

CONNECTIONS

A Publication of the Department of World Languages at the University of Northwestern – St. Paul, 2021

TEACHING AMIDST COVID-19 CHALLENGES

The COVID-19 pandemic has presented new teachers, such as Ni Thaw Shar (née Gay, pictured below), with a unique set of challenges. Ni Thaw graduated from Northwestern in Fall 2019 with a major in English as a Second Language Education. She is now working as a long-term substitute teacher at Roseville Area High School, instructing students in grades 9-12.

“My first day of work was via Zoom,” she recounted. “I never thought I would be teaching from home, but COVID-19 has impacted our schools in so many ways – good and bad.”

Ni Thaw shared, “It has been challenging navigating distance learning mainly because I am not able to build a community or relationships with my colleagues and students in person.”

Distance learning has made language instruction particularly difficult, with distance learning having a disproportionately greater negative impact on multilingual learners than others. “I believe that part of language learning is through in-person human interactions,” said Ni Thaw, “and COVID-19 has taken that away from us.”

However, Ni Thaw is optimistic about teaching under these restrictions: “We’re so privileged to still be able to learn and build classroom community and relationships through technology tools,” she said. “I think now we have so much more appreciation for technology and everything that we can benefit from [by its use].”



SPANISH, HEALTH CARE, AND GRACE

Moriah Maunu (pictured below) graduated in Spring 2020 with a B.S. degree in Interdisciplinary Studies (Health Science and Psychology) and a B.A. in Spanish. Like many others, Moriah had her senior year cut short by the COVID-19 pandemic and has had to wrestle with unexpected circumstances.

“Since graduating, I have had to reconsider what I thought I thought post-grad life would be like.” Moriah was laid off from her job at a clinic in the Twin Cities after which she had to find creative means of employment over the summer. Since then, however, she has found work in Duluth, working in an emergency department and in a chiropractic clinic.



Aside from academics and the ability to speak Spanish, Moriah believes the most important lessons she learned from Northwestern were to be more empathetic and the importance of interpersonal relationships, both of which she finds incredibly valuable during the pandemic. “I am realizing the importance of being kind to

myself and others, as all of us are being affected differently.”

During these recent challenges, Moriah has only become more passionate about pursuing a career in health care. Despite the present circumstances, Moriah is staying strong and learning a lot. “Through it all, I’m learning to have grace for myself and others. No one has all the answers, and I am learning to be okay with not knowing what life will be like six months, one year from now.”



**UNIVERSITY OF
NORTHWESTERN
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DEPARTMENT OF
WORLD LANGUAGES

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/Communication Arts &
Literature Education (CALE)

MINORS

Spanish
Teaching English to Speakers of
Other Languages (TESOL)
Modern Languages
Chinese Studies
International Studies

and all
language students.

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LANGUAGE AND CULTURE CLUB ADVISORS

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

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UPCOMING EVENTS

- Spanish Praise Chapels
- Spanish Senior Capstone Presentations
- World Language Day: Chinese
- World Language Day: Russian
- World Language Day: American Sign Language (ASL)
- World Language Day: Spanish

UPCOMING CLASSES (FALL 2021 & SPRING 2022)

- CHN 2101 & CHN 2102 Intermediate Chinese
- SPA 1001 & SPA 1002 Beginning Spanish
- SPA 2101 & SPA 2102 Intermediate Spanish
- RUS 3805 & RUS 1806 Beginning Russian