

**Service Learning
Puebla, Mexico Internship Program
University of Wisconsin - La Crosse
May - July 2013**

The Puebla, Mexico Internship program is an excellent opportunity to improve your Spanish and your knowledge of Mexico in both a classroom situation and in two separate experiential learning activities. The program lasts ten weeks, from mid-May to late July. The first five weeks of the program take place in the city of Puebla, two hours from Mexico City. During this period, students take an advanced Spanish language course on Mexican Civilization. They also spend 20 hours a week in an internship/experiential learning situation – and living with Mexican families – one student per family to allow for maximum interaction. The last four weeks are spent in a second experiential learning activity in San Miguel Tzinacapan and other indigenous communities surrounding Cuetzalan in the sierra norte of the state of Puebla. There, students will have the added experience of living in the homes of people in the community.

The program was originally designed for Spanish/Elementary Education majors. However, in recent years, students from TESOL, Sociology, International Business, Marketing, Theater, and other areas have taken part in the program:

Jessica M., theater major, taught a course on directing with a local theater group in Puebla and interviewed San Miguel residents for a future documentary. She went on to the Cinema M.A. program at UCLA and spent Easter week 2007 filming her master's thesis film in San Miguel – with two professional actresses and supporting actors she had met during her four weeks in San Miguel.

Angela Z. and Jeff W., both elementary education majors at UW-L, taught in public schools in Puebla (all in Spanish) and then taught English to pre-school children in San Miguel. They both went on to teach in a Spanish immersion school in the Twin Cities.

Xiong V. taught English as a foreign language in three different settings in Puebla for five weeks then to high school students in San Miguel. She has since completed a master's degree at UW-L. Many elementary education majors shift from the mainstream classroom to ESL after their experience in Puebla.

Allison F. taught music at a pre-school and a primary school for handicapped children in Puebla for five weeks, then worked with the young people's band in San Miguel for four weeks, leading up to a concert at the end of the program. She did her student teaching (in Spanish and music) back in Wisconsin and now teaches music at a Spanish immersion school.

Kristi H., marketing major, worked with a major marketing firm in Puebla for five weeks – including interviewing and observing product testing sessions. In Cuetzalan, she joined Abby L. in developing a project called “El Cine en tu Puebla” which included interviewing school children and setting up the project in two nearby indigenous towns.

Janis H., UW-L TESOL coordinator, studied Mexican history and completed an internship in San Miguel volunteering with an English enrichment program for early-elementary children and the local band for middle-school children. Earning university credit for her Puebla, Mexico experience, she was able to renew her Wisconsin teaching license for ESL, Spanish, and communication studies.

Hollie N., sociology major, taught English and interacted with women in the Puebla CERESO – state prison; then worked with a human rights project in Cuetzalan – and with children in a local center for abused women. She is now completing her Ph.D. in sociology and human rights at the University of Minnesota.

These are only a few of the many success stories growing out of the Puebla, Mexico program experience...

*David Brye, Ph.D.
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