



DIVISION OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

University of Wisconsin-Madison

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Live & Learn [Spectrum Magazine]



By Andy Cho, Spectrum Magazine, January 2009

Verb conjugating textbooks were never part of the curriculum. Not a single audiotape blared out a generic list of important phrases. I became bilingual simply by living with two languages. Growing up in a Korean American household where English and Korean flowed from room to room was probably the most important factor in making sure my parents' native tongue still resonates in my life today.

In many ways, UW–Madison's International Learning Community works exactly the same way. The ILC is made of up six different language-focused communities where students do their best to utilize those languages in their everyday lives to the fullest extent. The program includes Arabic, Italian, German, Japanese, Spanish and Nordic languages.

“Our language floor programs allow for complete immersion into the language,” says housing area coordinator Jolene Esterline. “The complete immersion allows for more opportunities to learn and practice.”

It's why students with an interest in studying abroad or learning a foreign language find language immersion to be the key to their linguistic success.

“Students who live and actively participate in the ILC leave the community with a truly global perspective on the world,” says Esterline. “Having the opportunity to send informed and conscientious citizens into our ever-shrinking world is what's most rewarding.”

From scheduled field trips to “Roundtable Dinners” geared toward global issues, students participating in the ILC find their academic endeavors are reinforced with a diverse outlook on student life.

“The ILC attracts a culturally, religiously and globally diverse community,” says Esterline. “It's not every student's experience to wake up and share living space with people from nearly every continent in the world.”

For UW–Madison students looking for a more global educational experience, the world may be just a dorm room away.

For more on ILC see “[Students embrace Arabic in new International Learning Community](#).”

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