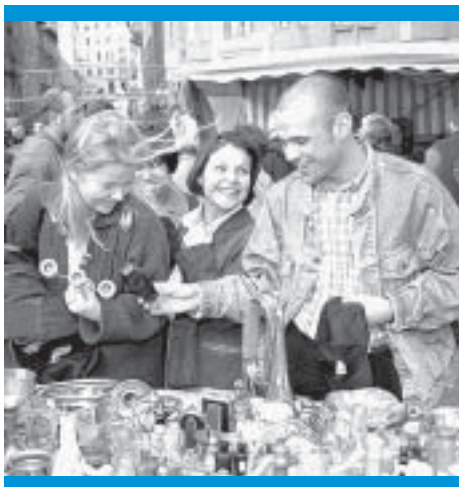


Are Language Skills Enough?

There is so much more meaning to a message than what exists in the spoken/written word. For example, if a person says, "You know, Barbara, I really like you" it will have different meanings depending on if it is said by/to a man or a woman, in a work environment or a bar. Eye contact, physical distance, relationship between the speaker and listener, context, the tone of voice, and the stress put on certain words are all aspects of the message which give meaning to the words being said. In fact, these factors can provide much more meaning than the words themselves. Sarcasm is a perfect example of how non-linguistic aspects of communication relay meaning. If a friend says to me, "Gee, I can't wait to vote in the upcoming election", the way I interpret that message will be based upon my knowledge of my friend's political views, the situation with the current campaign, and my ability to understand the meaning behind the tone of voice.



Our ability to interpret such cues is subconsciously developed through our process of socialization. The meanings that we attach to certain non-verbal aspects of communication seem inherent to us. Our interpretation of these cues just comes naturally. Now take into consideration that every culture has its own set of cultural cues that each member of that culture understands. It's easy to see how a person from Culture A and a person

from Culture B may interpret the very same words in totally different ways. Here are some examples:

When Sarcasm Means Sincerity

Marsha thought things were going well with her new French friends, particularly Bertrand. He continually invited her to interesting and fun events, but he was constantly making fun of her. One day at an art exhibit, while looking at a particularly abstract piece, Marsha says that she cannot understand what the artist was trying to express. Bertrand smiles and responds, "Yes, I'm afraid French art is far too advanced for Americans to comprehend." Marsha was desperate; she really liked him and could not figure out what she was doing to cause his constant teasing, so she asked her host mother about it. "My dear," the host mother told her, "this means that he really likes you. In France, when someone feels comfortable enough to tease you, that means that you have been welcomed as an intimate friend."

When Now Doesn't Mean Now

Joshua, an American student in Heredia, Costa Rica, called his Costa Rican intercambio partner to meet for coffee. When he asked what time they should meet, the response was "Nos encontramos ahora en el parque." For Joshua (and the dictionary), "ahora" literally means "now." So, he grabbed his jacket and headed straight to the park where he sat on a bench and waited for over half an hour. His friend arrived without the least sign of repentance for being late. After discussing the matter with his Spanish teacher, Joshua learned that in Costa Rica, "ahora" means sometime within the hour. And, if you are meeting a friend someplace like the park, it is expected that it is no problem for one or the other person to wait for a while because you will spend some nice time sitting in the park, probably running into some other friends, or meeting someone friendly also sitting on a bench.

When Yes Doesn't Mean Yes

Many business people have experienced this frustrating scenario in Japan. Sarah, a young businesswoman from New York, was sent to Japan to close a big deal for her company. While giving

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her pitch, she became more and more sure of the sale because her Japanese counterparts continually nodded their heads as she spoke. When she finished, she thought the deal was made and asked when they would like to sign the contract. She was shocked when she was told that they were not yet sure if they wanted to make the deal or not. What Sarah did not know is that in Japan, nodding of the head does not necessarily mean yes as it does in the U.S. It can also mean "Yes, I am listening and understanding what you are saying."

These stories provide just a few examples of how language skills are simply not enough to achieve effective communication in another culture. To get the most out of your international learning experience, focus on gaining cross-cultural skills as well as linguistic ones. Cross-cultural skills will enable you to:

- 1) Understand how culture effects communication (your own and that of others)
- 2) Deal with behaviors that, to you, seem strange or annoying
- 3) Learn from your cultural adaptation process
- 4) Communicate more effectively.

