

Title: Stand up, Stand out

Name: Krista Burdick.

Study Abroad Program: Currently through the Auxiliares de conversación y cultura en España, but two years ago I went with the EMU Art/History group to Spain with Benita and Gordon. This past September, I uprooted my whole world and moved it more than 3,500 miles east, to Spain. My mission: help facilitate English conversation and share my culture with the students in a high school in the small coastal city of Cambados while perfecting my Spanish and getting to know the people and culture. My photo submission was taken during a lesson I gave to one of my classes about Halloween. Dancing motivates this particular group of students, so I decided to show the Just Dance 2 Ghostbusters video and learn it together in class after I gave a presentation on the holiday in the United States. The picture helps tell my story of learning to be more comfortable with being foreign. While I had been awaiting this new and exciting adventure for almost a year, I was beyond nervous to begin when the time came, given that I had never moved away from my beloved hometown of Ypsilanti, Michigan. True, there are daily reminders of just how far away I am from home. Simply hearing my name or seeing me walk through the streets, they know I am not Spanish. Sometimes I wish that I could just walk to the grocery store without anyone staring at me. But then again, I would not have this opportunity unless I was a foreigner. I am here because I am American, and my "foreignness" is valued in my job. I have started to realize that standing out is not so bad. It makes it easier for my students to spot me in the hall and greet me in their best English. And in ten years, I want them to be able to look back on this very snapshot of the lesson I taught about Halloween and remember how much fun it was to learn the Ghostbusters dance with me in class. I want these memories to stand out to them, just as they do for me. Moving to Spain has showed me that standing out is not such a bad thing.

