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your application will be disqualified.

This student received the Global Engagement Certification with Distinction. He did his student teaching abroad in Costa Rica for 16 weeks. His 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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Despite the fact that I took Spanish classes in Elementary School, Middle School, High School, and University, I didn't have a whole lot of confidence in my ability to communicate proficiently in Spanish before my initial arrival in Costa Rica. I knew from my work at Dentistry for Children, where I had to translate conversations for patients and doctors, that my formal education taught me the basic grammatical structures necessary to compile syntactically understandable sentences; however, the lexicon necessary to communicate in day-to-day situations was lacking.

As I sat down on the plain to Costa Rica, I began to understand just how untested my Spanish language skills were; the announcements came on in Spanish (real Spanish, not the slow Spanish with lots of hand gestures and repetition that I was used to) and I didn't have a clue. That's when the sweating started. How was I going to live in a country where the primary language of interaction seemed alien to me? I disembarked the plane and immediately began scrutinizing the crowd to find my name scrawled on the back of a pizza box. No such luck. After perusing every sign in the airport, I gave up hope that my host family had arrived to rescue me. I sauntered through the airport to the taxi stand

and began (in broken, mangled, and mutilated Spanish) trying to figure out the best way to get to my new home. Where is Moravia? Is there a bus? How much is a taxi? Do I have to take an orange taxi? What about the red ones? It wasn't great, but I realized that, with a little bit of practice (and a lot of hand gestures), I could make this work. Eventually, I made it to Moravia and, immediately made a pact with my roommate that we would use as little English as possible in the house and around the city.

I continued to practice Spanish in every allowable situation; I can't promise it always sounded the best. That's how you learn, though. About 60 days into my trip, my sister decided she wanted to fly down and go down to Panama with me while I renewed my Visa. My sister took the same classes I took in school, had similar interactions with the Spanish speaking population, and studied abroad in Costa Rica. Therefore, before we left, she spoke Spanish much better than I did. After the first night with our host family, I realized just how much my Spanish had improved. She was able to form basic sentences and understand the jest of conversations, but I was able to carry on full conversations with 95-100% comprehension. Because of my proficiency in Spanish (and a little bit of luck), we made it to and from Panama without any problems. Communication with border officials, taxi drivers, waiters/waitresses went smoothly and stress free. If there was something I didn't understand, I was proficient enough to stop the conversation and ask for clarification on certain points.

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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About a month and a half into my student teaching, Ms. Soto, the middle school principal, came up to me at lunch and told me that she needed two student teachers to attend the 9th grade field trip (keep in mind I don't teach 9th grade; I'm doing my student teaching in 8th grade English). Costa Rica's a beautiful place and I love field trips, so I immediately agreed to go. She gave me the date of the planning meeting and told me to pack lightly as I'd only need clothes for one night. Wait a second, pack? For a planning meeting? When she said field trip, she actually meant a weeklong excursion with the 9th grade students to the University of Georgia's Costa Rican satellite campus. The planning meetings was actually to go to the campus, get acquainted with the area, and start planning the classes the students would be taking. By the end of the meeting, we had the students broken into 5 groups and 5 days worth of classes and activities planned for the students. Gaby, the coordinator of the field trip, then assigned two teachers to each group.

I was told that my partner would be Sandra, the 9th grade Spanish teacher. At Lincoln, teaching Spanish is the only teaching position that does not require an English-speaking teacher. So, not only did I get to practice working with someone from another culture, I was forced to speak primarily in Spanish all week. I think I spoke more Spanish on that trip than I usually did in two weeks.

Sandra and I worked collaboratively throughout the week to take the students to each of their activities, enforce the attendance policy, aid the students in activities, and even to teach a class on interviewing together. The most difficult thing I faced while working with Sandra was the amount of talking during instruction that she tolerates. In a classroom in the U.S., students know that talking while a teacher's talking is not acceptable. However, many Costa Ricans don't see it that way. Sandra, for example, doesn't mind students talking as long as it's not disrupting the whole group. Because of this pedagogical conflict, we had to sit down together and reexamine our roles in the group. We decided that I would handle attendance and transitions, she would control the noise level in the classroom, and we would both walk around the room and help students with their specific tasks. It was difficult for me to give up control of how much the students were talking during the lessons; however, because the students were used to her classroom management strategies (she sees them every day and I don't normally teach these students at all), we decided it was best to keep things consistent for the students.

