Diversity

The Intensive English Program Newsletter

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Editor’s Note:

Kingwood College Intensive English Program (IEP) was founded in August 2001 to help immigrant and international students learn and improve their English. In its sixth year, the IEP now has about 400 students from over 50 countries. One of the goals of the IEP is to promote intercultural understanding and diversity on campus and in the community. Diversity: The Kingwood College ESL Student Newsletter plays an important role towards this goal. This issue of the Diversity has two main themes: My Life in the United States & Learning English at the Kingwood College IEP. Enjoy reading these great stories. If you have any comment about the newsletter, please e-mail Masoud Shafiei at shafieim@nhmccd.edu.

My Life in the United States

A Funny Story

Carlo Medina, Peru, Grammar & Writing II

One time, my uncle told me a funny story. My uncle drives trucks and he lives in Houston, Texas. One time he was driving, but he was very tired. He made a decision to stop at the side of the road to sleep. He heard someone hit the window. It was a young man in sports gear. The young man asked, “Excuse me, what time is it?” My uncle responded angrily because he was sleeping, “It is 8:10 a.m.” Thank you,” responded the young man, and he went away. My uncle returned to sleep, but five minutes later he heard another person knocked on the window. A man asked, “Excuse me, what time is it?” My uncle responded very angrily, “It’s 8:17 a.m.”

My uncle was very tired, so he put a sign in the window that read “I DON’T KNOW WHAT TIME IT IS!” Then a little boy knocked on the window of the truck and my uncle was very very angry and yelled at him “WHAT DO YOU WANT?” and the little boy said, “I only wanted to tell you that it is 8:25 a.m.”

A Scary Experience

Liliana Tise, Bolivia, Reading & Vocabulary V

Usually I go shopping at the mall with my children so they can play at the park. I like the park because it is clean and fresh. A few months ago, we went to the mall with my husband. He works outside the country most of the time and misses the children a lot. He wanted to take care of the children and he told me that if I wanted to go shopping, I could. I said “No!” because I know my children and I know how active they get, especially the baby boy. He loves to go to the mall and hide from us, he is not afraid of people, and I have to watch him very carefully. But my husband insisted that I go shopping anyway.
My Life in the United States

Edith Vargas, Mexico, Grammar & Writing VI

My life in the United States has been simple, yet difficult. It has been difficult for me because of the variation in language, and time management. I wanted to accomplish learning the new language because I had more opportunities for education, job, and better living conditions.

Moving away from my country, Mexico, has given me the challenge of learning a new language and the opportunity to explore different cultures. A couple of months after arriving in this country, I thought deep in my heart that I had made the biggest mistake of my entire life. I didn’t understand a word that any American English speaker was saying. Everything was different. As soon as I had learned how to say something, they would change for a different word with the same meaning. It was difficult because in my head everything was bla, bla, bla, giving me the sound of a child learning to say his/her first words. I knew the phrases, such as hello, good morning, and good bye, but it wasn’t good enough. I was looking for more, to learn more words not only to understand them, but to pronounce them. I got to high school, recognizing that I could not speak any other language better than Spanish. Obviously, they put me in ESL classes right away. They wanted me to have knowledge of what I was about to learn. For some reason, the ESL courses in high school are not very good. I had only Spanish speakers in the classroom. I realized that it was not a smart idea for me.

It became even harder. People in this country usually have their day organized; they have a schedule for every day of the week. For instance, they may be working out at this moment, but they already know what they are going to be doing the next period of time. If I had been that organized, I could have accomplished more things. However, I had to rethink my plans, since I moved to a different household. After a year of trying to manage my time, I can say that I did a pretty good job. By that time I was balancing my time between school and a job as a dishwasher in a restaurant. Getting involved in school was a great idea because it helped with my job. I got promoted after a few months and became a hostess. By that time, I had already learned enough English to defend myself.

The rest was just a piece of chocolate cake sweet and rich in flavor. Together with sorrow, this country gave me a lot of opportunities to choose from, such as better job, education, and better living. I was happy and afraid at the same time. I didn’t want to give wrong information about the place. For instance, just to clarify, a hostess is a person that welcomes people to the restaurant and provides them what they may need at the moment. For me, becoming a hostess in the restaurant was great because I learned a lot about coworkers, customers, and I was losing my fears. At that time my learning skill and my job were great; however, I just had to climb another hill step by step.

I was working and studying hard. However, my way of living was not as it was in my dreams. I was neither poor nor wealthy. I was beginning to have things that I never dreamed of having, such as an automobile, cell phone, e-mail address, and a bank account. However, inside my heart I knew that all those things were the result of my determination. I was living with a great family and having great support from my employer. In conclusion, I was opening myself up to a better education, better job and a way of life that I had never dreamed of accomplishing.

A Different Life

Erwin Pascual, Philippines, Grammar & Writing VI

Being new here in U.S., I am currently facing new things in my life. Moving here made me more mature with the help of new learning and experiences. Some of the things that help mold my life here in U.S. are my lifestyle and responsibilities.

My responsibilities here have been very important in helping me become a better person in many aspects. Those responsibilities include studies, house chores, and time awareness. One of the biggest parts in my life here in U.S. is my studies, attending college for my future. Moreover, I am still keeping up with those responsibilities because I need to be the best that I can be.

In addition to my responsibilities, my lifestyle here has adjusted and changed in some ways too, such as meeting new people, less leisure time, and no more playing in my band, which we had back in Philippines. I am so glad whenever I meet people from somewhere else, learning more new things from different cultures. For example, their native foods, what they do for a living, religion or beliefs, and other things concerning their life. Furthermore, I look forward to adding new insights to my life here in U.S.

Finally, even though I had to experience some difficulties prior to leaving the Philippines, my life here in the U.S. has been good so far. It is ongoing and still open for more things to learn and experience.

American Dream

Giovanny Andres Echavarria, Colombia, Grammar & Writing II

I am an ESL student at Kingwood College. I arrived in Houston one year ago. I came from Columbia, seeking a better future. Actually, I am living with my sister, her husband, and her baby; they are always helping me a lot. I want to talk about my country Colombia. I lived in Cali. This is a small city, but it’s beautiful. The people are very friendly, and we have amazing views of mountains, rivers, lakes, and a lot of different landscapes.

I like the U.S.A. because we have more opportunities here for success. That’s why I am doing my best to learn English to become better everyday and some day to achieve my American dream.
The Worst Experience in My Life

Elsy Alvarez, Mexico, Reading & Vocabulary VI

I have lived in the United States for one year. After only a few days in the states, I experienced Hurricane Rita and it was a horrible adventure. We didn't know what was going to happen. Everything started on Wednesday morning. I was at Kingwood College and the teacher told us that the college was going to be closed and there was a general alarm. Her advice was to leave Houston. When I got home, my family was alarmed and we decided to go to Monterrey, Mexico. We picked up everything and we left home at 10:00 P.M. That night, everybody thought the same thing. All the freeways were full. At 5:00PM the next day, all the freeways were full. It was very hot that day and there was little food or water. All the people were out of control. We were scared because my daughter could be in danger. My husband took out a map and found another way to San Antonio. Other cars started to follow us. Our gas tanks were empty and the police helped us. Finally, at 10:00A.M. on Friday we found a hotel. It was lucky that we found a room. The next day we returned to Houston to our home. I will never forget this scary trip.

Hurricane Rita

Jean Young, Korea, Reading & Vocabulary V

Two weeks after my family arrived in the United States, Hurricane Rita landed in Houston and passed through Kingwood. At that time we were staying at a hotel that wasn't a comfortable place. Everyday we met unfamiliar people; furthermore, we didn't have any friends. When Hurricane Rita landed in this area, every school and company closed for a few days. When I watched TV, many people moved north and every highway was full of cars. Some cars didn't move because there was little gas. When I looked outside, I could see a long line of cars. Most of the family was confused about what to do. We only watched TV in the hotel. Fortunately, Rita was reclassified as a level 3 and the projection was that it was going to move a little to the East. I thought if Rita attacked our hotel, my family couldn't go back to my country. Rita landed overnight. When I woke up the next morning, the storm had moved to another area. We didn't know that Rita had passed our hotel because the windows of the hotel were very thick and we couldn't hear any sounds or wind. Finally, my family survived. That was the first scary experience for me and my family in The United States.

Living in the U.S.

Nseobong Etokebe, Nigeria, Reading & Vocabulary V

I came here in the year 2002 for a company job assignment. Since that time, I have experienced new things in my life in the area of culture, infrastructure, technology, and education. People behave differently here because they are from different countries and cultures. There are black and white Americans and they behave differently. They also dress and speak differently.

There are good roads everywhere because of the good technology that exists. There are street lights everywhere and a good drinking water system in every house. In the area of technology, I can use a computer to do whatever I want to do. I can study WebCT online if I don't want to be a regular student. I know how to use a microwave to make my food warmer; I can use the washing machine and the dryer. I can also use the dishwasher to wash my plates in the kitchen. The standard of education in the United States is high. I am starting with ESL classes before I proceed to college level classes. The ESL classes are a lot of fun and I give thanks to my instructors for their understanding. It is a surprise that no matter how much fun we have, our instructors encourage us to learn. Life in the United States has become a blessing to me because I have been able to study different cultures, enjoy social amenities, technology, and education.

A Funny Story

Kim P. Nguyen-Wong, Vietnam, Reading & Vocabulary V

Since I came to the United States, the free country, my life has taken a 180 degree turn. My mind was feeling fresh, and I also felt release. Like all immigrants, I started roughly. I had to study hard and work hard to make my life better. However, I also looked for some things to do to relax and enjoy life a little. I recalled, one time on Memorial Day, my brothers, sisters, some friends, and I went camping in San Antonio. We were all still single at that time, except my youngest brother, who was engaged. My siblings and I were 4, and with our 6 friends, that made 10. With 10 people we drove down in 3 cars. When we entered the camping area, the sun already went down. We picked out a good spot to camp. The girls were responsible for the food. The boys took care of putting up the tents. We set up the grill to make BBQ. One of my brothers looked for some dry branches from the tree to burn, in order to make some light and to chase away mosquitoes and other insects. My other brother and his friends started putting up tents. It seemed really hard for them because it took them so long to figure out how to do that. Maybe it was their first time to put up a tent. Therefore, they got things done slowly. Finally, we finished eating and then we sat around the fire singing while my brother played the guitar accompanying the singers smoothly. We also played some games until late. We went to sleep and slept soundly. After we spent all day traveling, cooking, and working, it made us tired and sleepy. In the middle of the night, a heavy rain hit us. The wind and the rain made my tent collapse. My sister, my sister-in-law, and I woke up. Every one of us had to hold one corner of the tent making the tent stand up. We didn't get too soaked with water, but we were holding the tent bars in one position for a long time. Rain kept coming down the whole night and we were exhausted. Almost morning, the rain slowed down to a sprinkle. We ran quickly to our car and tried to get some sleep. We slept until daylight.

