

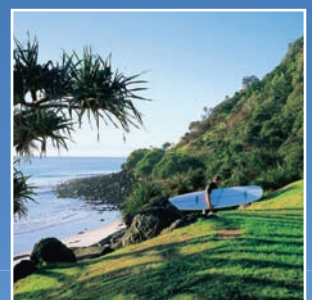
BOND UNIVERSITY

LIFE CHANGING EXPERIENCE

My name is Von Marie Rodriguez and I came to Bond University through the CCIS St Bonaventure Program. As a full-time College student at Miami Dade College I put myself to a challenge by travelling thousands of miles away from home and settling in a five room villa with unknown strangers and begin my journey which I call: LIFE.

Now attending Bond University in Gold Coast, Australia I've learned to take the whole meaning of learning in a whole new perspective. Studying Abroad has opened those closed doors for me. It has given me the chance to look at life in a different panorama and value what the definition of learning really is. Learning is defined as to gain knowledge or understanding of or skill in by study, instruction, or experience (Merriam-Webster.com). This is what Bond has provided for me. Bond has given me a chance to explore the outside world at a different cultural level, and admire the real beauty of life. Bond University allows students to be themselves and use what they learn as a hands-on technique. At Bond, the students become the teacher. As a group we teach each other versus having to learn on our own. There is so much inspiration, dedication, and devotion surrounding us that makes the learning fun. The teaching continues even after the semester ends. As a Bond student I've been able to indulge my time in acquiring the teaching and making it a useful part of my everyday life. Obstacles have come and gone, but at the end of the day the learning overcomes the tension.

Personally speaking given this opportunity has helped me become wiser and strong willed to do as I please. It's helped me become who I am today and not look back to what I could have been. Bond has shaped me into a new student, a student full of commitment, desire and admiration for the outside world. I've always been one to never regret what I do, and this has to top the list. I will never look back and regret this experience because to me this is an experience of a life time. I'm glad to have taken this step into the future, for it being one that I'll never forget. Choosing Bond University as my study abroad institution has given me the outcome I wanted... learning at a whole different level.



**BOND
UNIVERSITY**
BRINGING AMBITION TO LIFE



Testimonials from our students

Read through our students' reflections based on their experiences in a study abroad program.

2005 Hispanic Heritage Study Program

As for any words about the experience: words aren't enough to express how humbled I have been by going to Spain and spending time there. I fell in love with Madrid and I would like to study over there for at least a semester. I have made incredible friends, too, and reconnected with a few others. I work on my Spanish more every day and I even go to church with a fellow student that went overseas with us. My life has been changed, and people noticed that my attitude changed after I came back. I think about the trip constantly and would like to see this study done again, even though I can't go again. I want to be there, though, to speak to the new group that may go.

- Ender Guerra



The following reflection is in Spanish from a participant of the 2005 Hispanic Heritage Study Program:

VIAJE A ESPAÑA

-por Augusta Cornejo

Podría escribir sobre todas las invaluables piezas de arte que he visto durante el transcurso de este viaje a Madrid-España. También podría escribir sobre los lugares visitados como son El Museo del Prado, El Museo Reina Sofía, El Palacio Real, El Valle de los Caídos, El Escorial, los conventos, los monasterios, las catedrales e iglesias, o las visitas que hicimos a las ciudades de Toledo y Segovia y a la casa donde nació Miguel de Cervantes; sin embargo, creo que todo eso podemos verlo y conocerlo en los libros de historia o en el Internet, aún cuando un libro o una página Web, no nos revele del todo, la verdadera maravilla que es estar parado, por ejemplo, frente a las Meninas de Velázquez en el Museo del Prado y contemplar en toda su dimensión lo majestuoso de la obra y vivirla y sentirla, o poder apreciar la primera edición del Quijote en la casa de Cervantes. Mi opción ahora, es poder compartir con ustedes, todos aquellos pequeños detalles que hacen de la España actual, una mezcla de tradición y post modernidad donde lo antiguo se une con lo nuevo, sin perder en ninguno de los dos casos, su esencia. Es decir, ambos conviven en perfecta armonía.

