

## Episode 8: José Morcillo-Gómez on Teaching Spanish and Latin American Culture in China

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>> STEPHANIE DOSCHER: You're listening to Making Global Learning Universal: Conversations about engaging diverse perspectives, collaborations, and complex problem-solving in Higher Education, on campus, online, in local communities and abroad. I'm your host Stephanie Doscher, Director of Global Learning Initiatives at Florida International University.

>> JOSE MORCILLO GOMEZ: I think we need to be very humble. When we are adapting International programs, an International program means when you are able to create this interconnectivity between the content that you are already teaching in the, you know, in the country where your University is from, but at the same time you're adapting your content to the reality and the culture where you are going to implement that program

>> STEPHANIE DOSCHER: Jose Morcillo Gomez is Visiting Instructor and Coordinator of FIU's dual degree program in Spanish with Qingdao University. In this episode, Jose gives us a glimpse into his unique experience teaching in China, his perspective on the borderless nature of knowledge, he's deeply informed by his experience as an International Ph.D. student from Spain, by his linguistic identity growing up in Spain South, by his experience living in Miami surrounded by a plethora of Spanish dialects, and now by his work teaching Global Spanish and Culture in Asia. Jose is a strong advocate for studying identity and power through language and area studies. He lives his values of connecting and knowing others through interculturalism and he views global learning as more than approach to teaching. For him, it's a way of life.

>> STEPHANIE DOSCHER: Maybe we should set the stage for our listeners a little bit here. So I think this was maybe -- how long have you been in Qingdao?

>> JOSE MORCILLO GOMEZ: Well, in February will be my third year here. Three years, yeah.

>> STEPHANIE DOSCHER: Okay, so this was about three and a half years ago and I recall vividly that our mutual colleague, Maida Watson, who is a senior faculty member here at FIU in our Spanish program, she asked me for a meeting. She comes into my office, she was very nervous, she was wringing her hands. [Laughter]

>> JOSE MORCILLO GOMEZ: Really?

>> STEPHANIE DOSCHER: Yeah, yeah. She said, Stephanie, you know I've created these two global learning courses, which is Spanish for Business, right? And then also the Latin American Culture course. Yeah. And she was teaching them online, she was teaching them on campus, she said, now they're going to be taught in a completely different modality by two doctoral students who are going to China, they've never been to China before, they're going to teach these courses to Chinese students in our new Spanish BA program, what is that going to look like? [Laughter] She was concerned for you. You know?

>> JOSE MORCILLO GOMEZ: Oh, really?

>> STEPHANIE DOSCHER: Yeah, she was.

>> JOSE MORCILLO GOMEZ: Yeah, she's always -- yeah, she's always taking care of all of the students of the department, yeah. I know.

>> STEPHANIE DOSCHER: She said, how can we find out more? I mean, they raised their hands, I don't know if they know what they're getting themselves into. What is it going to look like? I said, Maida, I don't know what it's going to look like. That's what Jose is going to figure out, but I know, because they are Global Learning courses, they're going to have diversity, collaboration, problem-solving. I mean, that's how we define global learning and I know that they're going to prepare our Chinese students and they are our students, they're FIU students for global awareness, perspective engagement. So it's fantastic. Fast forward three years, now we get to talk about what it looks like. [Laughter]

>> JOSE MORCILLO GOMEZ: Yeah, yeah. Yeah, yeah. And, you know, these two courses are, from my point of view, you know, this semester I am the Latin American Professor here. I mean, my feeling about Latin American, even being from Spain, because I am Spanish, I feel very close to Latin America because I'm from the south of Spain. And in this part of the country we have a different way of talking in Spanish. Many people in Spain, the Castilian people, they make jokes of us because we -- supposedly we are not pronouncing properly the Castilian Spanish. They get that feeling of, you know, of people refusing the way or making fun about how, you know, how I was talking my Spanish and they were thinking that my Spanish was not very good quality one, whatever. It's very similar with the perception we have in the peninsula in Spain about Latin American because many people think that Latin American Spanish and culture is something that is not so important as the, you know, the culture and the language from the metropoly. I mean, from the crown of Spain. Whatever. What I mean with this is that I go to this part because these two courses are really important in China because many people don't know that the relation between China and the language in Spanish is not because of Spain. It's mainly because Latin America. The main thing, the relation between China, I was talking about this relation between China and the Spanish language, this relation is because China now has really deep economic relation and political relation with Latin America. Most of the International companies here in China are located in Latin America. Many of them have partnership with the main companies. In Latin America, commercial balance between Latin America countries and China during this last 15-20 years, clearly balanced between China and these countries in Latin America. What I mean is that this Global course is about Spanish business for Latin America or Latin American culture or Latin American literature, just focus on the Global Learning courses, the Spanish for Business Latin America and Spanish Culture is pretty important in our program because it's just to go through this relation that now China has with Latin America. What we do in this Global Learning course is just to make the students know how important is this region in the planet for the economy of China. And how important is the relation between these countries with China. Then I realized when I came here and I was teaching this course for the first time that we needed just to make sure that the students already know how important it is to know Latin America in order to be more competitive in the labor market in China. Actually, we can say that most of the students who already graduated with us in Qingdao are working, most of them are working in Latin America. Now we have students from our program who are already living Uruguay. Now we have another student who is living in Ecuador. We have another student who is living in Dominican Republic. We have another one going to Brazil. What I mean is that if we talk about Spanish here in China, we must talk about Latin America.

