

When I began my research this summer, I had big plans to travel across Ireland speaking with linguists (and specialists in the Irish language) at Maynooth, NUIG, and in the universities around Dublin, while also maintaining close contact with several specialists in Arabic at universities throughout the world. As such, in the weeks leading up to the official start of my project, I emailed, LinkedIn(ed), Facebook messaged, and even cold-called a total of 32 professors, receiving a total of 18 responses, 12 of which were out of office replies and 6 of which fell along the lines of a “regrettable no.” Consequently, like so many of my peers, due to the hectic nature of these past 2 years, I had to scrap my initial gameplan and reassess and reorient the nature of my project to fit the current climate. I was at a loss and, for those first few weeks, I struggled to see how I could possibly complete my project. Overwhelmed with so many individual tasks in front of me, I began to orient my existence around my research, checking off boxes as I went. This adaptability would characterize my summer, viewing every setback as pointing me in a new and interesting direction: I had a limited background in linguistics, so I spent extra time at night using books and academic articles to give myself a crash course; I had limited experience with the Irish language, so I used the countless resources made available by the Irish government.

For several reasons both personal and circumstantial, I began the summer quite unbalanced, and, consequently, though I was thrilled with the work I was doing, I almost immediately began to fear the inevitable burnout. Luckily, however, living on Trinity’s campus, I had situated myself in between the only resources I truly needed: the library, the plethora of coffee shops in D02, and the gym. As I devoted serious hours daily to sitting in a single spot and researching, I found it useful to view socializing and exercising as meditative outlets for releasing my stir-crazed energy, rather than simply mundane habits. In this pursuit, I instituted a “never say no to plans” policy which has significantly improved my relationships with both my Dublin friends and my rapidly growing New York circles. Over time, my daily schedule for those six weeks (a dream, now, as I acclimate to Columbia University) would come to consist of scouring the internet and the Ussher/Berkeley shelves for relevant studies, bouncing ideas off of both my advisor and Irish speaking friends, and spending at least an hour per day lifting weights and exercising. Thus, over the course of the summer, I learned that what I require above all else to succeed is internal balance. Though in no way revelatory, I do my best work and feel I contribute the most to the people around me when I am at peace with myself. Though listening to nearly any medical professional would have suggested the same, this summer was the first time in my life that I learned how to actively implement this balance.