

International Internship in Adapted Physical Activity

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Type of Contribution:

Age Range Elementary, Middle School, High School, Adult, Older Adult

Population Visual Impairment, Deafblindness, Additional Disabilities/Severe

Physical Activity Visual Impairment, Deafblindness, Additional Disabilities/Severe

Session Activity Practical Session: Presentation (30 minutes)

Participation in cross-cultural, study-abroad, service-learning experiences, including those within Adapted Physical Activity (APA), can bring unique benefits for college students and people with disabilities engaged in the program. Although there are many opportunities for faculty-led study-abroad programs and partnerships, instructors and organizations in APA may not know about these opportunities or be aware of the steps required to build these programs. The purpose of this presentation is to present a case-study example of a six-week/six-unit, faculty-led study-abroad program in which Kinesiology students from the United States travel to Reggio Emilia, Italy and provide APA services to people with disabilities. In this high impact partnership, Kinesiology students from California State University, Chico intern for Gast-Onlus, a non-profit organization in Reggio Emilia, Italy focusing on disability and sport for community-rooted exchange and long-lasting impacts. Students engage in over 120 hands-on internship hours as they simultaneously learn Italian. Working within the community and diving into the culture gives the students a unique perspective on best practices and cross-cultural competency in Adapted Physical Activity/Education. This presentation will provide participants with (a) background information and details regarding the Gast-Onlus organization, (b) a narrative description detailing the process of creating an international partnership and the study abroad internship, (c) examples of collaborative, educational, and service activities that the student interns and participants engage in, and (d) strengths and challenges experienced before, during, and after creating the program.