

Growing up with a Hungarian mother but never having learned Hungarian grammar, I always struggled to speak with my relatives on my family's yearly visits. Two years ago, I decided to spend my summer in Debrecen at the summer school for the first time. My mother had worked at the summer school as a student helper as she went through college in the eighties and she only had good things to say about her experiences but had no idea how it might have changed in the following years. I found that though much had probably changed since the eighties, I would have only positive experiences in Debrecen.

The programs scheduled really allow students to immerse themselves in the culture. By far everyone's favorite is the folk music and dance night. Each week, a different region of Hungary's food, song, and dance is showcased. The bravest students go up to sing the folk songs in front of the group and everyone joins in to learn the dance; an exhausting experience on the hottest nights. Other nights are spent playing soccer (or football, as I learned to call it over the course of the month), dancing at the weekend disco party, and exploring the beautiful city center.

Despite the program being an immersion into Hungarian language and culture, it is so much more due to the diverse background of the students attending. Through my two years I met students from Russia, China, Japan, Turkey, Brazil, Canada, and of course from all over Europe. So, on top of learning Hungarian culture you pick up bits of cultures from all over the world. Both years I attended I stayed in a three-bedded room. It's a great way to start meeting people from all over the world before the program even starts. Not much is better than arriving to the program on the evening of the World Cup Final to find that your roommate's country is in the final.

Of course, I shouldn't forget to mention the classes themselves, after all, everyone is there to learn Hungarian. The classes are very enjoyable, and the materials are handy and provide

helpful exercises. Every two weeks the program holds a book sale where you can pick up additional materials to aid you in continuing your studies after the program. My teachers provided great recommendations to further my cultural immersion too, urging me to pick up some Hungarian classics in local bookstores.

More than just endless exercises in the classroom, the teachers find fun and engaging ways to get you to build your skills in the language. Time is spent learning grammar and practicing vocabulary of course, but teachers incorporate other activities as well. Games to help with vocab retention, folk songs, field trips into the woods nearby to hold class outdoors when the weather is too nice to be cooped up in the classroom, scavenger hunts. Each time I attended, my relatives commented on how much it improved my Hungarian. Though I've been twice before, I'd happily go twice more; not only does your Hungarian improve by leaps and bounds, but you meet some of the best friends you'll make in only 4 weeks.