>> STEPHANIE DOSCHER: I'm fascinated by this because you are -- you're a node for so many different vectors, right? So you're a Spaniard. You're from the south of Spain, so that's a particular identity. And then you came to the U.S., to FIU to do your Doctoral program. You're teaching Spanish in China to Chinese nationals who are not going to come and work in the U.S. necessarily, but in Latin America, but Miami, which is the home to our University, is deeply enmeshed economically with Latin America. And our graduates from our domestic programs will definitely interact with Chinese nationals who are doing business in Latin America. I mean, is this what we're talking about? Is this complex?

>> JOSE MORCILLO GOMEZ: Absolutely. It is, you know, as you mentioned, Stephanie, I'm from Spain. I went to do my Ph.D. at FIU and now I have the big, the big honor to be part of the FIU faculty/staff and I'm teaching here in China. For me it's a really amazing experience just to be teaching here because, first, after being living in Miami for four years I realized about the diversity. I always say to my students that I was learning Spanish in Miami for four years.

>> STEPHANIE DOSCHER: Explain that.

>> JOSE MORCILLO GOMEZ: And I'm a person from Spain. What I mean with that is that Miami offers a great opportunity for anyone who wants to learn about Spanish and Spanish culture, not about Spain. Spanish is important in the world, not because 42 million people living in Spain. Spanish is a real global language because the million -- the hundred -- not the million, but hundred people, you know, there are more than 500 people talking in Spanish in Latin America. That's what makes really a global language Spanish in the world, not because of Spain. But we have this perception about the colonial and, you know, the colonialization that the European did with the rest of the world. Being here in China made me realize I already did it in U.S., but U.S., for sure, is part of the western world, but for me being in China is just to be in another, another culture, another point of view about the history, another point of view about the territory, another point of view about the identity and it made me feel that the western world is so Euro centric. We feel that everything was started in the western world. And we are absolutely wrong because I'm coming from Europe, I'm coming from Spain. Spain is a really, really important place in the history of Europe. We have the oldest city in Europe in the south of Spain, in Cadiz. Suddenly I went to Miami and I realized that I didn't know anything about Latin America until I was in Miami because I had the chance to be in connection with all the Latin America countries just in one city. I could learn about the different ways of talking in Spanish. And I could realize that my Spanish was so poor because my Spanish was coming only from one part of the Spanish world. It was coming from Spain. And I realized that there were another more than 20 countries who offer a new way of understanding the culture and to use the language. Then I said to my students that it's amazing to have FIU in China because if there is one University in the U.S. that knows very well the Latin America world, the Latin America political relations, the Latin America culture, that's Miami. Not because Miami is a -- well, the main point is that Miami is a meeting point for all the Latin America who left their countries and they made Miami to be the more Latino city in the U.S. Then FIU, at the same time, and I think we need to be very proud of that, we are the first University in U.S. with students coming from this Latin America background. We have students from Nicaragua, from Cuba, from Argentina, from Spain, from all over Latin America. We have students coming from the Caribbean countries who are part of the Spanish culture, but at the same time is a part where you have more mixture because you have some of the countries who were colonies of France and other ones of England and other ones of Netherlands, the Netherlands. And you realize first that you are in a very International environment. And the same time I can say that FIU is the model of the global Spanish. If I could say that FIU offers something amazing to the students here in China is that we can offer that diversity of the Hispanic culture coming from one University who is holding, in the same institution,

