

Learning Through Translation: A SIROW Intern's Experience

(Please note that an abridged version of this article can be found in the SIROW Community Research News – Summer 2013)

The SIROW-Central staff enthusiastically welcomed Dominique C. Cruz, a first year UA student from New Hampshire, as an intern during the Spring 2013 semester. Dominique is part of the UA Honors College as a Hispanic Merit Scholar and is majoring in Latin American Studies with Spanish and Pre-Med thematic minors. The goal of Dominique's internship was to translate from English to Spanish the PowerPoint slides for 14 sessions of our sexuality education curriculum - Health Education for Youth (SIROW-HEY). The Spanish translated name we are using is ProJoven: Educación de Salud Sexual. While Dominique had no previous translation experience, her professional work ethic, positive approach, and experience growing up immersed in the Spanish language by her Dominican parents proved her more than qualified. She excelled in this role with SIROW. In fact, she did such impressive work with us that she joined Monica Davis, a SIROW Assistant Research Social Scientist, for a week in Guanajuato, Mexico. There she co-facilitated and piloted ProJoven as part of a one-week summer program for adolescents at Resplandor International, a non-profit organization founded by Dr. Todd Fletcher, Distinguished Outreach Professor in the UA College of Education.

In addition to the translation of the sexuality education sessions, Dominique reflected on her experience through creative electronic journaling. In her journal, she shared introspective responses to the curriculum, as well as quotations, images, and a 'feelings' word summarizing her reaction to each session's content. The following italicized excerpts and associated images are from a few select entries in Dominique's internship journal.

Topic: Body Image and Self-Esteem

"Bratz dolls were among my toys of choice growing up. Not only was this company keen on creating dolls of all skin colors and hair colors/types, but they were also not as career orientated as the Barbie dolls that my older sister played with. Instead, Bratz dolls different outfits were all about reflecting personal style and having fun! Is this a better image for young girls to idolize? I'm not sure...but it was nice to be able to have a doll that looked like me."



"I wish it was more a piece of common knowledge that "all that matters is how you see yourself". Yes it is a cliché, but honestly realizing this has saved me so much grief over little things people around me have said or done that hurt my feelings or insulted me. You have to live in a way that makes you proud of yourself and surround yourself with people who remind you of how amazingly beautiful and smart you are just with their presence and respect. I really liked this session because it is eye-opening...we are all special and worthy of time, respect, love, and laughter."

"All that matters is how you see yourself. I understand that now."



"Whenever you feel sad, just remember that there are billions of cells in your body and all they care about is you"

Feeling: *special*

Topic: Puberty

I realized while translating the Puberty session that going through puberty really is just a matter of whether or not you want to look at it optimistically or pessimistically because many of the changes your body goes through have pluses and minuses.

GLASS HALF EMPTY	GLASS HALF FULL
Growth spurts	Growth spurts
Hair	Hair
Breasts develop	Breasts develop
Erections occur more often	Erections occur more often
Responsibility	Responsibility
Change	Change

Of course this would have been great to realize while I was going through puberty, but I had no one to tell me that what I was going through truly would result in a woman...which is a pretty darn cool thing to be! 11 year old me was just mad at having to wear bras, worry about tracking my period, and make myself prettier so boys would like me.



So this session really is great for preteens especially because it lets them know that puberty is normal and though it is a process it will come to an end and leave behind a blossomed flower.

Without change we can't grow.

*Feeling: **enlightened***