By then, I felt it was a terrible night. We were wet, tired, and cranky. Nevertheless, every time we think about that, it was funny. We just laughed and laughed non-stop.
My Life in the United States

A New Life

Thitaree Chaisawat, Thailand, Reading & Vocabulary V

I have been living in the US for a year. I had never traveled to the US before I arrived here. The United States of America is a place where lots of people visit. It also has some of the greatest schools in the world. I had planned to continue to study here because there are a lot of advantages of having an education in America. When I arrived here, everything was so exciting. There were lots of people from many different countries with different languages. I felt lonely at the beginning, but after that I met many friends who made me happier than before. I was taking ESL classes. Taking ESL classes was the best experience of my life. I have met new friends and people from all over the world. I assimilated into the different cultures. The first week in the United States was so funny. When I think of that time, it makes me happy. I had to stay at home with a friend because my aunt could not take her vacation. My friend and I were going out to see the new world. I couldn’t even say the word “coke” at McDonalds because I couldn’t speak English. My friend ordered for me. I bought a new cell phone after I stayed here for a week. When someone called me, I wanted to throw away my cell phone because I was afraid to speak English. I could not understand what they said. I had good friends who were living here for a long time. I brought all my friends with me to help me talk with American people. Can you imagine how scared I was? I was so afraid to speak English. I could not understand what they said. I thought that my English improved after I had taken ESL classes at Kingwood College. My teachers were wonderful. My English is getting better. I can communicate with American people. Someone said, “Experience is the best teacher”, and I agree with that. I’ve learned many things while living in the United States. If I didn’t come here, I wouldn’t have these great friends and experiences.

A New Change

Maria T. Gonzalez, Mexico, Grammar & Writing IV

Many people go through different feelings when they are about to move. They can either feel happy and enthusiastic to discover new things, while others experience fear and frustration over a new change.

I recently moved from Bryan, Texas to Porter, Texas and even though it has been almost two months, I still miss my old, small town. When I made the decision to move to Porter, I was happy and desperate. Not only was it my first time moving out of town and away from my family, but also, Porter is a bigger city with more things to do and places to visit.

With many cities close to Porter, there is a greater variety of restaurants, stores, parks, shopping centers, schools, and even movie theaters to visit or have fun, but the emptiness of family love and security can change a good thing to a bad experience.

Now, two months later, I’m happy with my new experience, but sometimes I feel sad and even frustrated. I miss my family a lot and sometimes I can’t believe that I miss my little town, too. I miss the calm atmosphere and weather, but the biggest thing that I miss is the calm traffic flow; which is the biggest problem here.

Moving to Porter has changed my life in different aspects, but it won’t change my love for my family or my hometown, Bryan.

Rural Life in the U.S.

Marcela McLean, Colombia, Grammar & Writing IV

The first time I came to the U.S.A., I was 17 years old and I had just received a scholarship as a foreign exchange student. That was a big challenge because I did not know English or anything about the American life style.

I started by doing research and reading about the customs, about life in the cities, the schools, and I watched a lot of television trying to get an idea about how my life was going to change. A couple of days before leaving for the United States, I learned my destination would be Michigan, and I knew nothing about Michigan.

After many hours of traveling, I arrived at a small airport in Grand Rapids, but my final destination was still four hours away by car. Finally, I got to a farm in the middle of a cornfield. Well, I never expected to be in rural America. In the beginning, I was in shock. It was difficult; I did not know how to live on a farm with so many animals or how to take care of them. With time, I got used to it and learned to appreciate the hard work the people do in rural America.

Today, I have kept in touch with several friends I met in Michigan and I am better able to appreciate all the moments and nice people I met during my visit. Additionally, I was exposed to another America, a different one from the one on television.

Misunderstanding a Statement

Maria G. Gonzalez, Mexico, Grammar & Writing IV

One of the funniest things that has happened to me is the misunderstanding that occurs with my poor English. The latest one happened last week. One of my coworkers and I were talking while we were working at the store. She was commenting about one of her kittens, which was run over by a car the night before we were talking. I was confused when she stated that one of her kittens was run over because I understood that one of her kids was run over by a car! She realized that I had misunderstood her because I asked her which one of her sons was the one who was run over by the car. She answered me that none of them had gotten run over because she was talking about her kittens, not her kids. Then I could not understand why she was talking without being emotional.

One of the most important reasons that I am taking ESL classes is because communication is essential in every aspect of our lives. The more we can communicate, the less shy we are going to feel communicating our ideas and also listening to the ideas of others.

A Huge Hug

Bertha Perez, Mexico, Grammar & Writing IV

Never say never when it concerns moving to another country. We always think we will live in the same country. Well, that’s what I thought. Then, after one event that happened to my family and me in my country, Mexico, we had to move to the United States two years ago.

When I arrived in Kingwood and we took the main avenue, Kingwood Drive, you cannot imagine how happy I was, first seeing all those green trees, the lakes, and the sky so blue, second smelling the grass that was just cut and third flowers everywhere. I thought I was in heaven; I will always remember that moment. It
was September and the weather was warm. It was like Kingwood was waiting for my family and me to give us a huge hug, and trying to tell us that here we will be protected and safe. In fact, after these two years, many wonderful things have happened. After the event, I lived. I learned that it doesn’t matter where you live; the most important thing is to try to live day by day, moment by moment as if it will be the last of your life.

In conclusion, never say never because no one knows what is going to happen next and where our life will continue. Just remember that God always gives us another opportunity. Thanks, Kingwood, for making me feel so happy!

Small World

Lana Reyes, Russia, Grammar & Writing IV

I moved to Humble in April of this year; before that, I lived in College Station, Texas. I went to an A & M English course, where we had American students being our conversational partners. My partner was nice, a pretty girl named Mariah. One day my manager, at my current job in Humble, was walking around the restaurant with this pretty girl. I glanced at her and it seemed like I knew her from somewhere, but I couldn’t remember from where.

A few minutes later my manager called me over. The minute I came to them, both of us, the girl and I, said at the same time, “I think I know you!” Yes, it was Mariah, and she came to visit my manager because they knew each other for a long time. That was crazy for me because out of all the A & M students in College Station, I met her and then we met again in Humble. It’s a small world.

Oatmeal

Adriana Gonzalez, Mexico, Grammar & Writing IV

My name is Adriana Gonzales; I’m from Monterrey, Mexico. I came to the U.S. nine months ago. I live in Kingwood, Texas, in a friend’s house with her husband and children. At first, when I arrived in the U.S., something funny happened. One day my friend, whose name is Lydia, invited me to eat breakfast in a restaurant. I got confused about how to order oatmeal. I said, “I want to order a Quaker State.” - that is a brand of oil for cars, of course, I wanted to order Quaker Oats. So, all the people started to laugh at me. My mistake made me feel very embarrassed, because they asked me, “Why do you want to eat car oil?” I couldn’t answer anything. I left running from there.

Every person who comes to the U.S. and doesn’t know English has different personal stories. But, in my experience, I will never forget my funny story. That is one of the reasons that I decided to start learning English.

Surprise in America

Manuela Rauch, Germany, Grammar & Writing IV

The best thing that happened to me here in America was my surprise birthday party. When I first arrived, I thought my party wouldn’t be anything special, because my old host family and I didn’t get along really well. That is the reason I just wanted to spend some time with my friends at Chick-fil-A, my favorite restaurant. Two of my friends from Germany who live in Houston asked if I could come and pick them up from their home and I said sure I could. At 7:00 p.m. on March 10th, I left my host family’s home and drove to my friends where the best party of my life was about to begin.

When I arrived at my friends’ home, all the lights had been turned off and one of my friends came outside to take me in the house. She took my arm and kind of pushed me in the living room where everything was dark. Then all the lights turned on and around 30 people screamed, “Surprise!” I was so surprised and my face was smiling the whole night. I was so happy to see all my friends, the grandparents and the brothers of my host dad. After that, my friends took me right away into the kitchen, where the next surprise was waiting for me, a huge box with chicken nuggets from Chick-fil-A with my favorite sauce, Polynesian. After we finished eating, we went outside to play some games and started talking about everything.

We celebrated my birthday until midnight and I can’t explain how thankful I am to my German friends. The birthday party they had for me was the best in my life. They both worked together so hard and showed me how much they love me. In Germany, we do not celebrate with surprise parties and you know what is going to happen on your birthday. That is the reason why my 20th birthday here in America is so special to me; I had a surprise party and got the chance to spend time with all the people I truly love here in America.

The Longest Trip

Americo Olquin, Mexico, Grammar & Writing IV

One of the funniest things that has happened to me was not too long ago: in fact, it happened when my family and I moved to Splendora. Splendora is located about 20 minutes to the north. My family and I moved from Pasadena, Texas, which is located at the south east of Houston. I remember that packing everything was a huge deal; it took two trucks and one U-Haul moving truck to get everything from my old house to my new house. I can still remember my brother telling me to take everything and put it on a trailer that we had attached to one of the trucks. Because it was a long trip, none of my family members wanted to have to come back for anything else, so we wanted to take everything in just one trip.