so many ways of understanding the Hispanic culture, coming from all the different countries with Spanish native speakers. Then that's amazing because the, you know, that's part of my responsibility here because I'm teaching all of the Latin America curriculum here in China. And I was -- I want to finally connect what I said about I am from the south of Spain, what it means to me in terms of identity. The south of Spain is a place where diversity, in terms of culture, is very important. We have 800 of Muslim kingdom and my city, Granada, was the last city in Europe with a kingdom ruled by Muslims. And the Christians were, you know, taking out of the country all the diversity with religions. They were, you know, there was a degree from the Catholic Queen and King pushing out the country to the Muslims and the Jews. And then finally -- it's finally because I'm coming from a very diverse culture environment. For me the Muslim culture is very familiar because the architecture, the food, even the language, the way of pronunciation of my language is very close with the Arabic. After that, my vision about the culture is based on domestication. And when I went to FIU I realized that Latin America is another part of the world where the identity of Latin America is based on this mixture of races, of religions, of cultures, and that is a great model in terms of diversity.

>> STEPHANIE DOSCHER: You know, I know that you are familiar with the, I don't want -- the narrative or the conversation that's going on, especially in Higher Ed right now, in terms of the U.S. relationship with China. So there are issues around security in terms of research, at the same time the United States institutions are, in large part, dependent upon International students from China for tuition dollars. So how do you make sense of this as someone who is teaching for a U.S. institution, you're a faculty member in a U.S. institution with a U.S. program that is situated in China, preparing those students to do business with Latin America? Because, you know, what you have described is that you are very comfortable within these complex dynamics, right? With these different streams interconnecting. You're comfortable, kind of, displacing yourself and thinking from a global perspective, but what would you say to those who push back and are asking why? Why is this happening? You know, to what extent is FIU benefiting from this? Are we ignoring realities that are not a public institution's best interest?

>> JOSE MORCILLO GOMEZ: I should say that the relation with China is very important for our institution, for FIU. The program here in Qingdao is pretty new. We started, since I know, around seven or eight years ago and we are teaching, two Professors from FIU, we are teaching here since 2017. It's been only three years. But FIU has another program in China. We have a really success program in Tianjin. We have hospitality. You know, the Chaplin School is doing a great job over there and they have been working with Tianjin for more than 11 years. What I mean with this is that FIU is developing a great relation with Chinese Universities. For FIU, the relation with China, I think, is a very important thing. I think the problem is -- I always say something. I live in China since three years ago and my perception is that I'm living in the future.

>> STEPHANIE DOSCHER: What do you mean by that?

>> JOSE MORCILLO GOMEZ: I mean that globally after been living in Europe for 46 years, four years in U.S., and three years in China, I can realize that the world in this point in the history is changing. And I think that in terms of, it's not only economically changing, it's changing in terms of political power. Probably something that we need to know is China now is one of the main actors in the International policy and we cannot ignore that. For me it's difficult when I have a workshop for recruitment students to go to FIU because the first question that they are doing since this last, almost, one year is, okay, Jose, I would like to go to FIU, but do you think I would have any issue to get my Visa? Because I know there are 700 students in China, I already know one student here in Qingdao. He got admission in a University in Miami and he couldn't go finally to start his Ph.D.

because he -- his Visa was refused two times. And he's a brilliant person. I think we need to know that, for example, I'm an International student at FIU. What I mean with this is that I'm not a local person who was learning at FIU, I was doing my Ph.D. in Spanish and Applied Linguistics, supposedly I learned a lot about methodology and I'm teaching, and other teachers here, about the methodology we are using in U.S. and at FIU, the task-based language teaching because Dr. Barratt, the expertise in this topic at FIU was my Professor. I learned a lot with her and I'm communicating with Chinese Professors here to teach them how to use this methodology in their classes. What I mean with this is that if I was an International student, in this case I'm working for FIU, supposedly I'm transmitting my knowledge to Chinese people, but I'm not doing something wrong. I'm doing -- I'm just teaching what I learned because my knowledge is here. It's not a property from anyone. It doesn't matter if I learned in U.S. or in Europe or wherever I can go in the future. What I mean with this is that we have Chinese students in the U.S. Universities and they are learning and they have the chance to learn in those excellent Higher Education institutions who are recognized like the best in the world. They are getting knowledge, but the knowledge is not a product property of anyone.

>> JOSE MORCILLO GOMEZ: The knowledge is the property of every human being working hard to learn. And, for sure, if finally they are hired by Chinese companies, they are using the knowledge that they got in U.S., but now we are living in a global world. We cannot try to put borders in the knowledge in the world. Then I think it's a wrong decision, from my point of view, just to try to avoid people from one country or another one because you are afraid of these people teaching the knowledge.

