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This student received the Global Engagement Certification with Distinction. She studied abroad in Ireland, Guatemala, Spain and Morocco. Her essays are a great example of the kind of reflection we are seeking.

D. FOREIGN LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY

Basic Certification: Have you successfully completed (with grades of C or higher) at least two years of foreign language at the high school level or two semesters at the college level? Yes: No:

With Distinction: Have you successfully completed (with grades of C or higher in each course) at least four semesters or the equivalent of the 2002 level of a foreign language at the college level, OR can you demonstrate foreign language fluency at the high intermediate level, or is English your second language? Yes: No:

Complete essay for either certification level in 250–500 words.

Criteria for Either Certification	Describe at least two scenarios in your global learning experiences where you relied on your foreign language proficiency.
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My first experience in relying on my foreign language proficiency was actually as a student traveling abroad. I was spending the semester in Galway, Ireland studying English and Political Science. Toward the end of our semester, my friend, Kelly, and I decided to travel to Spain for a couple of days over our Easter break. We traveled to Barcelona where we were unfortunately mugged inside our hostel shortly after we arrived. Kelly knew very little Spanish, so I relied on my near-fluency at the time to inform our hostel's managers of the incident. They spoke no English, so I was required to express everything in Spanish (amidst the distress of having been mugged for the first time). I explained that we had been in the stairwell between the third and fourth floor when a strange man who had followed us into the building grabbed Kelly's backpack, nearly pulling her down the stairs. I explained that I pulled her back towards me, and as a result, her backpack's strap broke, and the man took off down the stairs and out the door. We were confused and we wanted to know what we needed to do. I told them everything that Kelly had lost, and that we needed to tell the police. The managers were very concerned and sympathetic, and they directed us to the nearest police station. Once we arrived, I had to explain

our situation to a police officer, and file a report entirely in Spanish. I explained to the police officer of the incident in its entirety, and I interpreted for Kelly as she described everything that was in her backpack at the time that it was stolen. The officer explained to us that we would need to visit the US Embassy in order for Kelly to receive a new passport, and he wrote directions for us (in Spanish) to the US Embassy. The next day, we took the train to the US Embassy to file a report and regain Kelly's passport which had been stolen from her. While the experience was frightful and intimidating, my reliance on my language skills and proficiency provided me with the invaluable support we needed in order to regain Kelly's valuables and report the problem to the proper authorities.

E. CROSS-CULTURAL TEAMWORK

Complete essay for either certification level in 250-500 words.

Criteria for Either Certification	Describe a substantive example of successful teamwork where you worked closely with individuals from different nations/cultures. Address your specific role on the team, difficulty you experienced, and/or compromises you made to adapt to cultural differences.
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My second experience of relying on my foreign language proficiency included my work with Cooperative for Education, a non-profit organization dedicated to breaking the cycle of poverty in Guatemala through education. Each year, the US staff traveled to Guatemala for a month with various supporters and high-profile donors on what were called "Project Tours." Donors from all over the country came to see their support in action, and they also got to experience the beautiful culture and heartbreaking poverty of Guatemala firsthand. I frequently served as a translator when tour participants wanted to converse with local Guatemalans. When the tour participants wanted to go shopping, but needed someone to help them with bargaining, I often served as their interpreter. When tour participants wanted to communicate with various students at the schools we visited, I again served as an interpreter. In addition, half of the Cooperative for Education staff is from Guatemala, and several do not speak English. I relied on my Spanish fluency at this time as well so that I could not only communicate, but also enjoy the company of my fellow co-workers. After three years with Cooperative for Education and relying on my Spanish skills, some of my closest colleagues are those of the Guatemalan staff.

F. CROSS-CULTURAL AWARENESS

Complete essay for either certification in 250-500 words

Criteria for Either Certification	Describe what you have learned about your own culture in relation to other cultures. Describe the differences and similarities that you have observed between your native culture and at least one other culture. Examples of such differences and similarities
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	include but not limited to group dynamics, rituals, gender roles and work habits.
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After spending a month in Guatemala and a Semester in Ireland and Western Europe, I came to the conclusion that I was an exception in my own country. I learned that the rest of the world is much more aware of multi-national current events and happenings. Unfortunately, the United States demonstrates a much more isolationist perspective with its media. Rarely do we hear stories about what is happening in Europe, Asia, Africa, Australia, or South America unless the events directly affect the United States in some way, or the news is absolutely groundbreaking. The United States is seen as prideful and ignorant, and after experiencing various cultures outside of my own, I could see why for the first time.

In addition, I noted that the work habits of the United States are nearly that of a machine in comparison to other cultures. Monthly holidays, two-week vacations, and 6-month maternity leave is not uncommon in European countries. In some cases, the work habits are even more liberal and laid-back. The United States is perceived as a country full of "work-aholics" and stressed out businessmen who stop at nothing to gain that extra bit of recognition and status. After making this realization, I longed for a more "European" work habit for our country. We're working ourselves to death. We want our families to have everything, and we'll stop at nothing to provide that for them. But what's the use if we're never home, or we never actually get to celebrate with a vacation or time away from work? I learned so much about my own country when I was outside of it--definitely more than I ever would have learned had I stayed here.

G. CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNITY SERVICE

Complete essay for either certification 250-500 words

Criteria for Either Certification	Describe one or more substantive examples of productive and valued community service in which you participated that benefited individuals from other nations/cultures.
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When I spent a month in Guatemala as a college sophomore, I was fortunate enough to serve the community of Chimaltenango, a city about 2 hours west of Guatemala city in the country's impoverished western highlands region. While we spent four hours each day in intensive Spanish school, we spent two hours of our afternoons constructing the foundations for three new classrooms at Santa Isabel Primary School outside of Chimaltenango. We worked alongside native construction workers, and we performed every constructive task by hand. We had no power tools, no heavy equipment, no machinery. We worked entirely by hand, digging trenches for the foundation, mixing cement, and driving posts into the trenches where the foundation would soon be laid. The work was hard. I have never felt so sore in my life, but the interaction with the local workers was absolutely invaluable. We talked and joked, and asked questions about each other. At the end of our time in Chimaltenango, the

students of Santa Isabel provided us with a "Gracias" ceremony where the students performed a traditional Mayan dance and provided us with a hand-woven textile, which had a beautiful thank you message woven into the fabric. They were so grateful for our time and camaraderie. Little did they know, they had actually touched and changed my life forever. It was this experience that caused me to want to pursue my learning of Spanish and education.

H. FUTURE IMPACT

Complete essay for either certification 250-500 words

How have your global learning experiences impacted your career goals/understanding of your major area of study? How do you think these experiences will impact your future personal and professional growth?

My career goal is to advocate for international education. As a current Spanish teacher, I aim to enlighten my students of the value of their international awareness and sensitivity--not just their knowledge of a foreign language. To be globally engaged is to not only be an informed citizen of the world; it is also an inalienable gift that has a value beyond words.

I have come to this realization through my various studies at home and abroad. My current area of study, Foreign Language Education, and my anticipated course of study, a Master's degree in International Policy, have been entirely shaped by my experiences abroad. Because of my aforementioned cultural immersions, acts of service, encounters of wonderful people, and the constant stretching of my comfort zone, I have become more and more determined to ignite a passion for international learning within others.

I think these experiences will empower me as a worker, an American citizen, and as a global citizen. First, I am much more valuable to my employer because of my ability to relate and interpret various cultural differences. In the area of Spanish, I am also able to lend my linguistic skills to any necessary situation. As an American citizen, I can become a voice for progress and cultural awareness within my community. In addition, I can demonstrate a positive stereotype for Americans traveling abroad because of my cultural and linguistic sensitivity. Finally, as a citizen of the world, I feel that I am a much more "flexible" employee who will be comfortable traveling and/or relocating to various parts of the country or world because of my experiences abroad. The world does not intimidate me; rather, it excites me.

Certification with Distinction, in addition to completing A-H, complete either I or J I in 250-500 words.

I. CULTURAL IMMERSION

Criteria for Certification with Distinction	Describe one or more insights that you gained from your immersion experience about a different nation/culture.
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One specific insight that I gained from immersion into a new culture was that I should NEVER stand out in a new culture. To do so was inconsiderate of the culture I was in, and to be offensive showed ignorance and unnecessary pride. I chose to blend in as much as possible in as many ways as possible. I dressed in accordance to the culture, I spoke in the target language, and I even tried to walk in the same way as the locals.

When I was in High School, and we studied in Spain for ten days, we spent a day in Morocco. I had no idea what to expect, so I did my research about traveling in and around the country. Our tour guide informed us of major cultural differences such as dress and overall appearance. We were told to avoid any sleeveless clothing, shorts, or any tight clothing. I was intrigued by this, so I researched why we were told to dress in such a specific way. I was so interested in the topic that I began to research Muslim traditions and culture. I had never been exposed to this before, but one day of immersion snowballed into a lifetime of learning.

Another insight I gained from my immersion experiences is that not everything is centralized upon the United States. Prior to studying abroad, I had always assumed that the world followed in the footsteps of the United States. I could not have been more wrong. While several countries are allies and economically depend on the United States, very few countries base their culture and society at all on the U.S. If anything, they all contribute in some way to the United States's overall cultural identity. Instead of having the belief that the world revolves around the U.S., I realized that, in fact, the U.S. has evolved from the world. When we hear the President sign off his speech with "God Bless America," I often wonder if what he really should say is "God Bless the World."

J. LEADERSHIP/RECOGNITION IN GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP

Criteria for Certification with Distinction	Describe examples of your leadership roles assumed and/or recognition/awards received for work and contributions as a global citizen.
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