These skills will also help you in your pursuit to learn a new language. After all, language is a reflection of the culture from which it developed.

How do you start learning cross-cultural skills? The trick is to start before leaving the country. Here are some resources to start you on your journey to cross-cultural competence:

- Call AmeriSpan for a free copy of "Crossing Cultures: A Self-Study Guide."
- Find a comprehensive list of cross-cultural books at: www.amerispan.com/store.
- "What's Up with Culture?" is a new site for study abroad participants: www3.uop.edu/sis/culture.
- Download free materials (some in Spanish) from the Peace Corps: www.peacecorps.gov/library.

Where is your favorite place on earth?

We ask AmeriSpan staff

Koh Chang, Thailand: There's a hammock strung up between two palm trees just on the point where the river flows into the ocean. Every once in a while, a local will come by to sell you fresh fruit, cold beer, or a Thai massage. I could stay there forever ... except then I would miss the fish bbq each night. You choose the piece of freshly caught fish which you would like cooked, then grab your favorite table (which is located right on the beach, by the way). Usually before your first Thai beer is done, your perfectly-cooked fish dinner is served. After a long day of lying in the hammock and such a delicious meal, you can't wait to go to sleep. So you stumble along the beach to your \$6/night bungalow and let the sound of the waves lull you to dreamland. — Marlo

Paris, France: Ay, gay Pair-eee, city of lights. I had seen it in movies, and had created my own vision of it before I actually went there. I was right and wrong in my preconceived notions of Paris. Upon taking the train from the airport to downtown, my friend and I got off at our stop and there, sitting at the station was a Parisian man playing traditional French music on his accordion, beret perched on his head, and a cigarette hanging out of his mouth. "THIS is Paris!" I exclaimed to my friend. Later that day, crepe in hand, we walked down to the Eiffel Tower, which was brown! I had thought it was gray or some kind of metallic color. I stared at it in disbelief, but my disappointment was short lived as we proceeded to the top. Since then, I have been back to Paris and it was just as great the second time around. — Elizabeth

Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam: My favorite thing about this city is the people. While wandering the streets and markets I would be welcomed with a gesture to sit/squat with the locals who were wide-eyed with curiosity towards me and would have the widest, most friendly smile on their face despite the inability to verbally communicate. Warm, amazing people made me laugh out loud in half bewilderment and fascination that up to four people could all balance and ride around on ONE motor scooter! — Beth

Cuenca, Ecuador: The Anti-New York — a clean, relaxed city that doesn't even know what the word "hurry" means. Cuenca's layout, with Colonial parts and more modern areas divided by a river, makes this city seem very manageable. However, the people from bus drivers to shoe shiners to host families are so friendly that it must be the anti-New York. — John

San Antonio Aguas Calientes, Guatemala: An indigenous village close to Antigua, Guatemala, where my host family and the whole community treated me as one of their own, even though I stood out! A lot! They don't have running water or even a stove, yet these people are the richest people I've ever met. — Anne-Marie

Mexico: Each time I visited Mexico, I received such great hospitality by the local people that I can't wait to go back. One night while driving with my uncle and his American friend, who worked at the U.S. Embassy, we met five locals of college age who were driving next to us in their Volkswagen. My uncle started waving at them as they waved back at us. We all met up in the Zócalo and hung out in a bar with mariachi bands playing, laughing and drinking Tequila all night. Not everyone understood each other but that didn't seem to matter - we all communicated the same language of friendship. For the next four days, they were our "tour guides" around the city. They spent time with us for no reason other than to strengthen the friendship that had formed. — Sue

Hello Friends,

Welcome to the winter issue of The Translator, a newsletter that is published periodically for the customers and friends of AmeriSpan.

This issue represents what has been going on at AmeriSpan lately - a gradual transition from the exclusive focus on Latin America, to going "Worldwide."

Just take a look. The country close-up is Italy, the school profile is for French programs in Montreal and Quebec City, one article is about working in Spain, another about worldwide intercultural communications, yet another one is a travel story from Peru, the information about Academic Study Abroad for university students applies to programs in Spanish, Portuguese, Italian, French, and German-speaking countries.