>> STEPHANIE DOSCHER: Take us into your courses, your Global Learning courses, the kind of educational experiences, the tasks that you engage in to have students kind of grapple with Latin America diversity, the relationship between China and Latin America, and if so, even the relationship with the U.S. in kind of that, like, trilateral space.

>> JOSE MORCILLO GOMEZ: Yeah. Well, I need to tell you, for example, the way we are working -- I can -- I'm teaching this semester the Latin American Culture class. Something I do is, because, you know, I'm not only putting in connection China with Latin America through the point of view of an America University who is located in Miami, at the same time I'm trying to create a networking vision about all the possible connections. Not only from U.S. with China, China with Latin America, at the same time I'm trying to work on the relation that already China has with Latin America in terms of culture, in terms of language, in terms of even food. I'm going to explain why. When I start my course in Latin America culture, I start from the first human being existing in the American continent. And this is something directly connected with Asia because there are different theories about how the human being arrived to the Americas. And one of these theories thinks that the first human being in America was coming from Asia. They were coming because the Ice Age, when the two plots, the two continents, Asia and America, were connected, then supposedly the humans from Asia were able to go from Asia to America. Then this is the first connection in terms of understanding why the indigenous [indiscernible] in the Americas. The face is very similar with the Asian. I come from that not only because of this, I'm coming from that point because I want to make the students know that America is one of the oldest cultures in the world, like the European culture is or the Chinese culture is. Then when I start from that point in the history of the continent, I'm trying to make them know that America -- well, the term, you know, the idea of Latin America is a pretty new idea because it's coming from this last century, perhaps from the 19th Century, but mostly from the last century, from the 20th Century. But what I mean with this is that to understand the Latin America in the 21st Century, we need to know all the previous history of this continent. Then I start from that point. After that I have many classes talking and listening to audios and

reading articles and watching documentaries about the Mesoamerican civilizations and the Inca civilizations just to understand how it was. You know, these civilizations, how developed they were in terms of managing knowledge on technology, on diversity, on religions, and all that stuff. And to understand how important was the change that the society in Latin America had when the European arrived from Europe in the 15th Century with Columbus arriving to the Caribbean Islands. And they realize that, for example, there are more connections between the Chinese culture and the Mesoamerican culture more than this last part of the history where the Europeans were arriving to Latin America and changing the whole organization of the society and changing their religion and changing all the economy of this country --

>> STEPHANIE DOSCHER: So what I hear you saying --

>> JOSE MORCILLO GOMEZ: -- before they -- yes?

>> STEPHANIE DOSCHER: I don't want to interrupt you. What I hear you saying is that in your courses you are revealing interconnectivity between Asia and the Americas.

>> JOSE MORCILLO GOMEZ: For sure.

>> STEPHANIE DOSCHER: You are revealing dynamic power structures --

>> JOSE MORCILLO GOMEZ: Exactly.

>> STEPHANIE DOSCHER: -- within the Americas, between the Americas and Europe.

>> JOSE MORCILLO GOMEZ: Yes.

>> STEPHANIE DOSCHER: More so than you are, kind of, inculcating, these are the knowledge and the skills that you need in order to create new power structures.

>> JOSE MORCILLO GOMEZ: Yeah. Because I think if, you know, if something -- if I can say something of the students here in Qingdao, they are really global students. They are Chinese. They are doing a major in Spanish, but at the same time they are students in an American University, then the requirement is to have fluent level in English. Then they are managing three different languages. They are living in one of the oldest countries in the world. And they are learning about one of the oldest countries in Europe because they have Spanish culture and Spanish literature. And at the same time they are learning about the oldest cultures in the Americas who are the ones coming from those countries that now are part of Latin America. We are talking about Mexico. We are talking about, well, California, Texas, Arizona, all the Spanish colonies before, you know? And Central America and South America. Then there's a real global learning environment because we are working the interconnectivity between these three continents. For sure when I talk about Latin America, I need to talk about Europe because 300 years of the history in the Latin Americas is because the European were colonizing the oldest civilizations in America. Then it's a really interesting thing because during these 300 years, I'm talking about, how was the perception of the world of the European when they arrived in the Americas? And how was the perception of the indigenous, the first civilizations in America [audio faded out] European because both of them didn't know each other. And if I continue with my course, for example, we are at the point where we are talking about, for example, the relation

