

Exploring Culture

There were many activities that were included in Lingro learning that had us explore Spanish-speaking countries heritages and traditions. Some of the topics we discussed were families and their lifestyles, gender differences, and same-sex marriages/dating. It was very interesting to explore the similarities and differences between those countries and here in the United States.

These activities helped me because not all the words were from my vocabulary. I had to use context clues and/or look up some words to help me understand the passage. Doing this sometimes helped me learn new vocabulary. I also learned traditions and about ways of life in the countries that were exploring. In each news section, there were several different countries explored. I have no stereotypes, as I understand that all cultures and places around the world are different, and we all have our own ways of life. I am open minded, and I enjoy learning about and exploring other places/cultures/traditions.

Engaging in Communities

By engaging in immediate and local communities a person can learn a lot. Just by speaking with people and being active, you can learn a lot about a person. Sometimes small conversations lead to life-long friendships and bonds. It could also be an opportunity for someone to come into your life and give you the motivation you need to succeed. You never know the purpose of someone. I began as a new student at ODU in August 2022. Since being a student, I have learned so much about the people that I am in class with. One of my classmates is a swim instructor. Another one grew up on a farm, which is different from how I grew up. It is very interesting to learn about the differences. My professor shared that in her country they eat guinea pigs. In the United States, guinea pigs are pets.

Interpersonal Communication

The Talk Abroad activities were very fun to do. I had a great partner that I enjoyed speaking with. She was very patient with me and spoke so that I could understand her and respond to her. In Lingro learning, each unit had a “Conversar” activity that required us to speak, which required me to think and put sentences together in Spanish.

I can tell that I have grown so much from my first writing activity/project to the last. In the beginning, the first project felt like a lot to write in Spanish maybe 50-75 words. But as time went by, and the word count increased, so did our vocabulary, enabling the students to be able to write longer sentences and more in Spanish. As we progressed in the course, each unit reflection also required some writing in Spanish. The Talk Abroad was an awesome opportunity for us to use what we have been leaning. Of course, not perfect, but the native speaker was able to understand and that made all the difference.

Presentational Speaking

During the course, I completed three Talk Abroad conversations, as well as many speaking activities we did in class.

Some of the challenges that I endured during Talk Abroad was not understanding some of the words the speaker used. Therefore, I was unable to understand. How I overcame this was by asking the speaker to further explain, with hopes that I would understand. Most times, this worked. I think that I was able to respond in a way such that the person was able to understand, although my Spanish speaking was not perfect. Next time, I could improve by maybe spending more time reviewing prior to the conversation. I think that my first Talk Abroad was the best of the three.

Presentation Writing

There were two projects that we completed, one for how to maintain health and another on an activity and the benefits. Both were pamphlets with visual aids. I also wrote a nomination letter for a person that I admire.

The pamphlets that I created on maintaining health and activities enhanced my vocabulary tremendously. I am now able to speak about things I do to maintain my health such as ways to reduce anxiety, depression, and stress. I am also able to describe activities that could help with these symptoms such as doing yoga, riding a bike, or taking a walk. I enjoyed doing these activities because I learned even more such as using commands and reflexive verbs. Reflexive verbs are quite challenging for me, and I could use more practice.

Interpretive Listening

The homework incorporated several listening activities that I had to listen to and understand to be able to answer the questions correctly. This helped me with understanding how the words should be pronounced correctly as well as understanding native speakers.

Outside of class, I listen to a lot of music in Spanish, and I try to make sense of the song. While I don't understand all the lyrics, I am able to make sense of some. In the unit on food, there were a couple different listening activities that we listened to. I've learned native speakers (some) speak very fast and I get lost trying to keep up. Sometimes, I can make it out by remembering some of the words and piecing it all together.

Interpretive Reading

I enjoyed the reading activities because it was a chance to use what you know to understand the text. An activity that I wrote about was the letter of nomination. Prior to this class, I had no knowledge on how to write a letter in Spanish. When preparing to write my own, I used examples that were provided and attempted to translate them. Overcoming the challenges was just to study and learn the vocabulary.