Going on the freeway was the most interesting part; the sky was looking as if it was about to rain and we really didn’t want to get our furniture wet. We made a quick stop at a store and bought a big blue cover. We spent a long time covering the furniture that we had put on the trucks and the trailer, and after that we kept on going. When we finally made it to our new house, I remember my biggest brother was so ashamed I believe I even saw him change colors to red. All of a sudden my mother asked him, “What is the matter?” He looked at her and all my brothers. From that look we all figured he had forgotten something, and he said, “I forgot the key.”

After our brother told us about that situation, we all started picking on him, but that is not the end of the story yet. Because of the key, we needed to send someone to go back to our old house, get the key, then bring it to our new house. We all voted and agreed that our biggest brother was the most obvious choice. After a long wait of three hours, he came back and opened our new house.

After that, all my family remembers that time and the first thing that comes to our mind is our brother forgetting the key, and the moment that I remember the most is the way his head turned red like a tomato. I’ll never forget.
The Birthday Cake
Oksana Cooke, Ukraine, Grammar & Writing IV
I have been in Houston for five years. I got married to one of the best men and I have a big, wonderful family. So many funny stories have been happening in the Cooke family since I have become related to these nice people, but the memory of the birthday cake for my mother-in-law never leaves my recollection.

We got married, and one month later, my husband's mother had a birthday. It is a fine family tradition to get together on birthdays. Before that day, my husband and I were deciding about a gift for Mom; of course, we knew that the best present for that wonderful lady was family togetherness. Finally, I proposed to make a birthday cake. I had been working in my country as a chef for a long time. I knew a lot about cooking and baking. But I did not consider so many differences between American and Ukrainian recipes. With my husband's help, I made good looking batter and delicious homemade icing. Everything was perfect until I took the first layer out of the cake pan. It fell apart. The same thing happened to the second and third layer. My husband and I did not know what to do. At first we looked at each other with very sad eyes. A few minutes later, we started to laugh very loudly because it was the first cake which we, as husband and wife, had made together. I put all the broken parts in one piece; then my husband spread the frosting. The top of the cake we decorated with pecan pieces and grated chocolate. The result of our baking was not very beautiful; therefore, on the way to the party, my husband stopped by Kroger and bought another cake which was prettier. At the birthday party it turned out that our ugly cake was more delicious when compared to the Kroger cake. We could not even cut that cake, but it was more important for everyone to taste it than its appearance. My mother-in-law praised our work which made me feel even more welcome to the family.

For the past almost five years, I have been making a lot of cakes, cookies, and various desserts, and I always remember that birthday cake for our mom. Even though I lost her four years ago, I will never lose the memory about my mother-in-law and the cake for her last birthday.

A Scary Vacation in the US
Young Jeon, Korea, Grammar & Writing IV
Last December, my family had our first vacation in the United States; however, it became a scary vacation. After we lived in the U.S. A. about four months, we hadn't gone anywhere in Texas, so we planned to go to San Antonio. I expected that the travel would be interesting. The first day, we were excited about the city because my husband said it was very old; it had a historical background, and it was an impressive place. At that time, it was Christmas Eve. At night, the city was a very gorgeous place. Each tree was lit, and the streets were full of people and beautiful scenery. On the second day, my husband wanted to see the end of the river in Texas, because when he lived in Korea, his hometown was near the sea. After he drove for five hours, he didn't know exactly where the place was. For a while, he said, "When we pass over the bridge, we can see the end of the river." However, when we looked at a traffic light, we found a strange type of sign. Immediately we knew that we had arrived in Mexico! We had made a big mistake, and we were very embarrassed. As soon as we returned to cross the bridge, we saw policemen. They wanted to see our Visas, but we didn't have them, except my husband. So we had to get out of the car and go to the police station. As we felt nervous, he explained our situation to the other policemen. After one hour, they permitted us to leave. We sighed with relief, and we decided that we had finished our journey. While my husband drove about one hour, we fell asleep because we were tired. However, we met a policeman again in the darkness. This time, we were more nervous because when we went to the police station, we saw handcuffs on the desk. They wanted my ID card and asked about my children. After a while, they told us we could go. We were totally exhausted. We will never forget our first scary vacation in the U.S.A.

My First Experience on the Job
Maricela Pesina, Mexico, Grammar & Writing IV
My first job was interesting; in fact, I was very nervous the first day at work because I had never worked before. Also, I have never been around people that were so different. For example, some of them were really nice, like my first customer, who was a woman that made me feel happy. She told me not to be worried and that I am smart. And she said, "You are going to do well. It is hard in the beginning, but later you will get used to it, and it is going to be really easy for you." On the other hand, one customer was mean to me because he told me in a bad way, "Can you do it faster? You are so slow." In general, I really liked that job because it gave me the opportunity to know all kinds of people who are in this world.

A Christmas Wish
Maria Elena Rodriguez, Mexico, Grammar & Writing III
When I was a little girl one of my wishes was to have a Christmas with my father. I come from a big family. I'm number four of eleven brothers and sisters. That's why my father always came to the U.S. He had to work hard to give us a better quality of life. Christmas, to me, was the saddest holiday of the year because he was never with us. I was too little to understand the situation, but the only thing I wanted was my father with me on these special days. Time passed and I'm grown up. Now I have my own family and I can understand why my father did that. I know now the importance of providing the basic things for your children, but children can't understand that.

The First Days in the U.S.
Amparo Jaramillo, Colombia, Grammar & Writing III
I arrived in the United States in February, 2003. The first days we were in Houston, my husband, my children, and I were walking down the street, because we didn't have a car. I was freezing. We held hands as we walked down the street. We didn't understand, and didn't speak English. The first weekend we took a bus. The front said, "Downtown". We didn't know how much the ticket cost, then we saw another passenger put one dollar into the machine, the children don't pay. We went on the bus. Houston is a big city. We got off the bus on a downtown walk near Milam Street. We didn't miss it because we kept checking the map. We visited the mall and saw many stores. After four hours, we searched for our bus stop. When we put the ticket into the machine, it made a sound we didn't understand. We didn't know what happened. The driver spoke English, but we didn't understand. We paid, and the kids were going to pay, but the driver said, "the kids are free and don't need to pay", he used his hands and we understood.
A Difficult Decision: Colombia vs. the United States

Anamaria Brenson, Colombia, Grammar & Writing III
Since I moved to the United States, my life has changed in many remarkable ways. I have found very interesting things here that I probably couldn't find in my country. One of the things that I really want to highlight is my learning experiences in the United States. When I got here, I didn't speak any words in English, and I was kind of nervous to talk to people, because I didn't know how to say it. I was becoming a very introverted person, while I was the opposite in my country. I started to think about my self-esteem. I started to think, why am I acting like this? I was a very happy, positive, and social person, even though I didn't speak the language. I had so many things to share about my culture. At that time I decided to begin English classes.

My first day in class was amazing. I learned a lot and I met a lot of people from different countries; China, Japan, Venezuela, Cuba, Russia, Africa, Korea. It was very nice to see people from different places trying to learn English and trying to become part of the culture of the United States. When I got home that night after that wonderful experience, I called my husband and told him that I was feeling so great, because I met a lot of people that were in the same situation as mine. He said he was really happy to hear me talking like that because he was kind of sad about the decision that we had made leaving everything that we were building in Colombia as a family. After I talked to him, I felt much better. I never had a conversation with him before about our feelings since we moved. I thought he was happy about this big change, but after we talked, I was kind of sure that he was very concerned about me. This moment was one of the special moments in my life. I felt like I was regaining everything, my husband's attention and my personality as a Colombian in another country.

Since I continued taking English classes and became a student, going to school to take classes, I learned things that I already knew, but now I have to learn them again. Making different sounds to have the meaning of single words in order to be able to communicate my feelings and wants in another language, just makes me laugh and makes me feel like I am very lucky to have this opportunity.

Of course, I miss my country and I miss my career as an Occupational Therapist, but I have been learning more things relative to my profession and even though sometimes I feel like I am not going anywhere, inside I know this is the best decision that we could have made with my husband and my daughter. I love the change, although it is very hard sometimes, but we are here and I feel that I am part of this culture. Once again, I thank my husband and my daughter for being with me in this wonderful and challenging process. I love you so much!

Challenges

Jacqueline Cabanillas, Peru, Grammar & Writing III
When I came to the United States, I thought life would be better for me and my family. This is true, but we need to do our best to achieve it. The opportunity is there, you just have to take it and work for it. My family understands this. That is why we continue to study.

September 11

Enrique Medrano, Mexico, Grammar & Writing III
I'm going to talk about things or an event that touched my heart. It had to be a bad thing to make me think of everything, (myself, my family, my friends), I think I always have to wait for bad news or moments to reflect.

When 911 happened, it was one of the worst events that I have ever seen in my life. Watching people dying, scared, crying, worrying about their families, trying to contact them, but nothing was working; no signal on the phones, no communication, nothing was working. I thought it must have felt like the end of the world for them.

At that moment, I thought about my family, and all my people. I expected that maybe it could happen to them, or me, anywhere. Two days before, my mother got mad at me for something, but I didn't remember what. I just started crying. The first thing I did was call my family, just to let them know I was fine, and I told them how much I love them.

I learned something important from this: life is love, and sometimes we don't value life, we just don't care about ourselves and other people, even our families. One thought that made my heart move was when almost all of the world was trying to help by sending food, clothes, and more supplies.

Note: life is short, and we don't have to wait for bad things to value our life and other lives. I try to live everyday as it is the last one.

A Great New Life

Jesus Ortega, Mexico, Grammar & Writing III
To me, living in the United States of America has been such a wonderful and incredible experience. Since I was a child, I had always wished to live in the richest and most powerful nation in the entire world, which is the United States of America. So now I am here, and I want to thank this brilliant country for being the one who opened its doors to me.