With this issue, we're introducing a new feature where AmeriSpan's well-traveled staff shares their Favorite Places on Earth. These types of personal views and experiences from staff and past customers can also be found on the AmeriSpan website and in future online and printed newsletters. We know this will be enjoyable to read, and informative. Perhaps it will even help some of you in the decision-making process when choosing a program and location.

Finally, don't miss the new Specialized Programs that we keep adding in response to popular demand. There are special options for executives, educators, business students, medical students, social workers, and teenagers. There are also active programs which combine language classes with cooking, dance classes, or cultural studies. Sums it up, doesn't it? All in the spirit of Every Language, Every Culture, Everywhere.

We hope you enjoy this issue and look forward to hearing from you.



Dorioara Pinku
CEO, Co-Founder



Pain and Gain in Peru

by Marlo Goldstein, Director of Academic Programs

"To boldly go where no tourists have gone before." That was the offer made by Jimmy Aguirre, the official guide/go-for/handyman of AmeriSpan's language school in Cusco, Peru. Jimmy is also a tourism student at the Instituto Superior Tecnológico Antonio Moreno. As part of their thesis project called Jakuchu ("Let's Go!" in Quechua), he and two friends organized a weekend trip to a remote archaeological site near Jimmy's parents' hometown of Yaurisque. They had been planning the trip for months, down to the last detail. All they needed was a group of Guinea pigs (also a Peruvian specialty dish that does NOT taste like chicken!) to make it happen. So, a few gringos, some Dutchies, a German, an Englishman, and a man from Iceland volunteered for the adventure.

Our trip started with a bus ride ... only about 35 kms from Cuzco, but a fairly long ride to 3,900 meters. There, in the middle of nowhere, we mounted our bikes and headed down, down, down. The spectacular view of sprawling countryside and jagged mountains helped take our minds off the pain of having to tightly grip the semi-functional breaks as we descended the hairpin curves of the rocky road. After an hour or so, I couldn't have cared less about the view and just wanted off. Luckily, right about then we rolled into our lunch stop ... Jimmy's grandparents' house. And seemingly in celebration of our arrival and joy at



getting off the bikes, a colorful street procession with dancers and musicians passed in front of the house. Of course it was not for us, but it was nice to pretend. We were then ushered into the altar room where we were fed sandwiches and fruit while Grandma lit candles and prayed for our journey, which seems to have worked!

After lunch, it was time to hit the dusty trail

again, but this time on four legs instead of two wheels. We were a bit surprised that our trusty steeds did not actually have saddles but rather blankets and rope. It turned out to be sufficient gear for our leisurely stroll along the Eucalyptus wooded riverbank. Of course, no gain without pain ... soon my inner thighs were screaming with saddle soreness. There it was again, that simultaneous feeling of physical torture and visual ecstasy. As I was trying to figure out which pain was worse, the bike or the horse, we finally came to the end of that leg of the journey.

This time, no procession or sandwiches awaited ... this time, it was a mountain to climb! The climb was steep, but not too bad ... and anything was better than being on the horse any longer. So up, up, up we went along with about ten guys who effortlessly carried all our gear. After about an hour, we breathlessly arrived at the archaeological site Maucallacta ... recently discovered and uncovered and previously visited only by archaeologists and locals. We were the first group of "turistas" to tread that sacred ground. You should see the campsite they set up for us (complete with circus-style big top dining tent!) just below the ruins overlooking the valley from whence we had just climbed.

That night, the local shaman came to perform a Pago a la Tierra (Payment to the Earth). After meticulously placing little packets of stuff (sorry for the lack of detail, but I have no idea what all those powders and plants were) onto wrapping paper, he asked each of us to place a coca leaf in the right spot on the pile. We then "blessed" the package by dabbing a wine-soaked flower on each of the four corners. Then we each took a shot of local wine, wrapped up our present and threw it on a cow-dung fire (not as smelly as you might think). Once it started burning, you could see the "stuff" coming out in purple and blue flames. Truly magical.

As you might imagine, we slept like the dead until we were awakened by the faint sound of live music. We woke up and were brought hot (!) water to wash up with. We were treated to a fabulous breakfast of local-made cheese, fresh papaya juice, and REAL coffee (not the instant nonsense that hotels try to pass off as coffee). We then discovered the source of the music. A group from

the neighboring village of Mollebamba (pop. 500) came to present us with a gift. Dressed in well-worn handmade traditional dress and playing homemade instruments (including a gorgeous harp!), they performed traditional dances in the courtyard of the ruins. They were so sincere and beautiful, it brought tears to my eyes. This was not a tourist attraction, but a real gift to us. The tears soon turned to laughter, however, when they dragged us to the dance floor for a little payback. What a sight we were, especially the 6' 7" Dutchie dancing with the 4 ft. Quechua woman!