between the Chinese culture in the 19th Century with the Latin Americas because Cuba, Peru, Panama, and many of the countries in Latin America got a lot, you know, thousands and thousands of Chinese people coming from China to work in a semi-slavery, you know, condition in the plantation that the European had in Cuba, Peru, Panama. And even in California they were working in the construction of the railway. Then we have the first part of the culture where we have people coming from Nanchang to the Americas. We have connections between the beliefs and the religions in the Latin Americas with the Chinese culture. We have some icons who were very similar. For example, dragons or, for example, when we are talking about Tenochtitlan in Mexico, they realized that some of the symbols that they are using are very connected with the Chinese culture because, you know, Chinese culture is a culture, who even now, is very well connected with nature. Still, the year in China is based on the moon cycles. That's why we have the New Year in a different date from the rest of the western countries.

>> STEPHANIE DOSCHER: Did you know about all of these connections in terms of iconography and other historical facts? Did you know about all of these connections before you began teaching in China? Or are you learning along with your students?

>> JOSE MORCILLO GOMEZ: [Laughter] Well, I have to say, every time I have to prepare my classes, something that I do is just to think about the students I'm going to teach. Then when I got the position here in China, before I came here, I was thinking how to connect the way of talking about Latin America to Asian students who already don't know very well about the Hispanic culture. Then I was getting some materials from the FIU library. For example, I was getting some good articles about the immigration from China to Latin America because even for me it was a pretty new thing that I didn't know before. I knew about Peru, that I, you know, the President of Peru was Fujimori, his background was from Japan, but I didn't know, for example, that the restaurants in Peru can called chifas. And it was funny because I'm going to tell you exactly what happened. I read that, but until I didn't arrive to China and I wasn't in my class with my Chinese students, I really didn't realize how important this was because I was reading about these restaurants in a Mario Vargas Llosa novel. He has -- yeah, he has one of his novels is [speaking Spanish] and he's talking about these chifas, these restaurants, for example. And the students told me, oh, Jose, chifa, you know, I didn't know a word in Chinese. Well, I only knew [speaking Chinese] thank you, hello, that's all.

>> STEPHANIE DOSCHER: That's it?

>> JOSE MORCILLO GOMEZ: Yeah. And then the thing is suddenly the students would tell me, oh, Jose, you know in Chinese the verb to eat is [speaking Chinese]. Then I realized they told me, oh, probably these restaurants are called chifa because it's just a way of adopting to the Spanish the sound of the Chinese to tell to eat at restaurants. Then even when I was preparing materials before I was coming here to China, during this three years living here talking with the students, learning Chinese and learning Chinese, I want to have connection with the local people here because I think a big mistake we do is that when we are, you know, going to leave to another country, if we want to be really useful for our students, we need to learn their language. And then I started to learn Chinese because I needed to know how the students are struggling to learn Spanish because I read a lot about native -- English native students when I was in U.S. But my students here are not English native students, they are Chinese native students and we have different, you know, issues that perhaps I wouldn't have if I were working in Miami, for example. What I mean is that being in connection with the students, being in connection with the language here, being in connection with the culture in China, I really realized how, you know, the culture is something that can make to the whole people in the world to realize how connected we are. We --

then when I was in my classes and I was talking about many of the contents we have in class, first, I realized that I have to start from the beginning because, for example, when I talked about the Hispanic culture, it's mandatory to talk about religion. And we have to talk about the Christianity because Europe, when we were, you know, colonizing the Americas, we were trying to evangelize to give the Americas the Christian religion. Then many of the terms that we have in the literature, many of the terms that we have even when we are watching a painting or we are listening to music, most of the cultural production from Europe at that time was coming the religion. Then something that I learned is how to explain to a person who is coming from a totally different culture about the culture coming from this part of the world in terms of European going to Latin America.

>> STEPHANIE DOSCHER: Yeah, how do you do that? How do you talk about religion in your courses?

