tell regarding who they’ve been and who they are becoming.”

Northwestern teacher candidates were inspired and challenged by the conference and can’t wait to return in the years to come. “It was so encouraging and helpful to connect with other educators from the state and have discussions about doing what we love,” said Jenaya Crestik.

EXPANDING HORIZONS

During the Fall 2018 semester, four UNW students in the Spanish program studied abroad in Costa Rica in the city of Desamparados, San José. Abigail Fisher, Mallory Willett, Kimberly Alquicira, and Alyssa Morris spent the semester learning and experiencing a new culture as well as spreading the love of God to those they encountered. “It’s hard to put into words how much we loved the ministry portion of our semester and how beautiful it was to share the gospel and God’s love with the people of Costa Rica,” said Abigail, a senior Spanish and Christian Ministry major at UNW.

The students spent the first six weeks taking language classes and learned more about Spanish grammar, literature, and culture. In addition to formal language study, the group was able to improve their Spanish by interacting with the Costa Rican host families they lived with during their stay. “We built up amazing relationships with our families, and we got to learn about the culture (including the delicious food) in a much more hands-on way,” Abigail remarked.

Following this initial period of study, the students were placed in different ministry sites. They were involved in planning activities for children and youth, teaching skills such as sewing and cooking to women, working at a community health site, and traveling to different communities teaching about exercise, healthy cooking, and gardening. “God worked in us and through us a lot last semester,” said Abigail, “and I know that we will all hold Costa Rica close to our hearts.”



Four additional Northwestern students, Emma Petry, Vanessa Gonzalez, Margaret Emahiser, and Sophia Hudson, spent the semester studying abroad in Seville, Spain. The students were able to improve their language skills and experience a different culture while encountering exciting new people and places in Europe. A highlight for Emma, a junior

Spanish Education major, was conversations with her “host mom” in the evenings. “In the moment, it felt like such a small thing, but looking back I really miss it.” In addition, new foods (Cuban rice, in particular), traveling around Europe, and learning how to dance *Sevillanas*—a type of flamenco—made the semester memorable.

Of course, it wasn’t all fun and games. “God also brought several challenges into my life during this semester, including being away from family for so long, budgeting, and Spanish grammar!” Emma reflected. “However, he also provided many blessings. The Spanish professors were fantastic, and I had my favorite Thanksgiving ever while in Spain. Step by step, I’m still learning to place my trust in God and look for his blessings. I highly encourage study abroad!”



CONNECTIONS

is a publication of the Department of World Languages at the University of Northwestern—St. Paul for the following:

MAJORS

ESL Education
Spanish Education
Spanish

DUAL LICENSURE

MAJORS
ESL/Elementary
ESL/Spanish
Elementary/Spanish
ESL/CALE

MINORS

Spanish, TESOL,
Modern Languages,
Chinese Studies,
International
Studies,

and all
language students.

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LANGUAGE CLUBS

The language clubs at Northwestern host events and provide opportunities for cultural experiences. Anyone can join! If you would like to join a club or receive information about events, please contact one of the advisors listed below.



CHINESE

Prof. Hongna Bystrom: hrbystrom@unwsp.edu



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Dr. Matthew Miller: mlmiller@unwsp.edu
Department Chair



SPANISH

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Dr. Feng-Ling Margaret Johnson:
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Prof. Jonell Pacyga: jlpacyga@unwsp.edu
Program Coordinator of ESL Education
and Spanish Education



UPCOMING EVENTS

- Spanish Praise Chapels – March 6, April 17, 2019
- Spanish Senior Capstone Presentations – May 8, 2019
- Spanish Language Day – November 15, 2019
- Chinese Language Day – February 6, 2020
- Russian Language Day – February 27, 2020

UPCOMING CLASSES (FALL 2019)

Russian Language and Culture	Intermediate Chinese
Beginning Spanish	Intermediate Spanish