The reason I say this is because it gave me the opportunity to go to high school. Now, I have my diploma and I am planning to go to college. I also love this country because it has people from different nationalities, religions, ethnicities, races, beliefs, traditions, etc. I consider myself a lucky person, living here with all my family and the people I love. The main reason why so many people come to the United States is because you find a better life, a better wage, sometimes even a better job etc. Now I am taking English as a Second Language at Kingwood College because I want to improve so I can get enrolled in college and take regular classes. I would like to study journalism. I don't know if I can be a reporter some day, but I am going to study hard to get to know English well and communicate with people.
Living in the United States

Texenglish
Margaret Flores, Puerto Rico, Grammar & Writing III
I love living in the United States. I have lived here since 1986. I came from Puerto Rico. During my first week in Houston I became lost when driving to a job interview. As I stopped at the gas station for help, I will never forget what the gas station attendant said. “Are you fixin to take the feeder road?” “What strange English.” I thought, as I had no idea what “fixing or feeder road” meant. Well, years later I learned that this is a new kind of English called, “Texan English” and that the statement translated to, “are you going to drive down the side road next to the freeway?” Well, I have come a long way since then, and even though I still have a lot of English to learn, I know one thing: if I want to live in Texas, I need to learn more “Texenglish”.

My Life
Marisela Grassity, Mexico, Grammar & Writing III
My name is Marisela Grassity. I was born in Reynosa Tamaulipas, Mexico. I’m the third of five children. My father passed away when I was six years old. My mother never worked out of the house when my father was alive. She had a hard time raising us. Education wasn’t very important in our lives, so she didn’t send us to school. We started to work at an early age. Then my mother remarried. She had more children. We grew up and had our own lives and families. I came to the United States when I was a teenager. I lived with one of my aunts for a while. Then I moved to Chicago, Illinois. This was where I met my husband. We used to bowl in a bowling league together. After that, we started dating. We got married and had two sons, Luis and Christopher. Luis joined the military. Then he got married and he has two beautiful children, Alex and Cassandra. Alex is fourteen and Cassandra is eleven. Luis’ wife’s name is Josefina. She is so beautiful and I love her so much because she loves my son very much and she is a very good mother to my grandchildren. They are stationed in Los Angeles, California. Christopher is still single. He lives in Austin, Texas. My husband retired from Caterpillar Tractor Company. After that we moved back to Texas. My husband’s entire family is from there and so is some of mine. We bought land and built the house we always wanted. The best part was that everything was paid for.

When My Son was Born
Pedro Morales, Mexico, Grammar & Writing III
During that time it was pure happiness. It started when my wife told me that she was pregnant. It was a very special day. I was going to have my first son, and I never experienced a day like that in my life. He was also going to be very special for my wife’s family. Our son was going to be the first grandson.
My wife’s stomach started to grow that day. I drew a happy face on her when her stomach grew great. She told me she was very happy having the baby inside her. I told her that tapped into the very being of my heart.
Our friends had a baby shower for us. That night was very amusing. There were different games and my wife danced all night. That same night after arriving home from the celebration, we went to the hospital around 3:00 AM. That night was a full moon. Finally, after 12 hours, my son was born and thank God, all went very well and we started our happy family.

My Visit to Yellowstone Park
Daniel Delgado, Colombia, Grammar & Writing III
The first time I heard about Yellowstone Park, I was in New York. I was planning a trip to Bozeman, Montana with my friends. I was packing my bag and my dad came to me and told me about the park. He said that Yellowstone Park was beautiful and that I had to go there. The truth was, I was only thinking about going to Montana and hanging out with my friends and having a good time, but never about going to the park.
Some days after that, we were in Bozeman. We were having a really good time, we had been doing some sports like snow skiing, cross mountain biking, rafting etc. One day we stopped at a gas station and there was a big picture of a black bear. At the top of the picture it said, “Yellowstone National Park”. This picture impacted me because I never imagined being so close to a bear. I’m from Colombia and it’s so weird to find a bear around there. I was curious to go to the park and see that huge animal. I thought that my friends wouldn’t want to go there. I was really surprised when I told them about going to the park their answer was, “Yes, of course”.
The next day when we were on the way to the park, it was so funny because none of us had been to Yellowstone Park before and we got lost. If you are from a big city, like we were, you are accustomed to seeing a lot of signs on the road, but there weren’t any. We were three guys with only one map trying to find the correct way to Yellowstone, but each one of us talked about a different route. Finally, we did “Eenie, meenie, miny, moe”, to decide which route to take. We were lucky because the route that we took was actually correct, and we thought it was amazing.
Well, after a few hours’ trip, we were there in the front of the Yellowstone Park entrance; I never imagined how beautiful it could be. It was amazing, I was so excited because I thought that Yellowstone was a simple park with animals like Animal Kingdom, but it was really different. I found out that Yellowstone in incredibly big. I can’t say how big, but I have to say that it is enormous. You can find many things there: towns, hundreds of miles of roads with endless kinds of animals, geysers, panoramic views, etc.
I could write a lot about the geysers because they are so amazing. I’ll explain them briefly, hoping that some day you will go there and see them for yourself. The geysers are holes in the land or under the water and without notice, they just explode like a fountain, a natural fountain. This show is really beautiful, it’s like you are on another planet. The land around the geysers has yellow stones because of their sulfur content. I’m not sure, but I think that’s why the park is called “Yellowstone.” The truth is that I felt like that place was the beginning of the earth. I think that it had to be like that.
After a very interesting tour in the park, we were in Old Faithful Town and got a room in the Old Faithful Hotel. This hotel is nice because it’s made of wood so you feel close to nature. I was surprised when they gave us some rules while we were there. This was because there were so many animals around the hotel and you have to be careful, especially with the food which can attract the animals like bears. You have to be careful too at night when you are driving. You can hit an animal with your car because they run free in the park.
I was there for 2 days and I can say that Yellowstone is wonderful. The way that I felt when I did the sports in Bozeman was nothing compared to what I felt at the park when I saw the geysers,
the mountains, and the animals just a half a mile away from me. Everything was awesome!

I could continue to write about what I liked in Yellowstone, but I have to be sincere and give you my advice. Just pack your bags, take one weekend with your friends, and be ready to have one of the best weekends of your life. Go to Yellowstone National Park and then look for yourself.

**Coming to the USA**

**Sandra Aguilar, Costa Rica, Grammar & Writing III**

When I came to the United States, I didn’t know who the family was that was waiting for me. I was very nervous. I flew with other girls from Costa Rica to New York. We stayed for five days studying at a training school.

That week we had lots of feelings. We were sad leaving our parents and friends, but happy at the same time because we met new friends from other countries and we gave support to each other. For example, if someone got homesick, we tried to cheer them up. When the week was over, we departed to our new American home.

I was the only person flying to Houston. Because of this, I flew the whole way by myself. I didn’t speak English, or even know who was picking me up at the airport. I tried to call them the moment I arrived at the Houston airport. I tried their house and their cell phones, but no one answered. I was crying a lot because I didn’t know what to do, or where to go.

I asked a man if he could help me because I didn’t know how to use a public phone. The man said, yes. When I was dialing the number he asked who I was calling. I said, “Armando Selva”. A man behind me said, “Yes I am he”. I turned around. When I saw him, I was still crying a lot because I was very scared and excited, too.

Now when I think about this story, I just laugh telling people about it.

**Refugees**

**Luis Forero, Colombia, Grammar & Writing III**

Thousands of people in the world are refugees. The status of refugee is recognized by the signature countries in a declaration of the United Nations. A refugee is a person seeking asylum in a foreign country in order to escape persecution, war, terrorism, extreme poverty, famine, or natural disasters, and won't return to his/her home country.

My case is as a thousand others, the refugees have loss of economic security and loss of family or partners. Lots of refugees don’t feel safe in their own country and need another country for relocation. Refugees have common situations with danger for their life, their family, as well as political, ethnic, or racial persecution.

The United States of America offers a refugee program. During 2003, thirty thousand refugees from different countries came to the United States: Europe 39%, Asia 21%, Africa 39%, Caribbean 1%, South America 0.05%. The refugee program searches for the best living conditions for refugees.

People who come with both minimal or high education have problems adapting because they have limited language skills. This condition is contradictory, because you have your family safe, but are nearly illiterate in the United States. The situation of refugees who do not speak English is a disaster because they don’t feel comfortable in the society that is the receiver; a lot of refugees prefer to go back to their original countries before continuing in this situation.

Refugees in the USA need so much support, want economic or social assistance, food stamps, Medicaid etc. The refugee needs the help of your knowledge because they need the perspective of your life and family. The U.S.A. has many organizations to help refugees, but they don’t have programs of reinsertion, socialization and work. The applicable orientation programs need a change from those points of view.

Today, the refugees are trying to weigh the balance between safety for them and their families or loss of their culture and recognized knowledge.

In conclusion, the different refugee programs focus on economic support and neglect psychological support. The emotional and economic situations are equally important for the refugee family.

**The Light of my Life**

**Maria Rosa Varnis, Peru, Grammar & Writing III**

It was in September 2001, when I received special news in my life. It was that I was pregnant for the first time. At that time I had only been living in the country for a month. I missed my family a lot, but at the same time I wanted to start my own family.

When my Sofia was born on June 12, 2002 at 2:30 A.M., I couldn’t believe that I was a mother. My mother came and stayed for awhile. It was a special time for us. My Sofia is the first granddaughter’s daughter, so she is really special. They couldn’t enjoy each other for a long time because my mother needed to return to her country almost 40 days after my Sofia was born. We passed all the time enjoying her first days of life changing diapers, feeding, and caring for her.

My mother came back about 3 years later and they enjoyed another special time between May and August 3, 2005. At that time, my Sofia was 3 years old. She had started to potty train and my mother taught her all the time, and they enjoyed speaking Spanish. My mother learned some words in English with her.

This last summer vacation, I visited my family in Peru with my Sofia. She was so excited on the trip. She was awake almost the whole ten hours we flew. She kept asking when we were going to arrive in Peru. When we arrived, she fell asleep. At the airport in Lima she cried because she felt so tired, and after checking with immigration, we met my younger brother and older sister. They picked us up from the airport. After that, we passed most of the time in Arequipa, the city where I was born and grew up.

