

SECTION 3

- WOMAN: I've been reading your personal statement, Paul. First, let's talk about your work experience in South America. What took you there? Was it to gain more fluency in Spanish?
- PAUL: Well, as I'm combining Spanish with Latin American studies, my main idea was to find out more about the way people lived there. My spoken Spanish was already pretty good in fact. Q21
- WOMAN: So you weren't too worried about language barriers?
- PAUL: No. In fact, I ended up teaching English there, although that wasn't my original choice of work.
- WOMAN: I see. How did you find out about all this?
- PAUL: I found an agency that runs all kinds of voluntary projects in South America.
- WOMAN: What kind of work?
- PAUL: Well, there were several possibilities.
- WOMAN: You mean construction? Engineering work?
- PAUL: Yes, getting involved in building projects was an option. Then there was tourism – taking tourists for walks around the volcanoes – which I actually chose to do, and then there was work with local farmers. Q22
- WOMAN: But you didn't continue with that project. Why not?
- PAUL: Because I never really knew whether I'd be needed or not. I'd thought it might be difficult physically, but I was certainly fit enough . . . no, I wanted to do something that had more of a proper structure to it, I suppose. I get de-motivated otherwise. Q23
- WOMAN: What do you think you learned from your experience? It must have been a great opportunity to examine community life.
- PAUL: Yes, but it was difficult at first to be accepted by the locals. It was a very remote village and some of them were reluctant to speak to me – although they were always interested in my clothes and how much I'd had to pay for them.
- WOMAN: Well, that's understandable.
- PAUL: Yes, but things soon improved. What struck me was that when people became more comfortable with me and less suspicious, we really connected with each other in a meaningful way. Q24
- WOMAN: You made good friends?
- PAUL: Yes, with two of the families in particular.
- WOMAN: Good. What about management. Did you have a project manager?
- PAUL: Yes and he gave me lots of advice and guidance. Q25
- WOMAN: And was he good at managing too?

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- PAUL: That wasn't his strong point! I think he was often more interested in the academic side of things than filing reports. He was a bit of a dreamer.
- WOMAN: And did you have a contract?
- PAUL: I had to stay for a minimum of three months. My parents were surprised when I asked to stay longer – six months in the end. I was so happy there.
- WOMAN: And did anything on the administration side of things surprise you? What was the food and lodging like?
- PAUL: Simple . . . but there was plenty to eat and I only paid seven dollars a day for that which was amazing really. And they gave me all the equipment I needed . . . even a laptop. Q26
- WOMAN: You didn't expect that then?
- PAUL: No.
- WOMAN: Well, I'll look forward to hearing more.
- WOMAN: But now let's look at these modules. You'll need to start thinking about which ones you'll definitely want to study. The first one here is Gender Studies in Latin America.
- PAUL: Mmm . . .
- WOMAN: It looks at how gender analysis is reconfiguring civil society in Latin America. Women are increasingly occupying positions in government and in other elected leadership positions in Latin America. I think you'd find it interesting.
- PAUL: If it was to do with people in the villages rather than those in the public sphere, I would. Q27
- WOMAN: Okay. What about Second Language Acquisition?
- PAUL: Do you think I'd find that useful?
- WOMAN: Well, you've had some practical experience in the field, I think it would be.
- PAUL: I hadn't thought about that. I'll put that down as a definite, then. Q28
- WOMAN: Okay. What about Indigenous Women's Lives. That sounds appropriate.
- PAUL: I thought so too, but I looked at last year's exam questions and that changed my mind.
- WOMAN: Don't judge the value of the course on that. Maybe, talk to some other students first and we can talk about it again later. Q29
- PAUL: Okay.
- WOMAN: Yes. And lastly, will you sign up for Portuguese lessons?
- PAUL: My Spanish is good, so would I find that module easy?
- WOMAN: Not necessarily. Some people find that Spanish interferes with learning Portuguese . . . getting the accent right too. It's quite different in a lot of ways.
- PAUL: Well, I'd much sooner do something else, then. Q30
- WOMAN: Alright. Now, what we need to do is . . .