>> JOSE MORCILLO GOMEZ: Well, it's amazing because I need to explain what a Church is. I need to explain what a Mosque is. And I need to explain what a Synagogue is. What I'm doing in my classes is just, for sure, I need to talk about religion because if we are reading some text from, you know, Friar Bartolome de Las Casas, he was a priest, or if we are reading some text about a writer from Mexico, so Juana Ines de la Cruz, she was a nun then -- a nun, sorry, not a noon, a nun. Then the writing is about religion, then they know -- they need to know some of the Bible stories, they need to know about some of the Bible characters. They need to know what religion thinking. For example, today in my class, I was talking about virginity and I was talking about how the indigenous cultures already have a word for the clitoris in the woman. Meanwhile, in Europe, until the 19th Century, the, you know, the way of representing the sexuality of the woman was using the sexual organs of a man. What I mean with that is that when I was talking about culture today is that when European arrived to Latin America, the women in the indigenous cultures, in the original civilizations, were -- their status in term of equality was better than the status that the women got when the Europeans arrived to America. Because, for example, some of the indigenous cultures already had a word in their languages for this part of the woman. Sexual organs. was really interesting to talk with the students in class about this because many people think we cannot talk about some, you know, topics in class here in China because it's kind of controlled by the institutions. I can tell you that I feel absolutely free and I didn't have any issue here for three years because if I want to show how the Hispanic culture is, I need to talk about these topics in class. What I mean with this, today we were talking about the history of the women in the Latin Americans and, you know, I'm using -- part of the material I'm talking about sexuality. And how the female body is used in the culture and how is the difference between how was the status of the women in the indigenous cultures? And how was the status of the females in the European culture? The way I do it is in a very natural way just to make them know that religion is part of the culture. We need to know about this period of the European colonizing the Americas. And my experience is that in class we have the chance to compare. And something that is amazing is that most of the students are trying to make connections between the cultural content we have in class with the Chinese culture.

>> STEPHANIE DOSCHER: Okay, can you give me an example of what that looks like? Because that's the essence of global learning, is this comparative, connective space.

>> JOSE MORCILLO GOMEZ: Yeah. I can give you some examples. For example, after taking the Latin America Culture class, most of the students who are graduating with Qingdao University, they need to do a final thesis, you know, just to get the graduation with Qingdao University., since we are teaching here, the Professors from Qingdao University was telling us that most of the

students were choosing topics in their thesis that were trying to connect the Chinese culture with part of the contents that they already got in the Latin American Culture class. For example, we have students who wrote an article about the Mesoamerican and about one of the legends about the origins of the Earth. Then you know there is a book, there's a very ancient book who was published and was used in the Mesoamerican culture. The name is "Popol Vuh." And in this book, you know, the beliefs were that the life in the planet was coming because there were -- the human being was made with clay. Then this student was writing an essay for the Latin American Culture class. About the connection between this idea of the origin of life in the planet with an idea of a very ancient legend from the Chinese culture. And this legend was talking about a woman. It's name -- her name was Nua. And it's the way of telling in Chinese woman. Woman the way of telling in Chinese woman is nuar and it's coming because this woman God in the, you know, ancient culture here in China, then she was trying to compare the way of perception in the ancient culture in China about the origin of the world, of life, and the origin of the world in the Latin American culture from the Mesoamerican side of the session.

>> STEPHANIE DOSCHER: Oh, this is fantastic! I mean this is -- these are some of the deepest sources of identity are stories of the origin of the world. So when we're talking a global perspective and perceptive consciousness, what I think I hear you saying is that your approach to global learning, this connection making between Latin America, Latin America culture, Spanish, China, Chinese culture, Chinese, it's having deeper manifestations in how students are thinking about their -- the -- the sources of identity for themselves and for their culture.

>> JOSE MORCILLO GOMEZ: Yeah, exactly. Exactly. And, you know, the connection between the Chinese culture and the Latin American culture is coming because the period of time before the European arrived to Latin America. Because the religions -- yeah, yeah.

>> STEPHANIE DOSCHER: -- it's Spanish, right, the European language that's enabling us to, like, bridge this gap.

>> JOSE MORCILLO GOMEZ: Absolutely.

>> STEPHANIE DOSCHER: And could even allow us here in Miami to bridge the gap in political, social, economic spheres because Miami is the gateway to the Americas and through our city...Is this, like, is this negotiated space?

>> JOSE MORCILLO GOMEZ: And even, you know, Stephanie, something that I will have next week in my Spanish for Business in Latin America, we are traveling from Mexico to the south of the Americas. But next week we are going to talk about Miami.