Sofia knew the rule; I told her before the trip: in Peru the people and family only speak Spanish. You need to speak only Spanish all the time. When somebody tried to speak with her in English because they knew the she was American, she always gave the answer, “I don’t speak English, I speak Spanish”. Of course in English it sounds so funny, but at home she knows to whom to speak English or Spanish. My Sofia is so smart, and that is one reason that I continue to live in this country learning more and more English every single day. I want to absorb the American culture for her and for myself.
Living in the United States

Living in Porter

**Ligia Rave, Medellin, Colombia, Grammar & Writing III**

I am so happy to live in Porter. I have lived there since 2001. We wanted to build our home. So we started to build it with one bedroom for each of our children. Then God provided us the opportunity to build more houses for a culturally diverse group of people, including Latin Americans and Asians. All of these people had different needs and situations. We gave them what they wanted and needed at a very good price. Now we build both custom and standard homes depending on the situation of each family. I am so glad to serve others in this way because that is the way that my family and I are working to glorify God.

Living in Houston

**Simin Gifani, Iran, Grammar & Writing III**

I live in the Huffman area of Houston. My neighborhood is quiet and beautiful. There are very tall trees and there is a lake near my house. There are only two seasons in Houston: summer and spring. In the summer the weather is very warm and humid; spring is not very cold and sometimes it is rainy. Houston has beautiful, interesting places, such as, the Aquarium, Downtown, Malls, and Museums. I love living in Houston.

A Funny Anecdote

**Maria Juarez, Mexico, Grammar & Writing V**

When I feel sad, I try to remember a funny story. The story that I am going to tell you about was caused by the fact that one day in February I was in a big hurry. Because of the cold weather, I was wearing many bulky clothes. I looked like a fat woman, even though I am thin. That morning the alarm clock never went off. I usually wake up at 7:00 a.m. and my son has to be at school at 7:15 a.m. Since the incident with the alarm clock, I didn't have enough time to get ready for the day. I quickly put on the clothes that I wore the day before. My son ate his breakfast on the way to school. When I dropped my son off at the school, the gasoline light turned on, indicating that I needed to fill up the tank. I stopped at the first gas station. When I was walking toward the counter to pay inside the store, suddenly a piece of an under-clothing fell off from my pants. Even though the store was not crowded and only the clerk and I were there, I was so embarrassed. I quickly bent down trying to hide it under my pants. I could not push it under, nor pull it out because it was stuck somewhere under my pants. At first the clerk was surprised by the scene and then he started laughing. However, I paid for the gas and left the place very fast. My face was all red. I could not even say “thank you” to the clerk. When I got into my car, I could not stop laughing. There is a proverb that says “Laughing is an infallible remedy.” This is true because whenever I remember this funny anecdote, I forget about my worries.

Destiny

**Andrea Valencia, Colombia, Grammar & Writing III**

Something incredible that happened to me since I moved to Kingwood was the way I met my boyfriend. At the beginning, when I moved to Kingwood, I just had one friend in Houston. Her name was Nathalia. One day she told me she knew a guy who lived in Kingwood and he was studying at Kingwood College. Nathalia wanted me to meet him. The problem was that she just knew his first name (Victor) and that he was from Colombia just like me, but she didn’t know his phone number or any other details about him.

Some weeks later, Nathalia and I were at Kingwood College waiting to talk with a counselor. While we were talking, a guy came through the main door and said “Hi” to us. As soon as I heard him, I realized that he was from Colombia. So I replied with a joke by saying, “Hi, Victor.” He was indeed Victor, the one that Nathalia wanted me to meet. I was surprised, and I could not talk for a few moments. Now I believe in destiny, because of the way I met this man who became my boyfriend.

Why I came to the U.S.

**Monica Almeida, Angola, Grammar & Writing V**

It was not my decision to come to the US, but at the same time I was happy to do it. One day, my husband came home from work and asked me, “If we need to move to another country, would you come with me?” At that time, quitting my job was a difficult decision to make because I was at the top of my career. On the other hand, I had to think about my daughter’s future. After much deliberation, we were ready for the biggest change in our life. After one month, we arrived in the United States. Here life is so different! People are diverse in their culture, and we have to get used to all kinds of new situations. Among other things, I have decided to take ESL classes at Kingwood College, which helps me even more to accommodate my new life. Being in college with classmates from different countries makes me feel better. I can see now that it was not only me who had to make a big decision in life, but also many others. •••

Artist: Manuela Rauch, Germany

Reading & Vocabulary IV
Learning English at the Kingwood College Intensive English Program

Ishibe Azuma, Japan, Grammar & Writing II
My name is Ishibe Azuma from Japan. I came to Houston one year ago to study English. I did not know the language at all and it was very hard for me. But I have a dream. It is to become the champion of Bass fishing in the United States. So I work hard and study English for fishing. My English has improved, even my teacher says so. And I have a fishing boat now and next year I will go to a fishing tournament. That is my next big step and improving my English advances this goal. I need to keep going until I reach my dream of becoming a champion fisherman in this country.

Anamena Escobar, Venezuela, Reading & Vocabulary V
Nowadays, our lives are affected by many circumstances and life comes at you fast sometimes, at least in my case. Due to my husband’s transfer, I had to leave my country, friends, and family. I am living in Kingwood, Texas with my husband and my children. I began to learn English to improve my daily speaking, reading newspapers, watching movies, and the news. I want to be able to speak for myself and to go places like grocery stores, do bank transactions, talk to teachers about the progress of my children at school, or request for someone to speak Spanish. I love to get together with friends and share opinions and get to know other people. I didn’t want to limit myself by sitting in a corner and looking at the rest of the people speaking English. After living here for 2 months, I took a free class in Atascocita but those classes didn’t provide me with the tools I needed. However, they did wake up my interest. I needed something more, so I enrolled in ESL classes at Kingwood College. I can now speak English and my desire is to obtain a great vocabulary to carry out new challenges in order to have more interaction in the social, economic, and intellectual scope.

Zarghona Jahan, Afghanistan, Reading & Vocabulary V
Education is an important thing in human life. With education, people can achieve their goals and their dreams. Education leads people to success. There were two things that encouraged me to start college, my family and my dreams.

I stayed home for 14 years to take care of my children. When they got older, I thought about going to school. I considered doing something and then my children backed me up. When I was in Afghanistan, I finished High School and didn’t have the opportunity to finish my education. When I came to this country, I always believed that one day I would do something to improve my English and become a radiologist. The day I started taking English classes was about 2 years ago. I have more to learn before I become a radiologist. I’ve found my chance to do better in life. My husband is very supportive of my education. Because of his support, I am here now.

After I finish ESL, I will take college level classes to become a radiologist. My advice for all ESL students is that you should take every step of learning carefully and seriously. Never lose your self-esteem because of your speed in learning. Visualize what you want in life and go for it.

Yang Chen, China, Reading & Vocabulary V
I am taking ESL classes because I want to speak English as well as I can. Now I live in the United States and all the people here speak English. If I cannot speak English well, I will have a lot of trouble living here. That is my first reason. The second reason is that I have a goal to get a master’s degree. If I cannot understand English very well, I will not be able to earn my degree. Also, when I take ESL classes, I meet many people from different countries. We can be friends and we can talk about different cultures. This is one of the most important reasons why I am taking ESL classes. The ESL program has many good and friendly teachers. They teach us how to use the English language well. They have made the classes fun for us. I am so glad that I am taking ELS classes here.

Shu Yen Lu, Japan, Reading & Vocabulary V
This is America, so I need to speak English. I had studied English thirty years before in high school. Also, I like America very much, but only for vacations. This time I came with my children to study English and the American culture. We are learning and we are enjoying it. Maybe it’s hard, but we will be able to speak English.

Etsuko Lee, Japan, Grammar & Writing VI
I am from Japan. I have lived in the United States for about fifteen years and I still struggle to understand and speak English. Maybe if I came to the U.S. when I was younger, I would have had a better understanding of the English language. Also, if I had a more extroverted personality, I would have been more confident in speaking English. There are three main reasons as to why I believe I must study English.

One reason is that my husband is an American and I need to understand what he is saying to me. Communication is exceptionally significant in a marriage.

The second reason is that I live in the U.S. and it is essential to fully understand the language. For example, I need to understand what my doctor is telling me. Also, it is impossible to find a decent job without being fluent in English.

The third reason I should study English is that it is the most widely used language in the world. English is originally from Latin; therefore many European languages are related to English. Also, in some Asian nations such as India, the Philippines, Singapore, and Hong Kong, their official language is English. If you understand English, you are able to travel almost anywhere in the world without a language barrier.

I’m studying English because I have an American husband, I live in the U.S., and English is common in many countries. Finally, I have the chance to study English in an ESL class at Kingwood College. I am close to being fifty years old and if I do not study now, I will never have the chance to learn English.

Eun Choi, Korea, Grammar & Writing II
My name is Eun Choi and I came to Houston from Korea 5 years ago. I chose Kingwood College to improve my English. The campus is a very convenient and beautiful place. I am taking reading and grammar classes. Both teachers ask students a lot of questions and each person gets to respond and work in our text...
book. So, I usually prepare for each lesson. I think that I will improve my English skill. Most classmates are very friendly. They are from many countries and I can learn a little about their culture. I have one handsome son and I want to be a good mom to him. If I speak better English, I can help my baby live a good life in America.

Laura Romero, Venezuela, Grammar & Writing II
All the beginnings are difficult but at the moment you decide to take the chance, you just have to try. The College is new for me because in Venezuela these institutes do not exist, we only have schools and universities.

For me, Kingwood college is beautiful. It is an overall good college for a student’s education because it offers opportunities for investigating all kinds of projects.

The people that work and study here are pleasant. They are always smiling and willing to help. Oh! And most importantly, people, whether they know you or not, they always greet you and it’s even better if it comes from hot guys that are always around here.

The classes I am taking, Grammar and writing II and Jazz I, are awesome from academics and social aspects because the professors find the easiest way to teach us in a way to make it fun and exciting. Even though the teachers make learning fun, they are professionals that make us want to be our best.

I decided to take Grammar class because it is very important to learn English now that it has become such a universal language. I also decided to take jazz class because I have always said that not only do you need to study and work, but you have to dedicate some time to diversion and dance to be a complete person. Of course getting good grades shows many things. For example, it shows that you enjoy what you are doing and you are happy. The most important factor is that you are actually learning.

My friends in my classes are wonderful. I have learned so much with them and from them. I have learned from their different cultures and even languages. These friends will always be there, no matter if time goes by. That is why I will always remember them here at Kingwood College.

