

Ian Cook's journey to teaching English abroad started as a childhood dream driven by a love of books: "I've always loved to read books. That's why I picked my degree, my career, I was like, what's the job that I can work where I'll be surrounded by books?" Cook pursued this dream as an adult by earning a bachelor's degree in Secondary Education for Language, Literature, and Writing at EMU. However, it was while earning a minor in Spanish Teaching, when he was able to study abroad for 6 weeks in Spain, that he found another passion in Spanish culture.

Cook's desire to return to Spain drove him to apply for the Fulbright Award as an undergrad, but he was rejected on his first try. This initial rejection didn't stop him from reapplying while earning his graduate degree in TESOL at EMU. Having already applied once, Cook felt very confident in his second application, and with the help of several faculty members, he was accepted the second time around.

In Spain, Cook is excited to immerse himself into the culture of a smaller Spanish city as well as the chance to run in the Valencia Marathon this December. For other students interested in applying for the Fulbright Award, Cook stressed that you don't need to have an education degree; "there are many things that closely reflect teaching, like volunteering, coaching, summer camps," etc. When it comes to deciding which country to apply to, Cook says to choose a country that you have a connection and draw to, even if the country has a highly competitive acceptance rate. Your passion and authenticity will show through your application.