>> STEPHANIE DOSCHER: Okay. How do you -- so what do you talk about when you talk about Miami? [Laughter]

>> JOSE MORCILLO GOMEZ: For sure we need to talk about Miami because Miami is the gateway and, you know, Miami is a great example of how connectivity between different cultures can be really successful. Miami's the place where a country like U.S. is connected with the rest of the continent in Latin America. Then we need to know about Miami because Miami is, you know, just in one city you have the whole Hispanic world. You have the main companies coming from Latin America. You have the main companies coming from Spain. You have many, many artists. You have singers, you have actors, you have actresses, you have televisions located in Miami and

they are producing content for Latin America. But at the same time they are using, you know, these products for U.S. because, you know, Spanish is the second main language in U.S. We cannot forget that. Then Miami, I think is a great example of diversity. At the same time is pretty easy to know Latin America just being in Miami because you can eat food from any of the countries in Latin America. It's a place where you can listen to Spanish coming from different part of Latin America. You can listen to Argentinian, you can listen to Colombian, you can listen to Venezuelan, Cuban, Central American, you know, dialects. Then it's the perfect place. And then, in terms of the economy, I need to tell you something, I have my own company in Spain for 14 years. When I started to do an International process to, you know, to have business with other countries in the world and I thought about U.S., before I went to FIU, I have a business trip in 2006 because I wanted to have partnerships with American companies and my company in Spain. And then when I was thinking to make business with U.S., the Government, you know, the -- there is a foreign affairs agency in Spain and they recommended me just to start in Miami instead of going to New York. Or going to Chicago because Miami was the first place for, you know, a company coming from Europe, in this case from Spain, if they wanted to make business in U.S. What I mean with this is that many of the Chinese companies already know, for example, the port of Miami is already making a big partnership with the port here in Qingdao. Even the cities of the Qingdao and Miami are really, really similar in terms of we are coastal city, we are, you know, part of the business now here is the cruising, you know the cruising, we have a lot of cruises going to Korea, going to Japan because we are very close to Japan and Korea. For sure, Miami should be in this Latin America, you know, Spanish for Business in Latin America because Miami is not only U.S., Miami is Latin America, for sure in the U.S. Then we have some students who are preparing a presentation for next week and I've given them some materials talking about how the investment of Chinese company is -- of Chinese companies is now in Miami. And for example, FIU is one of the examples of collaboration between Chinese institutions and U.S. institutions with the relation with Latin America. And that's why we -- the major that we are teaching here is Spanish because it varies any University in the U.S. who has that core component is FIU. You know, even the President, President Rosenberg is a great example. It's a President who can speak perfectly Spanish. His expertise is in Latin America. He was living in Central America, he was living in Mexico. He's a very good, you know, expertise and scholar in Latin America. He is a great example just to make that connectivity between different continents.

>> STEPHANIE DOSCHER: What is the President -- what has been your experience of working with President Rosenberg and his leadership of this program in Qingdao?

>> JOSE MORCILLO GOMEZ: I must say that I need to thank him, thank him, thank him for all the support for this program. I think he really loves the program. He's traveling to China every year just to, you know, to be the President in the commencement that we have here for the graduation of our students here in Qingdao. He's all the time, anything we ask for, he's willing to help. I can tell you that we did an interview because we have a radio podcast channel in Spanish and in this radio podcast many of the participants are Hispanic people. We have Chinese people who speak Spanish. And one of the people, I think one of the most important guests in this channel was the interview that we had with President Rosenberg and he did it in Spanish. Then the students were surprised to know that the President of an American University was able to talk in Spanish as good as President Rosenberg does. You know? And that was amazing! That was amazing because he's a good example of how International the University is and how important is global learning for a scholar or for anyone who wants to have an International career. And the students here in China are going to have an International career since they are working for Chinese companies who are located in Latin America or in Africa or in other parts of the world because now China is an International country as U.S. is already.

>> STEPHANIE DOSCHER: So you've had an International career also as a scholar and as a teacher.

>> JOSE MORCILLO GOMEZ: Exactly.

>> STEPHANIE DOSCHER: And so what has this experience been like for you personally, Jose

>> JOSE MORCILLO GOMEZ: Well, I need to tell you that I'm one of the most lucky men in the world. That's my perception. Every day I get up and I go from my home to campus here in China. You know, I feel really lucky just to be in this country because -- how can I explain? Just to be in your 50s learning a third language, learning a totally different culture, eating totally different food, amazingly good food, visiting amazing new architecture, trying to think, how is the perception of the world from this part of the world? Being Europe and after being for four years doing my Ph.D. at FIU and being a representative of an American University in China, bringing the Hispanic culture, oh, my God, that's a really global experience, Stephanie. And it's amazing because I'm learning every day, every day. I'm learning from my students. I'm learning from what I see every day here. What I experience in my personal life. What I experience with the connection I have with my colleagues here at the Qingdao University and how open they are to get new knowledge and to improve their, you know, teaching and to improve the learning of their students and that's an amazing experience for me. I'm very lucky because, you know, not everyone has the chance to be connecting the whole world. And the language is just, for me, the Spanish is just an instrument. It's a tool. But the main thing is that I'm using Spanish to connect the Chinese culture with the Latin American culture with the American culture as well. Because when we are talking about Latin America we are talking about the connection between the U.S. and Latin America for many, many decades in the Latin American history.

