

An American Girl becomes a Señorita

An Honors Thesis

By

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Advisor

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chris Luke". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Dr. Christopher L. Luke

Abstract

This CD-ROM I have created is a guided journey through my semester in Segovia, Spain. One can start with the index page and click on links to follow me in one of my many adventures. I describe my feelings about studying abroad, share my journal pages about cities I visited, talk about funny stories with my friends and host family, describe my school and class load and compare cultures between the U.S. and Spain. I have also included a few pictures of my time there in order to help tell my stories. In all, there are over 150 pages on my CD-ROM. Each page can be read in English or Spanish. They all lead back to the home page where one can start his/her search all over again.

Rationale

As I started to think about my honors thesis, I decided that my last big project for Ball State should be more creative than a paper. It should be something that takes a lot of time and pushes me to use the skills I have learned during my years here at the University. As I looked back at all my hard work, I decided I should create a CD-ROM about my study abroad experience in both Spanish and English.

Although I thought a CD-ROM would be easy to create, it took many months to put my journey through Spain on a compact disk. I first had to reread the journal I took while in Segovia and reflect on my time there in order to find information I wanted to write about. I also had to search for pictures to accompany the stories I found in the journal. I eventually chose the topics of my feelings while studying abroad, my host family, friends, school, side trips and culture. I felt that these topics are the most interesting. Whenever someone asks me about my study abroad time in Spain, they tend to ask me about one of these topics.

Once I had the basic information, I needed to write all my stories out and translate them into Spanish. I decided to translate everything into Spanish because I am a Spanish Education major and I feel that I should use my language skills in a project as important as this one. While it was fun for me to see how much Spanish I had learned throughout the years, it took weeks to translate all of my stories. I had to translate over 75 stories into Spanish. As one might imagine, I spent a lot of time with my Spanish/English dictionary.

When everything was written out and translated, I started to create my CD-ROM pages. Although I have only created one or two other CD-ROMs during my time at Ball

State, I felt that this would be the best medium to display my work. I never realized how long it would take for me to create links between 150 plus pages. I linked each page back to the home page and to its Spanish or English version. There were many times when the links did not work and I had to re-link them. Not only did I create over 150 pages of stories, but I included pictures on some of those pages as well. It was difficult for me to find a way to include everything without having the CD-ROM become overwhelming. Luckily, after a lot of hard work, I think I figured it out.

I hope that other students who plan to study abroad will look at my CD-ROM for help. One can see how fun and educational a study abroad experience can be for a student. I only wish that I had viewed such a project before my study abroad semester. I was extremely nervous and did not know what to expect. I had such a wonderful time though that I feel as if I should share my experience with everyone I know. Hopefully, my project will not only help those who are getting ready to study abroad, but will encourage others to travel as well.

Looking back on all the work I did for this project, I feel proud and am impressed with the skills I have picked up through my years at Ball State. I think that had I written a paper, it would not have shown my growth as a person as much as this project has done. The final paper would not have been translated into Spanish and would not have allowed me to better my computer skills. This project, however, is proof to everyone that my Spanish skills have increased to the point where I can translate numerous pages with some help from the dictionary and that I am capable of creating a CD-ROM. I feel fortunate to have had this experience and to have a recorded document of my growth in Spanish and computer skills.

Acknowledgments

1. I must thank Dr. Luke for agreeing to be my advisor. He had never been an Honors Thesis advisor before so he took a great risk with me. He is already busy with his many other students that I am truly grateful to him for all his patience and great advice for my thesis project.
2. I also need to give thanks to my parents. They always inspire me to work hard and do my best. Without their help, I don't feel that this project would have turned out like it did.
3. Finally, I would like to give thanks to all the friends I made in Spain. Without them, there would be no project. Our time in Segovia was so special to me that I felt like I should record some of it and share it with others.