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 include but not limited to group dynamics, rituals, gender roles and work habits.
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The reason I decided to do my student teaching abroad was because I got to a point where everyone only cared about himself or herself, they were bigoted towards certain groups of people, and nobody gave two cents about trying to reduce their consumption; I was fed up. I wanted to go someplace where people stood up for what they thought was right. Honestly, I was expecting much bigger differences between the culture of the United States and Costa Rica than I actually perceived. Consequently, the first few weeks were tough for me because I couldn't clearly see a difference. Everyone here has a phone, there are massive amounts of traffic, and Walmart is just around the corner.

It took me a solid month to see through those similarities and notice the different pace of life in San Jose. I think the first time it became apparent to me was on a bus ride home one day. I'd managed to venture further out of the city than usual and knew I was going to get back into San Jose a few minutes later than I would have liked (San Jose's not the best place to be in after dark). After convincing myself that I should be able to make it back to San Jose 30 minutes before dark and be on a bus back to

Moravia without a problem, I managed to fall asleep. A drop of sweat falling off my eyebrow woke me up at about the time I thought I should be back in San Jose. The bus was stopped. I put all my stuff in my backpack and got off the bus to see what the hold up was. A group of protestors had the pass blocked off going both directions and were holding up signs demanding that the government built a hospital in their town. Apparently, the nearest hospital is on the opposite side of the mountain and several people a year die because they can't get to the hospitals. "Sometimes the ambulances just don't come," one man told me.

That statement hit me in the face. At about that time I realized some things: First of all, how selfish was I? I headed out to a developing country because I wanted to live a simpler life. That's the difference between the U.S and Costa Rica. In the U.S we get up in arms because gays are getting married. In Central America, they protest because children are dying because they can't get to a hospital. In the U.S, I worked for my dad in middle school so I could buy extra Lego sets. Here, people are working with their dads after school so they can eat. As a consequence, life flows in a different pattern here. People do things at a pace that would drive people crazy back home. Back home, the cops would have dispersed the people, told them to quit whining, and made them go home. Here, they don't have that luxury.

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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As I mentioned in the above question, much of Costa Rica is ridden with poverty. Right next to Lincoln, a private school that typically serves the riches 1-2% of Costa Rica, is a tiny, impoverished school in Barrio Socorro. Every week all of the student teachers work together to plan and run after school activities for ~30 students from the Barrio Socorro school. Our goal is to provide them with opportunities that they don't usually have. Generally, we tutor them, do arts and crafts with them, play games in our gym with them, and provide the students and their family members with a meal. After the students had been a few times, we asked them what some of the things they'd like to do with us were – things they'd never done before. I was shocked to find out that most of the students attending the after school activities had never seen a movie at the theatre, attended a professional sporting event, or spent the day at an amusement park. We did a little bit of research, figured out which of those activities we could make a reality, and are planning to take the students to see their first movie at the end of April.

Costa Rica is one of the most biologically diverse places on the planet. However, like most of the world, Costa Rica has suffered at the hands of deforestation and habitat segmentation. Because of this, species of birds and other wildlife are becoming endangered, as they can no longer migrate across

the country or share genes with other animals within their species that are located in other patches of protected land. To combat this, the University of Georgia has partnered with several organizations in Monteverde to create Biological Corridors, a bridge of sorts, between each patch of protected land. I spent 8 hours over 2 days planting live fences along pasture and farm lands outside the Monteverde Reserve with a group of twenty 9th grade students. Once the project is completed, they hope to create a linear corridor between the Monteverde Reserve and the Caribbean Ocean. This corridor would allow several keystone species of birds to move between these two locations freely. As the birds move along this corridor, they will bring with them new seeds, which will aid in the reforestation of the area, allowing for the migration of other mammals such as the Puma and other endangered species.