El viaje a España me ha enseñado muchísimo más que obras de artes y lugares históricos. Este viaje a España me ha enseñado sobre todo, a entender de donde provenimos los hispanos y la importancia de su cultura en Latino América.

España no sólo es una ciudad rica en su historia, sino que además es rica en su cultura y su idioma. Las personas son amables y cálidas, expresiones del día a día como "currrear" (trabajar), "gafe" (mala suerte), "me piro" (me voy), "mosquear" (molestar), "flipeado" (volado), "se me fue de la olla" (se me olvidó algo), "vale" (de acuerdo) me hacían sentir como si estuviera en casa, ya que me trataban y me hablaban como si fuera uno de ellos. Don Florencio, el conductor del bus que nos llevó a todos los lugares con el mejor de los ánimos, un día nos esperó con una jarra de sangría preparada por él mismo, después de una excursión. La guía del tour, Hani, se

preocupó de enseñarnos cuanto podía en la apretada agenda que teníamos, mezclando historia y anécdotas para hacer entretenida la visita. El caballero que atendía el restaurante donde usualmente cenábamos, Paco, hacía lo indecible por hacernos sentir cómodos, explicando con paciencia qué significaba cada uno de los platos ofrecidos en la carta. En fin, todos y cada uno de ellos, nos demostraron con su trato o de alguna otra manera, que ellos son parte de América y América parte de ellos.

También, hubo muchas pequeñas cosas que llamaron mi atención. Una de ellas fue la visita a Caja Madrid donde la Sra. Carmen Estrada nos recibió con calidez y amabilidad. Ella nos habló de la importancia que tenía en la vida cultural de España esa institución financiera y nos dio algunos ejemplos de lo que hacían. En parte de su exposición, mencionó que en España se están recibiendo muchos inmigrantes de todas partes, “lo cual nos viene bien a los españoles, porque hay trabajos que nosotros ya no queremos hacer” (esas fueron sus palabras textuales). La percepción que tuve sobre ese comentario con respecto a la inmigración, confíenos que me sorprendió, sin embargo me di cuenta que tal vez yo interpreté sus palabras en un sentido que no tenían, así que le pregunte a dos personas españolas y me respondieron lo siguiente: uno de ellos lo interpretó así y me dijo: ella lo dijo, porque hay trabajos técnicos que son muy cotizados en España y que los españoles ya no los hacen. El otro me dijo que ella se estaba dirigiendo a un público norteamericano y fue por eso el comentario. Es decir, nos encontramos ante tres diferentes interpretaciones de una misma frase.

En esencia lo que quiero decir es que este increíble viaje lo llevaré conmigo como una experiencia inolvidable, porque compartí con un grupo de personas entre profesores y alumnos los mejores momentos de mi paso por el MDC. Gracias por eso

Summer in Aix-en-Provence

- Kaitlin Berger

As living creatures, we form subjective perceptions of external events to promote survival. As human beings, these perceptions are used to push forth ideas and actions beyond that which is necessary for survival. Artists use what they perceive to create meaningful expression and reflection of events. This past summer, I came to monumental realizations about myself as an artist, a human, and a part of the delicate living equilibrium that is nature.

The foreign exchange program I attended for painting in Aix en Provence, France was a major factor in shaping these realizations and without a doubt the most significant period of mental expansion so far in my life.



The classes I attended focused on painting the southern Provençal landscapes. Instead of tight geometric paintings, which I had previously been working on, and getting frustrated with, the teachers encouraged loose, emotional representations. With this as a primary goal, I was able to enjoy myself, and clear my head. I also found that I was much less critical of these landscapes than of previous works. The most significant leap I made was in self-expression. I found that strong blatant, flashy political symbols were not necessary in my art in order for my voice to be heard. By downplaying or completely eliminating the role of man in my serene landscapes, I realized I was adequately expressing my reverence for the earth.