Lidda Gamez, Mexico, Grammar & Writing II
My name is Lidda Gamez. I was born in Reynosa, Mexico. I graduated from High School in my native country. I have lived in the United States for about 12 years. For one reason or other I couldn’t continue my education in this country. To be honest, I was afraid to meet new people and to study in a totally different educational system.

After 10 years, I finally decided to face up to my fears. One day after leaving my son at school, I stopped at Kingwood College. I could tell from the first moment that I could feel comfortable there. The staff people were very nice and so willing to help. I could talk with Mrs. Ursula, and she answered all my questions. In fact, she gave me more information than I expected. Another thing captured my attention - it was such a peaceful place to study. The big trees, and the pretty green gardens are like an inspiration and motivation to do better things with your life.

My first day at class it was exciting. From the first moment I could feel that the teacher loves teaching and enjoys learning about the students diverse cultures. All classmates were very friendly, maybe because they feel the good vibrations at the college. I would like to be a good help for my community, a good citizen, a good neighbor a good parent, and one day a good teacher. And I think the best place to start is Kingwood College.

Viviana Barreto, Columbia, Reading & Vocabulary VI
ESL classes have become a popular way of learning among students from countries all around the world. This course has brought me the opportunity to be part of a new culture by learning the language of this country. In my personal opinion, English is a ticket to obtain a better future full of opportunities in the US. Therefore, this course is a tool of success. Since the day I started taking ESL classes I have seen a change in my life, not only because I’m learning, but also because I am able to express myself. I am able to speak to many people, and I feel more comfortable talking and writing in English than before. Also, ESL has brought me the opportunity to experiment how life is when you are in college, and this is very helpful because it will be easy when I start my regular courses in college. Further, ESL professors teach you essential skills that a college student needs and I think this is very important for my career. I’m very proud of myself because I have been making good use of this program. Now, I’m sure I took the right step when I decided to take this course and in the future I’ll be even more sure about it. I definitely recommend to people who want to learn English and succeed, to have courage to take ESL classes.

Maria Leon, Mexico, Grammar & Writing II
My name is Maria Leon. I am from Mexico and I have lived in Houston for almost 15 years. I just started coming to Kingwood College four weeks ago. I have improved my English more in these four weeks than in all my 15 years living in this country. I feel very comfortable at Kingwood College with my teachers and classes. I especially like my classmates because they are from different countries, and I learn from them about different cultures and customs. That way we can all learn to love and respect each other.

Viviana Barreto, Columbia, Reading & Vocabulary VI
ESL classes have become a popular way of learning among students from countries all around the world. This course has brought me the opportunity to be part of a new culture by learning the language of this country. In my personal opinion, English is a ticket to obtain a better future full of opportunities in the US. Therefore, this course is a tool of success. Since the day I started taking ESL classes I have seen a change in my life, not only because I’m learning, but also because I am able to express myself. I am able to speak to many people, and I feel more comfortable talking and writing in English than before. Also, ESL has brought me the opportunity to experiment how life is when you are in college, and this is very helpful because it will be easy when I start my regular courses in college. Further, ESL professors teach you essential skills that a college student needs and I think this is very important for my career. I’m very proud of myself because I have been making good use of this program. Now, I’m sure I took the right step when I decided to take this course and in the future I’ll be even more sure about it. I definitely recommend to people who want to learn English and succeed, to have courage to take ESL classes.

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Ethnic Lunch. It is so much fun for the students, because we bring and share food from our countries and we have the opportunity to taste it all, talk with others students, and practice our second language.

I think that is very important to learn English because people who live in the USA, like me, need to do our best to communicate in the language of this country. Since this is our new home, we need to adapt educationally, socially, professionally, etc., to have a good life.

Paula Squires, Mexico, Grammar & Writing II
Hi, my name is Paula Squires. I am 30 years old. I came to America 13 years ago with a dream of learning English. Instead, I got married and had 3 children. Now that my children go to school all day, I can finally pursue my dream. In my short time at Kingwood College, I have found the teachers and students to be very friendly. One thing that I like especially, is the cultural diversity. My experience in the classroom has been wonderful. In four weeks I can see an improvement in my English. I look forward to finishing this class and many others.

Patricia Flor, Ecuador, Grammar & Writing IV
Why did I decide to learn it? Is it a great deal? Of course. There are many reasons to learn English, such as: the best books are written in English. It is the second most important language in the world, and you can make friends in different places around the world and keep in touch with them.

There are more opportunities to get a better job and increase incomes. My main aim is to choose a career and get a degree, the same as I had in my country. It will be a great achievement. When you are learning a new language, it is funny because at the beginning, people do not understand your pronunciation or you have the words in mind, but can not express them.

Still, for me it is hard to understand English because people use a lot of contractions, speak fast or use slang. I just know one thing: I have to learn English like my own language to accomplish my goal.

Sivakorn Kornkasem, Thailand, Grammar & Writing IV
I think having English skills is important for me because my country is a travel country. There are lots of foreigner coming into my country. People from all over the world use English to communicate. Generally, English is the universal language. Knowing English is a good opportunity to do business with travelers. The more I learn English, the more chances I will get. I would like to have my own business in Thailand, but first of all, I need to step up my skills to expand my business. I had never thought about learning English before I came here; however, I was convinced by my friend to study English. Taking ESL classes at Kingwood College is the greatest experience in my life. I have met lots of friends from different countries. There are a number of reasons why I wish to pursue further education in the United States of America, and they are as follows: I would like to improve my English. It is very important to communicate with people who speak English when I run my own business. I would like to expand my professional business skills to expand my company. I would like to have great opportunities in a multi-cultural society. I plan to study in the U.S. for a time frame of two years, an English language course at the English Language Institute at Kingwood College, Texas. Upon completion of this course, I will return to Thailand in order to extend my professional skills for my company.

Daniel Sajche, Guatemala, Grammar & Writing IV
There are many reasons why I am taking ESL classes, but I am going to tell you only three. First, because we are in the United States, and we must communicate in English. Second, I have a job and all the people that work around me speak English. They speak to me, and I have to understand them. The most important reason is because I want to go to a university and get a career. If I do not speak English, I can not do this. For these three and many more reasons, I should learn English.

Chow Wan Lung, Hong Kong, Grammar & Writing IV
I am studying ESL classes this semester. I am very happy about taking ESL classes because I meet a lot of friends in these classes. However, why am I taking ESL classes? It is very important to take ESL classes. My English is very poor. I want to improve it. In Hong Kong, I failed English in my exam. So, I want to speak English well and write it better. Moreover, I meet many new friends in ESL classes. They are very friendly and we always talk and play together. I feel very happy about that. Finally, all the teachers in the ESL classes are very nice. When I donit understand anything, I can ask teachers. They help me a lot. In conclusion, I thank my teachers very much and I will study hard.

Anna Carroll, Russia, Grammar & Writing IV
I believe studying is the most important mental activity. Sometimes it is not only gymnastics for the brain, it is an absolute necessity. Take, for instance, moving to other countries. Studying in ESL classes is a great help because it provides a lot of possibilities, such as correct understanding and communication with people, the ability of continuing education, if necessary, and getting a good job.

ESL classes have good results in improving communicative skills. The first problem you face after coming here is the language barrier. Taking ESL classes, having experienced instructors and professionally created textbooks, and your classmates help to overcome this most difficult problem.

Next, someone needs to continue an education; almost everyone needs to receive some types of licenses. For successful studying, it is very important to have good reading, vocabulary, and grammar skills. All these subjects I am also able to take within the framework of ESL classes.

Finally, everyone wants to get a good job. To achieve this goal, you should have, a good and correctly completed resume. It indicates that you have good writing skills, in addition to your job qualifications. To master this knowledge is very difficult without special guidance and professional instruction, which can take place in ESL classes, too.

Day by day, I feel I have overcome my problem of misunderstanding, the fear which seized me when I had to converse with someone. I enjoy studying and am glad about my little successes. I am sure taking this special program, ESL classes, is all that is necessary for me now to reach my nearest goals. Finally, it leads me to a big achievement, step by step.
Learning English at the Kingwood College Intensive English Program

Javier Coronado, Mexico, Grammar & Writing IV

When I first came to the United States, I really was in embarrassing situations, and all because of not knowing English. I remember one occasion when I was in high school that a classmate was asking me something, but I did not understand what she was saying. My only words were, \textit{i'm sorry, I can't.} She asked that five times, but my answer was the same one, \textit{i'm sorry, I can't.} The classmates started to realize what was happening and started making fun of her because I did not notice her. What they did not know was that I did not understand anything and all she wanted was a napkin. It is really embarrassing when somebody asks you something so simple, and you have no idea what they are saying.

Luis Ignacio Munoz Diaz, Colombia, Grammar & Writing IV

My name is Luis Ignacio Munoz and I am Colombian. I am taking ESL classes at Kingwood College. I am taking Grammar and Writing IV, Reading and Vocabulary IV, and Listening and Speaking III.

My first time living in the U.S.A. was very hard for me because I didn't speak English. Houston is a big city and it doesn't have bus transportation. All the people use cars for transportation; this surprised me. It is the opposite in my country, because in Colombia, for seventy percent of the people, their transportation is by bus.

Next, I began the English class, but it was very difficult for me because my classmates didn't speak Spanish; they spoke Russian, Japanese, Indian, and English. Only two classmates spoke Spanish, but they didn't like to speak in my language because the teacher did not permit Spanish to be spoken. Now I am comfortable in my English classes because they always help me.

Finally, I am taking ESL classes because I am a teacher in my country. I studied science at the university and I want to apply to be a teacher in Texas. In order to do this, I need to take the teacher certification program. I should be teaching in this country; in the future. I want to work in any school in Texas because I love to teach.

Nubia N. Herrera, Mexico, Grammar & Writing IV

You do not need to be a genius to learn something new. You only need patience and perseverance. For me, learning English is very important to communicate with people. It is important to know the reason why you want to learn English; for example, to get a job, a hobby, or just to continue your education in this country. I have been living here for eight years and I never went to school, I wasted my time. Right now, I am happy to be studying at this college. My goal is to finish these courses and learn how to write and speak English.