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?

This little Jaunt in Costa Rica has changed me more than any other single experience. After spending 4 months in Costa Rica, I don't see how anyone could settle for permanently living back in the states. I'm not saying that this trip was always comfortable – it definitely wasn't. There were times where I was lost and confused, but looking back on them, those are the times I grew the most.

Just after taking over full time for my collaborating teacher, I had a day where everything came crashing down. In my first class, my students just wouldn't stop talking. When I called them out, they were irritated because in Costa Rica, the teachers tolerate much more talking and they saw me as taking away their freedom by treating them like "pre-kinder students." When they told me that, I was flabbergasted and simply replied, "Well, that's not how it is in America." Oops. First of all, don't ever tell a Costa Rican they're not American. They are, and they will fight you to the death over it. Secondly, I completely undermined their cultural identity without so much as a second thought. Even had I said something like "that's not how it is in the States," I still would have been far out of line.

I got through the rest of the class clinging to remnants of the respect my students formerly held for me...and it showed. My next two classes weren't much better. I was in a sour mood and they all knew it. By the time the end of the day came, I wanted to crawl under my desk and hide from the world with my foot so far in my mouth I wouldn't be able to talk for a year. Instead, I sat down and really thought about what I'd done. Even though my students were out of line, that didn't give me the authority to tell them that their culture was wrong because it was different. The next time I saw them, I apologized for what I said and followed that up with a new set of classroom procedures that would reflect both of our cultures. I'd give them time to discuss in groups, but while I, or any of their peers

were talking, they'd be silent. If they couldn't handle being silent, there would be an immediate consequence. It went over perfectly. Over the next few classes, they held me to my end I held them to theirs.

In the end, I learned that living in someone else's country is hard. However, if you roll with the punches and are willing to learn from them, you're going to come out far ahead of anyone who never allows himself/herself to branch out and learn a different culture. Now, I can't see myself going back to the states and being complacent teaching in Cobb County for the rest of my life. I want to continue to learn about new cultures, see the world, and teach while I'm at it.

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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The most important lesson I learned during my immersion experience was to roll with what life sends you. If you take yourself too seriously while you're in a completely different culture with a language that you don't fully understand, you'll go crazy. Before For example, when it comes to speaking a new language, you have to mess up. Don't worry if you have to repeat yourself two or three times before some understands you; the key is that they understand you...eventually. It's just part of language acquisition. How many toddlers have you ever heard who pronounce words correctly and form prescriptively correct sentences 100 percent of the time (or even 25 percent of the time)? You don't. Even as an adult, you have to go through that phase. If you never go through it, you never get through it.

When I lived in Georgia, I worked at a pediatric dentist office for 4 years. As a requirement for my position, I was required to translate patient information between the doctors and patients. However, I was always afraid to toy around with the language. I always asked someone to tell me exactly what to say. Guess what, I could say a few phrases really, really well. But, it was never a true immersion situation because I never went outside of my comfort zone to practice.

Here in Costa Rica, I haven't had that luxury. I can't go around the corner and ask my bilingual friends how to say something before I run back and say it to a patient. I have to mess up. I have to try to speak. After only 4 months of really playing around with the language, I can now hold full conversations with people with near 100% comprehension.

Also, I mentioned in a question above how different the pace of life is in Costa Rica than it is at home. Life almost runs on island time here. If you want to get a bus, you just go out and wait for one until it gets there. There's no schedule. If you're constantly worried about if you're 5 minutes late, you're going to go insane. Now, if you take a bus from one of the main terminals, the buses usually leave on time. However, you run into a situation like I did, where a group of protestors had the entire road blocked off all the time. If you can't bend and do things that are a little bit uncomfortable, you can't survive in a developing country.

These same lessons can also translate to a much happier life back home. Even if the pace of life in Atlanta is 90 miles a minute, just take a step back from it, take a deep breath, and let things go. Especially for teachers, things aren't always going to go your way (wherever you are). If you lose your cool, things just get worse. Everyone should have to do an experience like this before graduation and becoming a teacher so that little things just cease to matter.

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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