

My experience as a mentor for international students at the university has been deeply meaningful and closely connected to my learning process in this class. Having the opportunity to explore and do an in-depth analysis of the issues that may arise from my relationship with my international student mentee has been a transformative experience. This process allowed me to reflect on the unique challenges faced by international students and the dynamics of the mentor-mentee relationship. I chose to focus on this subject for my paper because being part of a student organization is not solely about showing participation because it looks good on a resume, it is about gaining new experiences to better understand different perspectives. I think that it is our civic responsibility as citizens of our community to take the initiative to become part of the process of addressing issues that we believe are impacting the well-being and progress of our surroundings. In my case, it was about finding ways to dismantle intercultural barriers to establish a relationship with my mentee. This initiative came about when I observed that there was a lack of interest and participation from the side of my mentee, which was frustrating because the mentoring program offers great opportunities and resources specifically geared toward the needs of intercultural students. However, researching various sources for my annotated bibliography helped me realize that the approach to offering help and the dynamics of a mentoring relationship can differ significantly across cultures. From the American perspective, there is often an emphasis on taking the initiative to provide solutions and assistance. Through this research, I learned that effective mentoring is not solely about taking the initiative to solve problems. Instead, it involves fostering a collaborative environment where both parties can work together to understand the root causes of the challenges and develop effective solutions. Therefore, through mentoring, I've been able to apply theoretical knowledge from the course to real-world interactions, which has enhanced both my understanding of the material and my ability to adapt it to practical scenarios.

Relating this class to my previous experiences, I would say that taking a Spanish writing course, much like this one, offered me a new perspective on the writing process. In my English courses, I have followed the same writing format for as long as I can remember. Being introduced to a different style of writing in Spanish; however, it was initially quite challenging, particularly when it came to organizing my thoughts and adjusting to a new structure. While it was unfamiliar at first, this experience pushed me to think more critically about how ideas are expressed and helped me grow as a writer by broadening my understanding of different approaches to writing.

In terms of theory and concepts, the world cultural studies courses I have taken in the past were incredibly helpful in writing my paper for this class. For example, in those courses, I learned about the differences between Eastern and Western approaches to authority, where Western cultures often emphasize individual decision-making, while Eastern cultures tend to prioritize hierarchical structures and group consensus. This knowledge helped me analyze how cultural values might influence mentoring dynamics. I also gained insights into different types of communication, such as nonverbal communication, which plays a significant role in many cultures. Understanding gestures, facial expressions, and body language helped me interpret my interactions with my mentee beyond just spoken words. Additionally, exploring the concepts of low-context and high-context cultures gave me a framework to better understand how people from different backgrounds convey meaning. For instance, recognizing that high-context cultures rely on implicit cues and shared understanding, while low-context cultures are more direct and explicit, which allowed me to tailor my communication approach in a way that resonated with my mentee's cultural background. These concepts provided valuable tools for exploring the cultural aspects of my mentoring experience and gave me a deeper understanding of how culture shapes relationships to come up with problem-solving strategies, which was central to my paper.

The skills and knowledge that I gained from this course can be transferred to many aspects of my future, both personally and professionally. In a professional context, I can apply my ability to recognize intercultural differences to adapt different communication and management styles in a culturally diverse environment. This type of environment is especially important in business settings, where I plan to spend most of my future career. My ability to navigate high-context and low-context communication is crucial in the business world, especially because clear and effective communication can make or break deals and collaborations. Being aware of cultural differences such as nonverbal communication, as indirect cues and expectations will allow me to engage more effectively with colleagues and clients. Overall, the critical thinking skills and theories that I learned in this course will be a significant asset in the world of international business.

Personally, I'm grateful to have taken a class that allowed me to explore ideas that truly interest me. It's not always easy to find a relevant course that allows me to explore my academic and personal passions, especially now that most classes I'm taking are business-related. Still, this class provided the perfect opportunity to dive deeper into topics that resonate with me, such as cultural dynamics and interpersonal communication. Having the freedom to explore subjects that align with my own experiences, such as mentoring international students, made the learning process feel more engaging and meaningful.