



## Post Fellowship Reporting - Project Summary

**Report Title:** El Camino **Name:** Heather Wade  
**Other Team Members:**  
**Program:** San Francisco Program  
**Trip Dates:** 11/30/-0001 - 11/30/-0001 **Location Visited:** Spain  
**Post Fellowship Reporting Template:** PFR Template 01

**Project Summary:** Many pieces of literature have discussed the road or el camino as a metaphor for life. Some of these titles include *The Alchemist* by Paulo Coelho, *Siddhartha* by Herman Hesse and Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales*. I believe that it is important for students to really reflect on the road they are traveling down. The life that they want is the one that they must be choosing now. If the road is a metaphor for life then imagine all the crossroads, obstacles and uphill battles they will have to traverse. I believe that students need to be taught about "the road" and the importance of having a destination in site.

I begin my classes each year with the poem *The Road Not Taken* by Robert Frost and have a discussion about the roads we chose. It has been a long time goal for me to create a curriculum focusing on the road and to teach kids about goal setting and persevering; moving ahead despite the obstacles life hands them. The authors of the titles above all took pilgrimages that influenced their writing and therefore eventually influenced the world. Coelho completed El Camino de Santiago de Compostela before writing *The Alchemist*. I decided that I wanted to do the same five hundred mile pilgrimage across the Pyrenees and through Spain so I could better discuss "the road" as a metaphor for life. So, in June I began my journey across Spain. I had to overcome many obstacles, including having all the money stolen from my bank account when I was alone in a foreign country. I had infections in both feet and needed to drain my blisters with needles every night before waking up for another twenty plus mile day. These obstacles were minor compared to many of the things inner city youth have to deal with everyday, but I could find some parallels that would allow me to better teach about moving ahead on the road despite the obstacles in my path. And here I begin my journey....

**Career Impact:** \* Provided me with the opportunity to study "the road" as a metaphor for life.

- \* Allowed me to explore a sacred and historical place examined in literature
- \* Gave me the opportunity to bring back relics from an authentic Camino: walking sticks, conch shells, and religious paraphernalia.
- \* Provided me with the opportunity to travel with pilgrims from all over the world looking to reflect and grow through the journey
- \* Gave me the opportunity to practice and use my Spanish

**Classroom/Community Impact:**\* The experience brought me closer to other teachers and administrators who followed my blog

- \* I had the opportunity to exchange emails and share pictures with my students along my journey
- \* I have relics that can contextualize the literature
- \* I believe I am better prepared to teach about "the road" of life and perhaps more understanding of the disappointments and obstacles that happen along the way
- \* I can better communicate with students and parents
- \* Am working on goal setting with the same group I worked with last year

**Open Response:** \* I am planning some hiking day trips with students

- \* Am looking into working with a not for profit and providing some outdoor exposure to students to allow us to do some goal setting together
- \* Looking to eventually teach an elective class about goal setting and perseverance
- \* Would like to design a curriculum about goal setting that is used by other teachers
- \* Am continuing to take a Spanish language class
- \* Designing a PowerPoint presentation to share with staff and students
- \* Hope to write an article about the experience
- \* Hope to find funding and make this into a larger program

**Quote:** "The Journey of a Thousand Miles Begins with a Single Step"

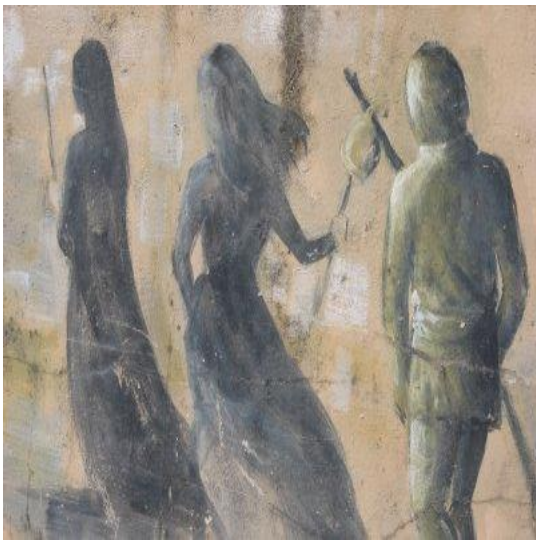
Photos:



The Cathedral



The Road



The History



The Way



The Reasons



Reflections on the camino



Friends on the camino



The End