We were invited to their village to learn about

how they live. So off we went, up and down the slippery slope to Mollebamba. We gringos were slipping and sliding all the way while grandmas, kids in flip-flops, and the guy carrying



his homemade harp seemingly glided along. At least we were able to return their kindnesses by offering ourselves as entertainment. Upon arrival, we were invited into the town "mayor's" home. A cozy adobe affair complete with guinea pigs and chickens running around. And don't think the mayor is above the people ... pretty much all the homes were about the same. Once they overcame their shyness, they were very eager to have foreign ears hear about their lives. Luckily we had Jimmy to translate their stories for us from Quechua to Spanglish.

There was more. After doing the town, we hiked to Pumaocco, the supposed birthplace of the three brothers who gave birth to Quechua people. Standing on the edge of this giant, jagged, flat-topped rock overlooking the river and the alley below ... it was easy to believe that something quite powerful was created there.

Then it was time to go home. Down, down, down yet another slippery slope. I fell at least three times, but was not the only one. Exhausted, frustrated, and dirty, we finally arrived at the bus. And who should be waiting? Our friends from the village ... including the harp guy (you'd think that thing was a mouth harp the way he carries it around!). We were invited to a picnic lunch accompanied by the ancient sounds of the harp. They wished us a safe journey and invited us back again. A perfect ending to a perfect trip.

Country Close-Up: Italy

Population: 58 million

Location: Southern Europe, a peninsula extending into the central Mediterranean Sea, northeast of Tunisia. Shares northern border with Switzerland, Austria, and France.

Area: total: 301,230 sq km (116,306 sq miles) including Sardinia and Sicily of this total amount, 7,210 sq km (2,783.8 sq miles) is water.

Weather: predominantly Mediterranean;

Alpine in far north; hot, dry in south

Languages: Italian (official), German (parts of Trentino-Alto Adige region are predominantly German speaking), French (small French-speaking minority in Valle d'Aosta region), Slovene (Slovene-speaking minority in the Trieste-Gorizia area)

Capital: Rome

Religion: Predominately Roman Catholic with mature Protestant and Jewish communities and a growing Muslim immigrant community

Ethnic Makeup: Primarily Italian (includes small clusters of German-, French-, and Slovene-Italians in the North, and Albanian-Italians and Greek-Italians in the South)

Public Safety: Relatively safe. Petty theft carried out by children can be a problem in Rome and other large cities in Italy. Tourists can be easy targets for pick-pocketing scams. Women traveling alone may have to put up with male attention, but it is usually harmless. Ignore the whistling and catcalls and you most likely will not have a problem.

Health Risk: Relatively low. Some travelers experience digestive trouble when traveling to Italy. This can be attributed to the excessive use of olive oil compared to travelers' home countries. The CDC advises travelers to swim only in chlorinated swimming pools and at uncontaminated beaches and lakes.

Weather & Natural Phenomena: Predominantly Mediterranean climate. However, there are extremes in the north (where there is Alpine climate) and in the far south (where it is hot & dry). Regional natural disaster risks include: landslides, mudflows, avalanches, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, flooding, and land subsidence in Venice.

Travel Costs: Lodging in Rome, Florence, Venice, and Milan run about 100 Euros more

expensive per day than other places in Italy. Dining in these cities is about 5-10 Euros more expensive per meal. Daily travel budget: Luxury over 500 Euros, 1st class 200-300 Euros, 2nd class 100-200 Euros, and budget under 100 Euros. Average lodging cost in Italy: over 200 luxury, 125-200 1st class, 75-125 2nd class, under 75 budget. Restaurants: over 20-25 Euros luxury, 20-25 1st class, 15-20 2nd class, under 15 budget.