>> STEPHANIE DOSCHER: So, Jose, there are a lot of Universities that have programs abroad. Do you have any specific recommendations for how to structure a successful program such that it isn't simply picking up a domestic program and putting it into an International context without thinking about the local needs? Do you have any specific things that you're doing that you have found successful in making a program more responsive to your students, to the community, and still maintaining the validity, the integrity of it being an FIU program?

>> JOSE MORCILLO GOMEZ: Well, my main advice -- I don't like to give many advice, but what helped me a lot was just I'm not from U.S., but I'm working for an American University. I'm from Europe and I'm a scholar and faculty now in an American University and I'm teaching in a Chinese University. I think we need to be very humble. When we are adopting an International program, a program is International not because we are using a different language from the local people. An International program is when you are able to create this interconnectivity between the contents that you already are teaching in the, you know, in the country where your University is from, but at the same time, you're adapting your contents to the reality and the culture where you are going to implement that program. What I want to say with this is that before I was coming to China, when I was designing the syllabus for my students here, for sure the needs that the students have in China are totally different with the needs that the students in Miami have. Then I need to think about what the students need to learn in order to make them more competitive in the labor market and in order to know better about the Hispanic culture. And we need to do just this. You know, the program, if next year I have to teach the Latin American Culture class in Miami, for sure I would use part of the contents that I'm teaching here, but I would change many of the contents that I'm

teaching already here because I'm in a very different environment for learning and teaching, even in a very different cultural environment.

>> STEPHANIE DOSCHER: And you even provide interactions between the FIU program in Qingdao and the local community, right?

>> JOSE MORCILLO GOMEZ: Yeah, exactly. For example, we have this Saturday, we will have a cinema class session and we are doing out of art composition. We do it in an art gallery in the La Chen district. And we will be screening a short film, it's a Chinese short film, with captions in Chinese -- sorry, captions in English and Spanish. And we are screening a Chilean movie about [indiscernible], the part from Chile and we are screening this movie. And, you know, something amazing is that most of the people attending to our event are Chinese locals from Qingdao who are really interested on the Hispanic culture, on the movies made in Hispanic countries. Then we have been screening movies from Spain, from Chile, from Argentina, from many countries. And for us, the most amazing thing is just to know how people here are interested about such a different culture as the Latin American one. And we have this event and we have, for example, is reading club and we are doing this -- this is -- we call it Beyond Classes. Because we want to make the Qingdao community know that the students from Qingdao University who are studying with FIU are students who already prefer to talk and to work in companies from Qingdao who have business in Latin America and at the same time we are offering a bridge to connect the Hispanic culture with the Chinese culture in Qingdao. Then this is amazing, Stephanie! You know, because we are making global every little day. For me global learning is not only global learning. Global learning for me, personally, it's a global teaching every little day because I'm using Spanish in a class from an American University for Chinese students.

>> STEPHANIE DOSCHER: What I hear you saying, what I think I hear you saying is that it's not just about global learning, for you it's about global living.

>> JOSE MORCILLO GOMEZ: Exactly. Exactly. Exactly. That's the perfect definition. It's global living. You know, today I was eating chicken, right? But I was eating one of the most delicious vegetables I ever had and I only can get it here in China. Even in the way I'm cooking now, I get that, you know, little spots coming from the Chinese culture.

>> STEPHANIE DOSCHER: I love it! I think that is a perfect place to end because, for me, it is just about lunch time. [Laughter]

>> JOSE MORCILLO GOMEZ: Oh, yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

>> STEPHANIE DOSCHER: For you --

>> JOSE MORCILLO GOMEZ: Oh, my God, for me it is night. Yeah. [Laughter] Yeah.

>> STEPHANIE DOSCHER: Thank you so much, Jose. I really appreciate you taking time to share with us about your very, very unique experience.

>> JOSE MORCILLO GOMEZ: I really appreciate your invitation just to talk to you because, you know, I think you're doing a great job in, you know, in our institution at FIU because if we have the "I" in International because we are part of the global world. And I think you're doing a great job just to make the faculty to know how important it is just to be International, not only because we are

talking a different language from another country, it's more than that. It's about understanding the New World where the way of thinking is totally different and we need to change into that global perception of every little thing every day. I do thank your work and I do appreciate your invitation just to share with you my experience here in China.

[Music]

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