Community college definitely has influenced and redirected my life in a way that I would not have imagined. Two years ago when I was in my native country, if someone would have asked me what I hated the most in school, I would have said, "Foreign language and math." I never would have imagined that I would end up living in the United States, learning a new language and excelling in math.

Two years ago, before I started my career at Lone Star College, I was depressed, sad, discouraged and even mad about having to leave everything that I loved like my family and my recently-attained degree behind. I knew that I had a new life as a married woman in Texas, but I did not realize that I had the opportunity of learning many new things and that I could grow intellectually even though the odds were stacked against me. I did not know that God had more in store for me.

In the summer of 2007, I registered for a class in the English as a Second Language program (ESL) at the Kingwood campus of Lone Star College just to be able to understand a bit more English. At the beginning I did not like it, but my teacher's encouragement and his passion for English attracted me more to the language. My ESL professor told me that I would have to spend two years studying English in order to be ready to take college level course work. Determined not to slow down my progress, I worked diligently to learn my new language, and after only two months, I was able to progress out of ESL and begin college level courses.

After learning that to be able to continue with my studies I would have to take math classes. I had to pause and reconsider whether or not I should continue to pursue a degree in higher education. I was tempted to give up, but I decided to sign up for a math class. Initially, it was a struggle, but after one month in the course, I could not believe that I was not struggling in something which I had feared my entire academic life. I had conquered the fear of being in a math class. To my surprise, at the end of the semester, I was even invited to be a part of the Supplemental Instruction program, which is a guided group-study that involves
more active participation and collaboration from the students that wish to participate. I thought it was a nice compliment but just the thought of helping other students in math -and also in English- was frightening. Even the thought of interviewing for the position was monumental. Nevertheless, I made the decision to challenge myself, and I knew that I was the only person that could hold me back.

As a supplemental instructor, teaching math in a new language was very challenging but taking on this risk taught me patience, motivation, encouragement and even enjoyment and self realization. I was even able to motivate those students with my own experience of having all the odds against me yet still being able to excel in mathematics.

These new experiences led to the development of both my intellectual and emotional intelligence. I now have enough motivation and self-confidence to pursue a degree in a field that I have always loved, dental hygiene.

Besides all of these personal accomplishments, for me the greatest one is that I have grown as a person. Kingwood College was the vessel that took me on this journey of personal discovery which has had a positive impact in all other aspects of my life. Now, I can see the positive side of every situation even when the circumstances dictate a contrary disposition.