Francis Venegas, Venezuela, Grammar & Writing IV

I need to learn English because it is important if you live in the United States of America. When I came to this country, I didn't speak English. I decided to take ESL. It is important to learn English because this is the language that everybody speaks here. These classes help me a lot. First, I learned how to communicate. Second, I learned how to read and write English. In addition, if you want to be successful in the United States of America, you have to know English well.

Domi Burgin, Venezuela, Grammar & Writing IV

Why am I taking ESL classes? I think this is the most popular question in the ESL program. I do not know how many times an ESL student has had to answer that same question. You need to answer that question every time you start a class, when you are filling out the ESL survey, or when one of your colleagues asks you the question. Is there any one answer for that question?

Every student of the ESL program has a different reason for taking ESL classes. To my surprise, I found out that my answers were changing every time I needed to answer it. Personally, I don't have one specific answer. To start with, when I started the ESL program three years ago after I came from my country, I found out that my English was worse than I thought. I was not able to help my children with their homework, nobody at the grocery store could understand my pronunciation, and I did not understand my neighbor when she was talking to me. So, in order to improve my communication skills, I started English classes. After that and during my first semester something happened. I found out that the college atmosphere caught me: I was spending most of my day on the campus and I liked it! Consequently, I decided to continue my education beyond the ESL program. Now with a degree as a goal, I have to finish all the ESL levels and start to take college classes. These are some of the reasons that I decided to take ESL classes at Kingwood College. In conclusion, nobody has a consistent answer for that question. With passing time, people's perspectives change and with them, the answers to this and other questions change as well.

Nipaporn Prada, Thailand, Grammar & Writing IV

I was born and grew up in Thailand. Thai was my language. I studied basic English, but I had never spoken English. After I moved to Houston, I looked for the classes that could help me improve my English. I thought ESL classes would be the best classes for me for several reasons.

First, I want to communicate with other people. I still remember the first day when I flew from Thailand to Houston. I had a lot of problems because I did not know what they were talking about, and they did not understand me. Just one thing that helped me a little bit was I could read the signs.

The second reason is for working. I was a nurse in Thailand. After I moved to Houston, I tried to take a test for a nursing license in the U.S.A. I passed the test last year. Now I am a Registered Nurse at North Houston Dialysis. In my job, I have to write a lot of reports. My reports will be better reports if I improve my English. Taking ESL classes can help me communicate with other people and be successful in my career.

Aracely Cruz, Mexico, Grammar & Writing IV

I am taking an ESL class at Kingwood College twice a week for many reasons. These reasons are communication, to be successful like a teacher, and to find a good job. The first reason is many people in this country speak English and I cannot communicate with them. For example, when I go to the doctor, I can not explain what kind of pain I have. When I go shopping and I want to buy a blouse, they do not know what I want, and in my sons' school, the teachers speak to me and I don't understand what they tell me. I feel frustrated. The second reason is I want to succeed in getting a certificate as a teacher. I need to understand English very well, so I can teach the students with language and math problems. I would like to teach bilingual classes because I understand that it is difficult to learn English when the teacher doesn't understand you. The third reason is I want to get a better job and earn more money, so I can pay the university for my sons' education. For these reasons, I would like to learn English very well, and I hope to achieve my dreams someday.
Emma Cabanillas, Peru, Grammar & Writing IV

I am learning English to get a better life. There are three powerful reasons why I am taking the English class at Kingwood College. These reasons are: to help my children at school, to be a good citizen, and to find a better job.

First, my children are in middle school and they need help with their homework. Second, I want to be a good American citizen learning the language and the history. Third, it will help me to find a better job.

In conclusion, this class helps me to better communicate with people; in fact, I feel more comfortable when I speak with them.

Monica Linan, Colombia, Grammar & Writing IV

Kingwood College offers the best program to learn English. I have found many advantages which have helped me to develop different skills to be able to understand and communicate with other people. When I am studying English, I feel more confident and less afraid to interact with foreign people. Moreover, ESL is the key to starting a career, which is one of my goals to obtain a better life style. In conclusion, I love this program and I thank all the staff because they put all their efforts into helping immigrants like me to have success in life.

Nina McKinney, Ukraine, Grammar & Writing IV

When I came to the United States, I did not speak English. I found out about ESL classes, and I decided to take them for several reasons. The first problem was that I could not communicate with people. I did not understand what people were trying to say to me. I felt very uncomfortable when I went out or when I went to a party. I could not tell people about myself and it made me feel very upset. The second reason was that I could not watch TV programs because I did not understand any words. I could not read the magazines and newspapers in English. And third, I want to receive my education in the United States; it is my goal. It is very important for my future. For all these reasons, I am taking ESL classes and I feel very comfortable communicating with people, and I have confidence in the achievement of my goal.

Angel Gonzalez, Puerto Rico, Grammar & Writing IV

I moved from Puerto Rico to Houston with one thing in mind: learning to speak English. I really believed that in two years I would be speaking English very well. When I was in school, learning English was not my goal, nor was it my favorite subject. It was after I entered the job market and got married, that I realized how much I was losing because of my lack of good English skills. Then I decided that my only option was to force myself to learn English by moving to the United States. The day I moved to Houston, my wife wrote on a piece of paper what my conversation would be if I had to speak with the telephone operator. That day I missed the connecting flight from Florida to Houston. I had to make a long distance call to my cousin, who was waiting for me in Houston. Somehow I was able to make that long distance call. I came in November and in December, I was already working. In February, my wife moved here with our two beautiful daughters. While we were at the airport, people were talking to me, and there I was, smiling and saying yes. My wife was impressed! She thought that I was getting very good in English. The reality was that I did not understand a thing. After two years, my mother called and asked if I had my luggage ready, since I had told her that I would be ready to come back in two years. It has been an interesting and positive journey. Moreover, after many years in Houston, I am still learning and improving my language skills.

Ana Morales, Mexico, Grammar & Writing IV

Three weeks ago I arrived in the United States. The first day I was in this country, I went to a high school because I wanted to do a year of high school in the United States, even though I had finished my high school in Mexico. When I was going to start my classes at the high school, my counselor told me that I should not enroll in high school and that I should go to college because I had very good grades. After the counselor told us that, my family and I went to Kingwood College because I want to go to college, but we did not have the money for enrollment. I needed a scholarship. While I was waiting for the scholarship, a counselor told us that I could go to free ESL classes and that I will have to take C.E. classes when I enroll in Kingwood College. That is why I am taking ESL classes.

Oksana Chukhray, Ukraine, Grammar & Writing III

People usually remember what is first. It is very important to have first experiences. I am still impressed by my first class and I adore my first teacher in America.

I entered my first Kingwood College ESL course in February of this year. At that time I had lived in America for three months. I felt it was difficult to understand even simple English. I took Listening and Speaking 2. At that time my purpose was just to get an understanding of English and communicate with people. I was very shy to speak. Generally, it is usual for me to keep silent, or speak only a little. It was like a personal habit. During this class this habit was changing. I became more communicative and sociable and I began to feel more confident. I realized opportunities to continue my education. It was helping me to adjust to American life. I really began to speak more and began getting to know about people in America, about life styles, and about priorities. I began to read about American history, listen to the news, getting to know the American economy.

I am always remembering my first teacher, Judith Watson. She put all her efforts into teaching. Judith is an amazing person. She was my first impression of an American woman, an American intelligent teacher. I am so lucky to get an incredible positive experience in studying English. I wish to improve my skills. It will happen because I am in love with this language.

Sarai Zapata, Mexico, Grammar & Writing III

When I first came to Houston, I used to live with my aunt Maria. I started working at Chipotle Restaurant. It was hard for me because I didn’t know English. I had a bad experience with customers. I couldn’t communicate with them and I lost my job. This happened four years ago.

I went back to Mexico and stayed there for a year. Then I came back to Houston and started working as a babysitter. I took care of four American children, but the difference in this job was that I could learn English with them. I worked there for eight months. This was a good experience for me and it helped me with my present efforts.

Because of this experience I chose to study ESL at Kingwood College. I want to learn more English and I know this is a good opportunity to get a better job in the future, when I can communicate with everybody. Once I have a family in this country, I will be able to talk with them.
Zoratda Magana, Mexico, Listening & Speaking I-II
My name is Zorayda Magana. I am from Mexico. I am taking E.S.L. at Kingwood College. Iím learning English because I want a better job in my future and I donít want to scrub toilets for the rest of my life. I would like a better life. I am single and I would like to improve my English so I can help my family.

Jesus Ortega, Mexico, Listening & Speaking I-II
My name is Jesus Ortega. I am from Mexico. I like to live in Humble because it is a friendly place and you can find all kinds of stores around it. I am taking English because I want to improve my skills and be able to talk to everybody. Another reason I am taking E.S.L. is because I would like to go to college and take regular classes and get a degree.

Francisco Monrreal, Mexico, Listening & Speaking I-II
My name is Francisco Monrreal. I am from Mexico. I am taking ESL at Kingwood College. I am going to college to learn English to get a better job. I am taking two classes a week. I live in Porter with my sister and her husband and I am working in a diesel mechanic shop.

Maria Chavarria, Mexico, Listening & Speaking I-II
My name is Maria Chavarria. I am from Mexico. I have been married for 15 years and have 4 children. I have lived in Houston for 13 years and I work for myself. I like to help my children with their homework so I need to learn English and I also need English for a better job. I like to live in Houston because I have a nice house and a good car and I can go shopping with my family. I am very happy here.

Leticia Sosa, Mexico, Listening & Speaking I-II
My name is Leticia Sosa. I am from Mexico. I am taking ESL at Kingwood College. I like to live in New Caney, TX because it is a good place. I am learning English because I need a good job.

Rosario Suarez, El Salvador, Listening & Speaking I-II
My name is Rosario Suarez. I am from El Salvador, Central America. I am married and I live with my husband, my son, and my sister. I was a dentist in my country and I am a student now. I am studying English at Kingwood College because I think if I live in the U.S., I need to learn English to better communicate with people in the community.