The Economy: US \$1 = .85 Euro (EUR). GDP = \$1.438 trillion (2002). Italy has a capitalistic economy, which remains divided into a developed industrial north and a less developed agricultural south. Unemployment is about 20%. In recent years, Italy has pursued a tight fiscal policy in order to meet the requirements of the Economic and Monetary Unions, and has benefited from lower interest and inflation rates. The Italian government has enacted numerous short-term reforms so as to improve competitiveness and long-term growth. Italy has moved slowly, however, on implementing needed structural reforms, such as lightening the high tax burden and overhauling the rigid labor market and the over-generous pension system, because of the current economic slow-down and opposition from labor unions.

Political Situation: Stable. Republic government with Executive, Judicial and Legislative branches. President Carlo Azeglio. Election last held 13 May 1999 (next held NA May 2006); prime minister appointed by the president and confirmed by Parliament. Prime Minister (in Italy, referred to as president of the Council of Ministers) Silvio BERLUSCONI (since 10 June 2001). Legislative branch: bicameral Parliament or Parlamento consists of the Senate or Senato della Repubblica (315 seats elected by popular vote; also, there are a small number of senators-for-life including former presidents of the republic; members serve five-year terms) and the Chamber of Deputies or Camera dei Deputati (630 seats). Judicial branch: Constitutional Court or Corte Costituzionale (composed of 15 judges: 1/3 appointed by the president, 1/3 elected by Parliament, 1/3 elected by the ordinary and administrative Supreme Courts).

Statistics courtesy of the CIA World Factbook.

Advertorial: Culture Xplorers Mexico, the Cultural Treasure Chest Next Door

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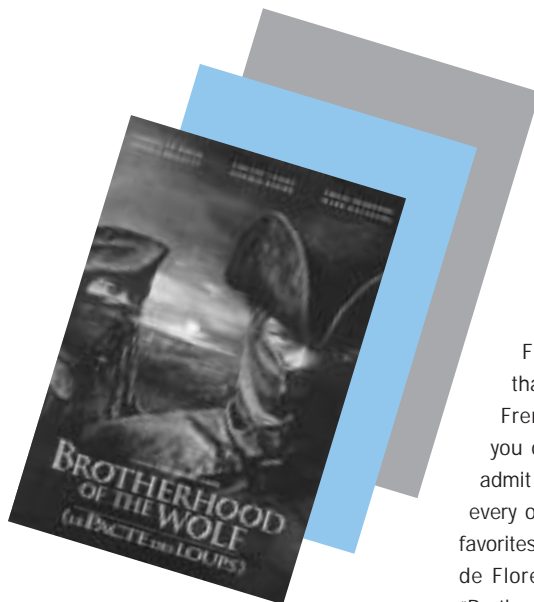
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Movie Review: Le Pacte des Loups

(Brotherhood of The Wolf)

by John Slocum, President/Co-Founder

From the first 15 minutes, you'll realize that this isn't your stereotypical art house French movie – it's full of action and puts you on the edge of your seat. OK, I have to admit I'm not a huge fan of French movies, but every once in a while I see one that I like. Past favorites of mine include "Le Femme Nikita," "Jean de Florette," "Manon of The Spring" and now "Brotherhood of The Wolf." "Brotherhood" boasts excellent action sequences, state-of-the-art special effects, and beautiful cinematography. It is kind of a cross between a period piece set in 18th Century France, "The Matrix," and "Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon."

The story is about a Parisian scientist and his Canadian-Iroquois blood brother who are sent by King Louis XV to track the Beast of Gevaudan, a giant wolf-like creature that killed more than 100 people in mid-18th-century France. No, this isn't a werewolf movie; rather, it is a mystery/action movie complete with political intrigue (from the Vatican to the French Royal Court) where nobody is who they seem to be.



However, the movie did have some periods where it got pretty slow and took itself a bit too seriously at times with the characters' somewhat preachy dialog. Overall I had a good time and would recommend it. The film is now available at major movie rental chains.

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El Café: Working in Spain

By Anne-Marie Dingemans, Director of Volunteer/Internship & European Wholesalers

What's it like to work in Spain? I was curious to the answer of that very question when I took the position of AmeriSpan's European office director in Madrid, 2½ years ago. I had been to Spain before, but only to Barcelona (FANTASTIC city by

like Europe ends at the Pyrenees just north of the Spanish border. It is very easy to get accustomed to things seeming 'normal' and then when you least expect it, Spanish reality hits you. Actually, not that unexpected, because this theory mostly

applies to large former government bodies and any other type of bureaucracy that has not quite caught on to the 'modern' style of doing things. A perfect example: You can get a cell phone contract and your phone in 1 day. Not a problem. Then again, to get your LAND line, you have to go through formerly governmental (and effectively monopolist) Telefonica. Well, THAT takes about 3 months of calling, filling out paperwork, waiting, and more calling.



the way) and the beaches for holidays, but never to Madrid, where I was supposed to settle in and be a professional for 2 years. The answer to the question: 'What's it like to work in Spain' was my main goal ...