Living in a different culture with a different family raised my awareness about a culture, society, and myself. Through observation and interaction with the French, I learned infinite amounts about their mannerisms and lifestyles including etiquette, cuisine and dining, and basic

communication. Of course, everything I experienced was inadvertently measured by comparison with American behavior. As a result, I became aware of aspects of the American way of life that I had not taken note of before.

One quality I have always disliked about Miami is the lack of apparent history. I became increasingly aware of this upon my stay in France where passing buildings dating back to 1400 became a regular part of each day. In both Aix en Provence and Paris I learned about art, religion and history through visiting museums, cathedrals and landmarks.

Undoubtedly, the most self-growth and consciousness gained through the trip revolved around my views of nature. Having been raised in Miami for the majority of my life, being able to walk twenty minutes and be submersed in forest and mountains, as I was able to in Aix en Provence, was as foreign to me as the French culture. Not that I was insensitive to mother nature before the trip, but I developed complete reverence towards her through routinely painting, hiking and swimming in some of the most beautiful places I have ever seen.

Before I left for France, I was conscious that the one consistency I held throughout my eclectic interests was a mindful desire for self-discovery. While overseas my focus transitioned from self-discovery to a holistic balance. Suddenly, my concerns switched from myself as an individual in society to myself as part of an endlessly connected whole, from mundane and self-centered, to spiritual and enlightened. I began to find my way back to a primitive equilibrium and completely rid myself of the conception that man is the dominant creature on this earth. This balance meant two things for me. First, I began to develop a spiritual conviction which involved viewing myself as a whole and therefore viewing everything as an extension of myself. Secondly, I meant to find a balance between myself as a social human being and as one who seeks a natural way of life. These two concepts became my beacons. They illuminated a development that had already occurred in me and they foreshadowed development in a positive direction. It meant I understood my place in society and more importantly that I had found a strong sense of who I am.

I made quantum leaps with many different aspects of life this past summer. The exchange program in France was in itself, an amazing experience. The personal insight I gained within myself on this trip is relevant to my past, present and future and therefore holds the most import. My passion for life consists of an urge to learn and, more importantly, to experience everything life has to offer. My interests in art, culture and society, and nature exploded during this trip and will continue to drive me to paint, to learn, to travel and to experience life on every level, as much as is humanly possible.

The first two days in Venice my friend from New York and I used to walk fast like to maniacs because we are so used to the fast pace of the city. Then we accostumed ourselves to the tranquility and the slow pace of life and we realized that life is too short why walk fast, why hurry, why worry, relax and enjoy yourself your in Venice. Being in Venice has given me the oppportunity to think what I really want in life, what I need to do when I get back to Miami and what I need to focus and prioritize. In miami I never really had time to thing since I was involved in so may things. My skin looks radiant and healthy because I dont worry and my legs had grown strong since I exercise everyday by walking to all my destinations. The food is GREAT!!!! I eat pasta everyday. I have been cooking a lot, washing my ownb clothes and doing things on my own. Venice has also given me the oppportunity todo thing on my own and not depend on mommy for help. I have grown mentally, physically, as a young women, and as a person overall. Viva L'Italia, Mamma Mia che BELLA cittÃf !!!!

Venice, Summer 2006

- Paloma Acosta

I would like to consider myself a child of the universe; hopefully a person that would be comfortable living anywehere in the world, yet I am having the hardest time typing this paragraph right now simply because the keys are different in France than in the U.S. Being completely surrounded by another language is an experience that every person should go through. It is a shock that will no doubt make you a stronger individual. It was a bit scary getting to Annecy, because the GARE ROUTIERE (bus station) was hidden behind this little chapel while I was looking for a the church I was told was next to it. When I finally arrived everything was very new and exciting, this town is absolutely beautiful. The old village is supposedly the place to see, but even the modern part of town amazes me; so much so that I haven't even bothered to visit la vielle ville yet. The family I am living with is very friendly, although they don't speak a word of english. Yesterday we drove 5 minutes into the hills and found ourselves in the countryside, where the adjacent town was having a spectacular garage sale. I felt like I was in one of those old movies like "Heidi"the whole time I was there-I loved it. Now; I hate to admit this, but it is necessary: after almost missing the bus into town and not hearing english for almost 24 hours, I was gladder than I should have been to see the other Americans at IFALPES. I'm almost certain that nostalgia for english will pass though, as I already find myself thinking in French and making investments into buying warmer clothes, as I'm sure I was meant to live here.

