

1. (00:18) Hello everyone, my name is Olivia Oh and I'm currently a second-year student in the Inclusive Early Childhood Education program here at BGSU. Today, I'll be talking about how my experience studying abroad in Morocco changed the way I view teaching.
2. (00:42) I traveled to Morocco during the j-term of 2020 with Dr. Christopher Witulski and several other students. Our program was called "Music and Healing in Morocco" and the main idea was to experience the different types of music present in the Moroccan society and to study their cultural and historical significance. Additionally, we traveled to various cities around Morocco, including Fez, Meknes, Casablanca, and Marrakech and participated in many cultural activities such as language lessons, traditional craft workshops, and a traditional calligraphy lesson.
3. (02:30) My time spent in Morocco was wonderful, but there were a lot of moments of discomfort and culture shock as well. One of the highlights of my time in Morocco was living with a local host family for the majority of the trip. It wasn't always easy, especially with a language and a cultural barrier, but because of that experience I was able to do many things that I wouldn't have been able to otherwise as a normal tourist. My favorite memory with my host family was going to a hammam, or a public bath. Going to a hammam usually involves taking off your clothes and washing yourself. There are a lot of hammams that are specifically for the tourists where you don't have to take your clothes off that I could've gone if I wanted to stick with what I was comfortable with. However, in the end I was glad that I went with my host family. It was definitely a new and shocking experience but it was certainly eye-opening and it taught me that stepping out of my comfort zone can be a rewarding experience. Another time where I experienced a big culture shock was when I attended a ceremony called Lila. I'll be getting into details of what it is and how it works later, but a Lila is a private event and it is very rare for outsiders to be able to see one in person. This was another example of me getting out of my comfort zone, because at first the idea of going to a religious ceremony that involved trance felt almost scary. However, I realized that it was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity and that I'll never be able to experience it if I stay within what I'm already familiar with. And like that, throughout my time in Morocco, I was constantly challenged to reconsider my view. A lot of things were new and even confusing, but they all helped me realize that just because something is different doesn't mean that it is wrong or that it is not important.
4. (01:25) An idea that I found very interesting in Morocco is that music and healing are closely related. Personally, I've always listened to music majorly for entertainment purposes so the idea that music can heal people was hard to understand at first. The idea of musical therapy, that music can heal a person, isn't new or specific to Morocco as it is present in many other parts of the world, such as the Ottoman Empire. You can see a picture of Maristan Sidi Fredj here in the slide, a hospital in Fez that was built in the 13th century where musicians would come in and play Andalusian music for those

who were mentally ill. Maristans were very common across the medieval Islamic world. I'll play a short clip to help your understanding of what this music sounds like.

5. (01:31) In addition to the Maristans and Andalusian music, the concept of music and healing can also be found in Gnawa music. Gnawa is a type of music that originated from the Gnawa, an ethnic group who were brought to North Africa on a slave trade from Sub-Saharan Africa. Gnawa is played at ceremonies called Lila in a group of musicians who are led by the ma'alem, or the master musician. Some typical instruments in Gnawa include the gimbri, or a skin-covered, three-stringed bass, a couple qraqebs, that are like big iron castanets, and lastly a tabel, or a double sided drum. You can see all three instruments in the picture on the right side of the screen, which is from a Lila that I attended. You can also see the ma'alem, or the master musician, in the picture with his yellow hat. I'll play a short clip of Gnawa to help your understanding of what this music sounds like.
6. (00:42) I mentioned earlier that I had a chance to attend a Gnawa Lila. The word "lila" means night in Arabic and the ceremony starts after sunset and lasts all night. It is a ceremony that also acts as a healing ritual with a lot of cultural and religious significance. A Lila is full of song, chant, music, dance, colorful clothing, and incense and its goal is to heal a person's illness, both physical and mental, by inviting different spirits into their body and asking for the spirits to heal them. It is a very intimate and family-centered event and is rarely shared with the outside world. It is important to note that a Gnawa Lila is not an exorcism.
7. (02:20) A Lila has 3 major sections: the warm up, the section where they ask for blessings from Prophet Muhammad, and the central ritual, where the trance happens. During the central ritual the 7 spirits, or mlek, are summoned and are asked to visit the bodies of those who are ill. These spirits are similar in concept to the saints in Christianity. In order to invite the spirits, the Gnawa musicians play musical pieces that represent certain spirits, and the person who is supposed to receive that spirit in their body is dressed in a color, or multiple colors, that represents that specific spirit. For example, Lalla Malika is a spirit known to love singing and dancing and her representing color is purple. During Lalla Malika's visit at the Lila, everyone in the room started dancing and the family invited their guests including myself and a other students who were there to get up and join them. That's when this picture was taken on the right side of the screen of myself and the other students who were at that Lila. Up to that point, I still had doubts about the whole idea of music and healing and the idea of trance, but it was at that moment that I realized again that just because something is different from my culture and what I already know doesn't mean that it's wrong or that it's not real. When in trance, Individuals dance by bending their back, placing both hands on their back, moving side to side while shaking their head side to side. The dancing gets more intense as the trancing progresses and until the spirit has possessed them. When in trance a person may scream, or lose consciousness and fall to the floor, or start speaking in tongues.

8. (01:15) My time and experience in Morocco taught me that just because something is different doesn't mean it should be dismissed or not worth of respect. There are cultures beyond my knowledge and imagination in this world, and those differences between cultures is what makes our society rich. It is especially important for future educators like me to be accepting and open-minded towards new ideas as there will be a time where I'll come across students whose backgrounds and cultures are vastly different from mine. And again, different doesn't mean wrong. So whatever the differences may be, teachers shouldn't judge or dismiss their students or their families for their culture but instead should acknowledge, respect and accommodate those cultural values to the best of their abilities because by being aware of students' cultures, the teachers promote a sense of belonging and safety for each student to thrive, developmentally, academically and socially. A way teachers can do this is by making sure all students felt represented in the curriculum and in the classroom and also by making sure that there is the atmosphere of open-mindedness and respect among students.
9. (00:02, References page) No speaking
10. (00:24) Shokran, or thank you, for tuning in for my presentation today. I hope this helped your understanding of Morocco and its rich culture, as well as the benefits of studying abroad. If you have any questions about this presentation or my experience abroad, please feel free to reach out to me.