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Clinica Madre de Dios: a Medical Spanish Service Learning Project

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Clínica Madre de Dios: a Medical Spanish Service-Learning Project



Abstract

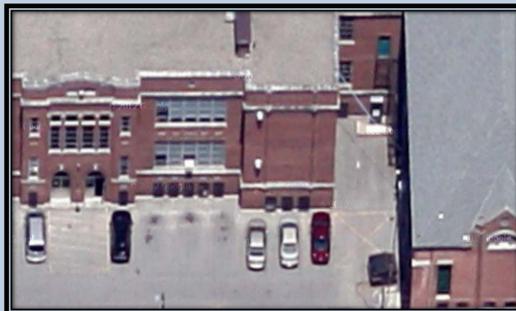
As the populations of various, non-English speaking minorities continue to rise throughout the Fort Wayne area, it only follows that the number of detrimental miscommunications throughout our community parallels this rapid increase in our diversity. These communication barriers are evident throughout our city; young, bilingual children often act as interpreters for monolingual parents, however, not all non-English speakers have this advantage, nor is it always appropriate. Due to HIPPA and a general lack of medical Spanish interpreters and translators, a stressful and terrifying situation for a native English speaker, suddenly becomes even more horrifying for non-English speakers when they find that the professionals assigned to their care, cannot save their life or decrease their pain because they cannot even begin to understand what is causing the problem. Therefore, as a future medical professional, the necessity for my acquisition of a second language is paramount so that I can work, brick by brick to tear down the communication barriers that stand between me and the well-being of my future patients. For this acquisition to be successful, I must learn not only how to speak, read and write the Spanish language, as I have been taught in all of my previous classes, but I must also learn to speak and understand true, native Spanish which is more than just words and grammatical rules, but a conveyance of culture, values and emotions that cannot be explained by direct, word-for-word translations but must be experienced in the native context in which they occur, which is why my Service-Learning class at Clínica Madre de Dios is so vital to my education. Working as an interpreter and translator at the Clínica has taught me that direct, hands on experience is rich in the context and real life situations that other classes simply cannot provide.

Service-Learning and Community Engagement

- **Service-Learning:** “Students engage in community service activities with intentional academic and learning goals and opportunities for reflection that connect to their academic disciplines” [1].
- **Community Engagement Classification:** According to the Carnegie Foundation, Community Engagement Classification is the “collaboration between institutions of higher education and their larger communities for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity” [2].
- **Other Community Engaged Projects related to health and Spanish at IPFW :**
 - Global Health Initiative started in 2011 (Brittany Byerley), service in Ecuador.
 - 204 H-Option, Spring 2013, National Kidney Foundation health fair in Spanish (Wes Stephens).

- **Clínica Madre de Dios:-**
Located at 2120 S.Harrison Street Fort Wayne, Indiana.

Opened in March of 2009 for the low-income and Hispanic Communities in Fort Wayne [3].



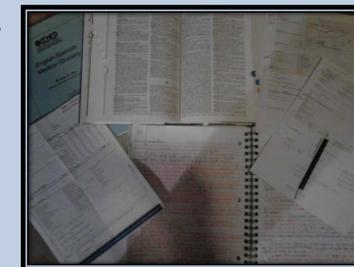
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Spanish Interpretation and Translation

- **Why Spanish?**
 - In 2003, over 10% of the US population was of Hispanic origins [3].
 - In 2009, over 12% of the US population spoke Spanish [4].
 - My own heritage is of Hispanic origins.
- **Interpreting:** The direct conversion of one spoken language to another. In this case, English to Spanish and Spanish to English.
- **Translating:** The conversion of one written language to another. In this case, English to Spanish.
- **HIPPA:** “Is the federal Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996. The primary goal of the law is to make it easier for people to keep health insurance, protect the confidentiality and security of healthcare information and help the healthcare industry control administrative costs” [5].

Academic & Learning Goals

- **Interpreting:**
 - The goal of interpreting is to place myself in direct and actual everyday Medical Spanish contexts with actual, everyday Spanish Speakers that use language that is often not taught or used in normal classes.
 - At the clinic, I interpret what the patients say in Spanish into English for the Nurses.
 - The interactions also work in the reverse order, where I interpret what the Nurses say in English into Spanish for the Patient.
- **Translating:**
 - The goal of translating is to practice using the language I have learned at the clinic and in classes, so that I may translate medical documents successfully so that native Spanish speakers will fully understand the Medical documents.
 - I am translating documents for La Clinica Madre de Dios and the National Kidney Foundation.
- **Clinical Practice:**
 - The goal of clinical practice is to learn how a clinic functions and how to combine both of my majors, Spanish and Biology Pre-medicine, to provide the best possible care for my future patients.
 - By volunteering as an interpreter at La Clinica, I am also fulfilling this goal.



Reflections

I have learned so much from this course, and in the process I have also given back to the community that has helped me to grow in immeasurable ways! I have become far more confident and fluent in my Spanish speaking. As a matter of fact, several of the patients at the clinic have commented that I speak beautiful Spanish. Furthermore, I have also taken this newly acquired knowledge and applied it to my Spanish writing. The new vocabulary I have learned in this course has helped me to translate several documents for both the Clínica and the National Kidney Foundation—accomplishments that also serve the community. This course has also allowed me to see the inner workings of a clinic that does what I have always hoped to do with my dual degree—help the Spanish speaking community of Fort Wayne in medical situations. I hope to become a family physician in the Fort Wayne area and knowing how to smoothly run a bilingual clinic will greatly aid me in this exciting dream. I look forward to continuing to use the knowledge I have gained to help my community by remaining as a volunteer at the Clínica, and applying what I have learned at Lutheran Hospital where I work as a Patient Care Associate. I truly feel that courses such as this one, that are directly hands on, student generated and geared toward teaching students how to achieve their academic goals are the most exciting and rewarding courses IPFW has to offer and would encourage any and all students to participate in courses like mine.

Acknowledgements

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