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MESE, Morelia, México

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MESE Final Report

The first day of my internship site I was introduced to the psychologist Elena Zolezzi by the social worker coordinator at MESE. After being introduced we went to her office to talk about my duties in the psychology department. Elena was so pleased to have help in her department. She then gave me a brief history of what she has done so far for the psychology department. I really like when she told me she was open to new ideas. I was also introduced to the four social workers and two administrative personnel, they were all women. Everyone made me feel welcome in the group. Alberto the social worker coordinator showed me a power point about MESE, so that I would get a better understanding on how the organization helps children and families. The power point answered a lot of my questions about how the non profit organization works.

Everyone was getting ready for *El día de becas*, which they do once a month. *El día de becas* is a day when children and families come and pick up their scholarship money and a box of food that includes oil, beans, lentils,

soy beans, rice, and pasta. There are about 261 scholars and families that are part of MESE. After having a great start I was ready to start working the next day.

My daily routine began at 9:00 am and started the day by telling everyone "Buenos Dias". I then went up to my office to setup materials if needed for my appointments. I would regularly have appointments with mothers to do a children history development questionnaire on her child. The children history development questionnaire was like an interview, which lasted about 1 hour and half. I ask the mother questions regarding her child development, health, education, personality, paternal aspects, family history and the actual problem the child had. I also had appointments with children to do psychometric assessments such as Bender, Raven, and H.T.P. The children ages ranged form 5 to 18 years old. After doing the psychometric assessments I would evaluate them and register scores in the computer.

I would go to lunch from 1pm to 3pm and had lunch with host family. When I came back to work I sometimes had meeting with Elena and Erika the new psychologist, she got hired a month after I arrived. The meetings were mainly about planning workshops, planning ideas to make our department better, and feedback on everything we are working on. I also did

home visits with a social worker to observe a house and family dynamics of a child. I then had to turn a report of my observations to the psychologist.

Personally the most important benefits from this internship experience was the confidence that I gained. I now feel confident to communicate in a professional matter. Working in a different environment and understanding cultural differences in the work place made me become more patient. After witnessing real life situations such as extreme poverty made me value what I have and not take things for granted. Another personal benefit was the amazing people that I work with such the staff, children and parents, also my host family that I lived with in Morelia , they all taught me great things that I will never forget.

Professionally the most important benefits from this internship experience was that it made me become more analytical and a better observer. I also gained professional vocabulary in my communication by reading psychology books in Spanish. I improved my Spanish writing skills, and computer skills. I was able to integrate reports on children. Another professional benefit was the interaction I had with children and families. Two advantages that I had in this internship were being fluent in Spanish

and being Mexican, because of that I was able to interact and understand the families' culture.

My biggest challenge in the beginning was adapting to cultural differences in the work place. Growing up in America where they teach you the importance of punctuality, organization, deadlines, rules, and team work. MESE in the other hand was informal and had no structure. At first it was stressful and frustrating but then I realize that it was a different structure that I needed to adapt to become more useful to the organization. However the two psychologists that I work with were more on top of things, organized and they even speak English. They both made my job easier and got along great. They both were understanding and helpful at all times.

Future interns, I provided some tips to help in your journey if you're your coming in the fall term, bring warm clothing. Morelia's weather in the fall is warm in the day but gets cold in the night. Before getting on a taxi ask the cost and if he knows that address were you are going. There are some taxi drivers who might try to reap you off and can be rude, if they don't know the address. The easiest and safest way to manage your money is by using debit card and withdrawing cash at ATMs. Take the initiative to work and do things with people telling what to do. My co workers liked that I had

the initiative to work and contribute ideas. Morelia is beautiful city full of rich art and interesting history; get to know the city before you do other traveling.

I really recommend living with a host family, for me it was the most rewarding part of my experience in Morelia. I lived with my host parents and their two daughters and two sons. My host family showed interest on my activities at work and my family back home in Oregon. They were very supportive when I got home sick. They always included me in all their family activities. My host mom was so caring and cooked amazing. I was lucky to have a host family that made feel part of the family.

Overall I had a great experience in Morelia. I am really pleased to have work at MESE because their goal as an organization is to keep children in school to better them selves in future. I am happy to have worked with a team who are dedicated to help children and their families. I will never forget get this experience because it changed me personally and professionally. I truly recommend this internship site. GOOD LUCK.