IFALPES, Annecy 2006

- Loren Mejia

Eric Sevilla
19 November 2005



Bio of My Traveling Abroad

My name is Eric Sevilla. I was born in Argentina and lived there all my life until approximately five years ago when I moved to the United States. Living in a third world country for the majority of my life taught me of the hardships of the people that even with an education could not earn enough to feed their families. When I moved to the United States, I saw how the system works differently in a country that is not stagnated by unchanging economic growth.

In the U.S. with a strong education, one can easily achieve the level of success a person could ever dream of in other places. This is truly the land of opportunities for those who have a real desire to excel and succeed in life. It is this reason that sparked my interest and has become my personal motivation to gain as much education and experience as a global citizen as possible. Getting to Miami and seeing a melting pot of cultures, traditions and languages, made me realize that a person should try their best to achieve a global education. I define myself as Argentinean because that is the place where I was born. I define myself as American because that is the place where I live now. I define myself as Jewish because that is the religion that I practice. I define myself as Hispanic because Argentina is part of the Hispanic countries. I define myself as European because my ancestors are from Europe. However, my overall identity is defined as a global citizen who acts on behalf of the world as a whole.

This idea of my identity was developed after traveling and studying abroad. As a young kid, I was fortunate enough to visit Chile, Brazil, Paraguay and most of Argentina. However, the past five years have been the most active one in terms of traveling and learning from others. In the past five years, I have been fortunate enough to travel to Mexico, Peru, Canada, Austria, Germany, Spain, Israel and Turkey. These trips have definitely influenced a lot in the way I think. For the past five years I have been trying to write journals and take as many pictures as I can to document my path of learning.

My studying abroad includes the Global Citizenship Salzburg Seminars in Austria, where I got the opportunity to learn about international issues and see the European's perspective on American political policies. Topics like xenophobia, ethnocentrism, racism, migration flows, identity, and others were the main topics of discussion that we were able to explore with different European professors and students.

The Hashbara Fellowship Program and the Birthright Program in Israel were also part of my experience of traveling and studying abroad. These programs allowed me to learn and understand the conflict in Middle East politics. These programs gave me the opportunity to decide my perspective on the issue after both side of the coin were shown. The CAJA Madrid Study

Abroad Program was another program that I was fortunate to attend last summer. This program was a weeklong intensive immersion experience for bilingual students of Hispanic heritage that enabled us to explore the rich connections of Spain and the Americas.

Last but not least, was the Case Study of the First Former Concentration Camp in Dachau, Germany. This was one of the most valuable experiences of my traveling abroad. This experience allowed me to step into one of the darkest periods of the history of the world. This experience transported me back in time to one of the appalling chapters in human existence- the Holocaust. This terrible but educational experience began as soon as I stood in front of the main entrance. My mouth, already dry and bitter, mumbled the words "ARBEIT MACHT FREI", work will set you free when suddenly an explosion of memories made me picture the atrocities that were made against human beings during that period. This experience taught me to "Never Forget" what had happened. This experience taught me that I should act on behalf of the world as a global citizen and never again allow something like to happen again.

Overall, I write my experiences to encourage students who are passionate about learning to launch themselves to the amazing experiences of traveling abroad and immersing into different cultures and experiences. I describe my experience to inspire others to do the same I have done and to seek people to understand the importance of acting on behalf of the world itself.

