

CAPS Experience Thus Far

It has been four and a half months since my arrival to Olesa de Montserrat, and the experience is turning out to be a great use of my time and energies. A Catalonian landscape to take your breath away, the most part of my lunch breaks begin with a run up the mountains, across the forest, and through the orchards. Raised on the prairies, I am extremely appreciative of this environment. The centuries old town is also foreign to my roots and intriguing.



Of the 331 odd students in my school, I enjoy the challenge of memorizing names and juggling the teaching approaches appropriate for each age group. Interacting with the children from P-3 all the way to ESO 4 also gives me a sense of familiarity with the community as a whole. The encouragement of a student shouting a greeting to me on the street is priceless. This school year here is an incredible immersion of vitality and significance.

With a range in students from 3-16 years of age I am having some widely varied experiences! With the 3, 4, and 5 year-olds there is loud rejoicing accompanying my guitar every time I relive the glory days of *Old Macdonald*, *Singing in the Rain*, many other classics, and some new ones, too. With children 6 years-old and up I instruct the classes, normally in thirds, on content related to their subject of study. When the unbridled and intense enthusiasm of youth is harnessed I delight in the endless possibilities.



An appreciated part of work with ESO is the developed vocabulary and conversation skills held by these adolescents. With a hunger to communicate, they are a generous stockpile of ideas. It seems that a twenty year-old Anglophone who understands very little Catalan or Spanish is a great learning incentive. Although they may be older and appear less impressionable than in earlier years, I deny the thought that they are too far gone to discover great new levels of conversing and understanding in English.

Certainly, it is a pride and a privilege to witness a youth discover a new frontier and then surpass it. Never before has this school had an English speaker here as I am, as a result nobody is left out of the excitement. During this dynamic work in progress all the teachers are being gracious and imaginative. May the next half of the program be no less challenging and no less full of growth!