I really did need about 2 years to come to any sort of conclusion because I was getting very conflicting impressions of the country and its business climate. In the end, I just gave up and decided that it feels like you are working in 2 different worlds!

For the most part, Spain feels like much of the rest of Europe: efficient, productive, goal-oriented and organized. The typical stereotype of the lazy Spaniard who works a couple of hours in the morning, takes a long lunch and nap, and then drags him or herself back to work in the late afternoon, doing nothing at all for the remainder of the day, does not apply here. I wouldn't have minded one single bit to live that very attractive lifestyle. Alas! That Spain is gone. It is now only a distant memory and part of the colorful history of this wonderful country.

On the other hand, sometimes I really feel

Maybe working in Spain is best defined by its quiriness. The Spaniards really have found ways to combine the modern business culture with bits and pieces of the more relaxed way of doing things from before. This mix is what makes working in Spain unique and oh-so-attractive. Unfortunately, the "modern ways of business" have not yet reached every aspect of Spanish commerce. See my example above.

In my mind, one of the best examples of that perfect combination is 'El Café,' yes, 'The Coffee.' 'El Café' is the ritual morning coffee that you drink with your co-workers in a nearby Café. Oh yes! You go out of your office building, walk a couple of yards to a Cervceria (bar), drink a quick coffee and after 10 minutes or so, you go back to work. You're not away from your desk more than 15 min and it's so refreshing! Sure you may have missed a phone call while you were away but returning that call with a simple 'I just went down for a coffee' is a perfectly acceptable excuse for not having been at your desk.

If you are as intrigued as I was and want to experience this sweetly confusing world of mod-

ern cosmopolitan life combined with charming laid back traditional culture, you can! But before you commit yourself to becoming a Spanish resident, you can try out being a 'guiri' (a foreigner in Spain) first. Through AmeriSpan we can set you up to intern in Spain for as short as 4 weeks or as long as 1 year. To get your Spanish up to par, we combine our programs with a few weeks of an immersion course to get adjusted and be fully prepared to start your working life in this very vibrant, uniquely quirky and cultural country.

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Program Profiles: Montreal and Quebec City, Canada

Schools

Montreal: Language Studies Canada

Quebec City: Bouchereau Lingua International

Cities

Montreal: The 2nd largest French-speaking city in the world, Montreal carries on the European tradition of keeping culture within the reach of the people. Downtown lies between the mountain and Old Montreal, where its charming centuries-old buildings are filled with boutiques, bars and restaurants. Visitors and locals alike promenade along the adjacent Old Port. The nightlife is legendary in the city's bustling downtown. Montreal features all the traditional genres of high culture – symphony, opera and ballet – but truly stands out with its experimental theatre and contemporary dance. One of its most notable exports is the internationally acclaimed Cirque du Soleil.

Quebec City: Located about 400km (248.5 miles) from the Gulf of St. Lawrence, Quebec City is one of the world's most picturesque cities. In 1608 Champlain founded the City that today has about 500,000 inhabitants. Quebec is the only North American city, north of Mexico, to have maintained its fortifications. With its old city walls, characteristic green copper roofs and fortified Citadel, UNESCO declared the provincial capital a World Heritage site in 1985. It is the cradle of French culture in Canada with a 95% French-speaking population.

School Atmosphere

Montreal: The school is in the heart of Montreal, two blocks from a major subway line and minutes from great shopping, restaurants and nightlife. It occupies the top floor of a modern five-story building and its facilities include a central administration office, 26 classrooms, and a social room with free computer and internet access. Also con-



tained in the building is a promenade of several cafes and sandwich shops. Most students who attend this school are from Europe, Japan, Mexico and North America and the majority are university students.

Quebec City: The school campus is located in the impressive old city, and is also accessible to shops, cafes, restaurants, as well as most sites of interest including the Chateau Frontenac. The school is located on the fourth floor and its small, modern facilities include about seven classrooms, a social room and computers for students to access the internet and e-mail. The professional yet friendly atmosphere attracts many serious French students and business professionals from Europe, North America, Japan and Mexico.

Language Program

Specially designed to meet the needs of foreign students, the French courses in Montreal and Quebec City address all of the important aspects of language learning. Students normally focus on conversation and grammar while also improving their writing and reading skills. Under the method of the communicative approach, students learn the language within a practical context and use only French in the classroom. Instructors at the Montreal program are all University trained. In Quebec City, all teachers are native-French speakers and are trained (University diploma) in teaching French to foreigners. In both Montreal and Quebec City a variety of texts and materials are used to supplement the course. These include: cassettes, books, magazines, and journals. Classes in both locations are organized in such a way so that they are always made up of students with the same French level. Private classes are available as well.

Lodging

The most popular choice of lodging for the participants of both the Montreal and Quebec



City programs is to live with a local family. In the homestays of these two locations, students receive a private room and two meals per day. Homestays in Montreal are about a 40-60 minute commute via public transportation. In Quebec City most families are located in a residential area (outside the old city) never more than a 30-minute direct bus ride. Alternative lodging options, such as hotel, hostel, apartment, and residence, are also available in each location.

Activities/Excursions

Montreal: There is an activities coordinator at the school who is responsible for organizing 3-5 activities per week. Examples: movies, sporting events, trips to museums, lectures, social outings. The cultural activities are conducted in French and English. The school staff can also help organize day or overnight weekend excursions to surrounding cities.

Quebec City: The school does not normally organize activities and weekend excursions. However, the on-site staff can provide helpful information, assistance and suggestions to any interested students.

Festivals

Most of Montreal's multitude of festivals include free admission for open-air events. They keep the streets filled with music, laughter and creativity. For 11 days every summer, Montreal plays host to the world's largest jazz festival, with 400 concerts and the biggest stars of the international jazz community. Another event, "The Just For Laughs Comedy Festival" began as a two-night French-language comedy show and has grown to an event that lasts almost two weeks and draws more than 470,000 people.

AmeriSpan: Off The Wire

Honduras is Back

With the damage of a hurricane a few years ago, on top of some school ownership changes, AmeriSpan decided it was best to stop offering the Honduras programs. Well, those times are over and it's back! This small country has much to offer. It's home to the Bay Islands with its spectacular coral reefs attracting scuba divers from everywhere. Historically, the Mayans were prevalent in some parts of the country and their influence and ancient ruins can still be seen today. And don't forget the jungles, mountains, and deserted beaches. Despite a stable political situation and low cost of living, Honduras is largely undiscovered by tourists - which, voila, is exactly what many immersion program participants are looking for. The program even features a "Maya & Playa" option, where you can combine studies in La Ceiba, Copan, and the Bay Islands.

Spanish Immersion in Miami and Denver?

Last year we added Denver to our offerings and now the Miami program is up and running as well! This is for those who want the benefits of immersion abroad programs but are unable to travel abroad. You stay in a Hispanic home, your classes are with native Spanish speaking teachers, and the

cultural activities are in the Hispanic areas of these cities. The Denver program is extra-intensive, suitable for professionals who need to learn great amounts of Spanish in a limited time, or for those who have specific vocabulary needs. And the Miami program? Don't be surprised if you hear as much Spanish here as in the popular tourist areas of actual Spanish-speaking countries.

New Beach Program in Costa Rica

Located on the northern Pacific Coast of Guanacaste, Samara boasts 5 km of white sand beach lined with palm trees, in a protected coral reef bay. The tranquil ocean is ideal for swimming, diving, snorkeling and surf/boogie boarding. Isla Chora, a deserted island, is a short kayak or boat trip away. Samara is ringed by primary and secondary forest that is home to a huge variety of wildlife, including monkeys, toucans, ocelots, iguanas, scarlet macaws, parrots, and more. Other activities include: horse-riding, bike rental, ultra light gliding, deep-sea fishing, dolphin tours, waterfall visits, canopy tours, visits to local 'fiestas' and more. For reasons related to placement test, distance, and culture acclimation, it's recommended that you study for one week at the main campus in Heredia prior to studying in Samara Beach.



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