Yolanda Miranda, Mexico, Listening & Speaking I-II
My name is Yolanda. I am from Mexico. I study English because it is important.

My grandchildren do not speak Spanish, so I can not understand them. I am happy when I can understand a few words.

Lourdes Ramirez, Peru, Listening & Speaking I-II
My name is Lourdes Ramirez. My country is Peru. I was born in Lima. I am taking ESL at Kingwood College. I like to live in Houston because it is beautiful. Houston has many tourist attractions. The people are friendly. I am learning English because I want to speak to many people and I want a better job.

Xochil Rivera, El Salvador, Listening & Speaking I-II
My name is Xochil Rivera. I am from El Salvador. I live in Kingwood. I like to live in Kingwood because the people are friendly and the stores are new. I am single. I donít have a job right now. My favorite color is red and black.

Javier Vazquez, Mexico, Listening & Speaking I-II
I am from Mexico. I am taking ESL at Kingwood College now because I am looking to progress at my job and get along better in the United States. I took my first English Class in Tucson, AZ. I learned to speak it there, but didnít use it often, so I forgot. I need to be able to talk to my boss, partners, and also some teachers and doctors.

Rigoberto Munoz, Listening & Speaking I-II
I am from Mexico. I am taking an ESL class at Kingwood College. I have three children. I am single and my job is to install ceramic tile. My schedule is six a.m. to night. I do not have any time off.

Jacqueline Cabanillas, Peru, Listening & Speaking I-II
I am from Peru. I like living in Kingwood because the people are friendly. It is nice here and I like the schools. I work at Randallís designing flowers. I make pretty arrangements. I also work at the Wal-Mart warehouse. I have four children and want a new car, so I have to save money.

Rosa Delicia Mia, Listening & Speaking I-II
Hello, my name is Rosa. I was living in Spain. I am taking an ESL class at Kingwood College. I like living in Houston because it is very big. I am learning English because I would like to speak with people. I am single. I live with my aunt and uncle.

Mario Lara, Listening & Speaking I-II
I have lived in the U.S.A for 11 years. I have been married for 10 years. I have 2 children.

I am learning English because I want to be available to my community and my family. I am continuing my classes from Mexico. I am good in mathematics. I want to be the project manager for my company.

Carlo Medina, Peru, Listening & Speaking I-II
I am from Peru. I am taking an ESL class at Kingwood College. I like to live in Houston because it is very big and Houston has many places to visit. I have lived in Houston for 3 weeks. I am learning English because I want to study at the University for a career.

I was studying at the university in my country for 1 Ω years, but my father said that I would have more opportunities in the U.S.

Adalia Zepeda, Mexico, Listening & Speaking I-II
When I came to the U.S. a long time ago, I never had time to study English at the regular school, but now I have the time and the opportunities. I am taking an English class because it is important in my job for me to communicate with people. My sons were born in the U.S.A. and they speak English and Spanish. I am learning English from them and I am teaching them Spanish because I told them it is important to be bilingual.

Eun Choi, Korea, Reading & Vocabulary II
It is important for me to take ESL classes because I have to speak English in America.

If I canít speak and read English well that will be sad in my life. I have a three year old son. He understands English and Korean, both languages right now. However, I want to be a good mother and I know that when he grows up, he will usually speak English.
Isis Vasquez, Honduras, Reading & Vocabulary II
I am learning English to continue with my studies here. I have taken nine months of English: six months in my country, two months at San Jacinto College, and one month here at Kingwood College. I think that learning English is very difficult for me. I try to speak English at my house, but it is very little. Some people have told me to watch TV only in English to learn faster. I think that I understand seven out of ten words. When people speak slowly, I understand better.

Cheng Yin Chang Angela, Taiwan, Grammar & Writing III
English is very important for me because I live here. I want to understand more English. For example, when I go to the store to buy some food, I need to know the names. Also, when I go to the bank to pay a bill, I need to know how to write. There are many words I don't know, and that makes me feel sad. So I decided to go to school to study English. At school, I can meet new friends, get to know about different cultures, and learn a new language. Gradually, I will improve my English and my life will change.

Maria J. Castro, Venezuela, Grammar & Writing III
English helps me communicate with a lot of people in the world. Because of this language, I can know about other cultures and traditions. Also, I can change my future by continuing my education. I plan to have a successful career in the future by obtaining a college degree. There are a lot of oil companies in my country, and they require that the personnel know English. I have always dreamt to speak this language fluently. I hope that my dream will become reality very soon.

Rossi Gabriela, Argentina, Grammar & Writing III
I think that the best way to learn a foreign language is to live in that country where the language is spoken. I decided to take a gap year and learn more English, German, and Italian. I had lived in Florence for two months, in Berlin for four months, and now here in Kingwood. My uncle has lived here for two years. He is an American and it is a good opportunity for me to practice English with him. It is also necessary to take ESL classes in order to speak and write correctly. The most important reason why I am studying English is because next year I will start my career. I am going to study international relationships and for this it is indispensable to know more than three languages.

Rosely Koch, Brazil, Grammar & Writing III
ESL classes are the best way to improve your English language skills. It is also very important to learn the language of the country you live in. ESL at Kingwood College offers more than just classes; one can go to the library to read books or magazines and even get tutoring.

Lorena Lopez, Venezuela, Grammar & Writing III
When I came to the United States, I could not understand the language, the culture, or the laws. I couldn’t be happy because I needed to communicate with other people. The exchange of ideas couldn’t take place because I wasn’t able to speak English. I needed a change in my life. So I decided to take ESL classes at Kingwood College. Now I can read, write, and read in English. I am so proud of myself!

Gudelia Cavero, Peru, Grammar & Writing III
The most important thing that I have to do in this country is to take English classes. I have a lot of reasons for this. First of all, it is to continue my studies in order to earn a Bachelor’s Degree in Electronics. Second, I would like to earn a degree in computer assemblies. Third, I will get a better job if I know English. Finally, I will no longer worry about how to communicate with others. In conclusion, for all these reasons the English classes are important for reaching my goals in this country.

Lu Yen Shu, Japan, Grammar & Writing III
This is the United States of America, so I need to speak English. I had studied English thirty years before in high school. I love this country very much, but only for vacations. This time I came with my children. I want them to study English and to know the American culture. We are learning English together and we enjoy it. It is not easy, but we will be able to speak English correctly soon.

Oneyda Argueta, Mexico, Grammar & Writing III
I am taking ESL classes at Kingwood College because I need to improve my English. As a nurse, I need to be able to communicate with the patients and the medical staff. Learning English at Kingwood College makes you feel good because the teachers help you with the language. I have had a very good experience in the ESL program here at Kingwood College. I have learned a lot of words, and I can understand when people talk to me. I still need to improve my grammar. If you want to improve your communication skills, you need to take ESL classes at Kingwood College.

Iryna Peacher, Ukraine, Grammar & Writing V
I am taking the ESL Grammar and Writing course for many different reasons: for a new life experience, for career preparation and also to increase my knowledge.

My life changed when I came to the US. I have to learn English for good communication. I watch American TV programs and I read English books. I am making a lot of new friends at Kingwood College. They are helping me to learn more about their different cultures. Also, I can taste different foods. I can say that I have a good life experience in this country, but it is only my first step now.

The second reason is career preparation. After I graduate from college, I will look for a better job. People who hire, prefer college graduates for better jobs. The more education a person has, the better the job they can get. A good education equals more money and a brighter future.

The third reason is increasing my knowledge. This reason is very important for me. I can always visit the college library and take some English books for my personal reading. I can check out video tapes, too. People who read a lot of books can do good writing homework. They can be good students and interesting people. I try to be that way too. In conclusion, I can say that I want to be a successful person and I want to have a good life to look forward to.
Chris Orta, Cureo, Texas (28 miles south of Victoria near Gulf of Mexico) Grammar & Writing V

Why am I taking ESL classes? I am taking ESL classes to refresh my writing ability. I am planning to attend Lamar University next year for a Masterís degree in Deaf Education. So I know that I need to improve my English writing ability. I had taken some ESL classes ten years ago at North Harris College, but I kind of forgot the English rules. Also, I have not returned to school since 2004. After five years of academic absence, my writing skills have become a little rusty. Right now I am slowly earning some oil to solve my rusty writing by coming to Mrs. Stirís English class!

Maria Tsurikova, Russia, Grammar & Writing V

I ended up in the ESL Program because of three reasons. First, I did not manage to pass the placement test. I tried to pass it several times, but my score was not high enough to start my education at Kingwood College with regular classes. I decided to take ESL classes. I hope they will help me improve my grammar and writing skills. Besides, I will manage to review English grammar by doing various grammar exercises and tests, listening to the teacherís explanations of grammar rules and exceptions. More than that, the Grammar / Writing class will give me an opportunity to understand the difference between various types of essays such as narration, illustration, description, etc. Since without having good grammar knowledge and without knowing how to express your ideas in written and spoken form, it is not possible to find a well-paid job; the ESL program is my first step towards my goals.

Aida Green, Mexico, Grammar & Writing V

I love the diversity of the students attending the English classes at Kingwood College. Most of them come from countries like mine, where we enjoy parties, and we like to get together so we can exchange experiences, food, games, or have some activities like bowling or dancing. Last semester I was attending two classes, when I met a lot of younger people. They are so full of energy, and many of them also have lots of free time to kill. Of course many of them are Hispanics like me. My friends and I were wondering once how the students from Asia or the Philippines communicate with us in order to get to so many parties and have all kinds of friends. Some of them speak and write English so perfectly, but there are no Americans in our classes. Those students do not party as much as we do. One day my Hispanic friends and I were waiting outside of the classroom, when five of our Asian classmates showed up. We were shocked to hear them saying ¡Buenos Dias! to us. I absolutely could not imagine myself saying good morning in Chinese or Japanese. It is already difficult in English. Then we understood that many of them in order to make more friends and enjoy more parties decided to learn survival Spanish. Maybe I should learn a series of survival languages too, but first, I have to concentrate on my English.

Fabema Abdulwahab, Jerusalem, Reading & Vocabulary II

Iím taking ESL classes because I never completed anything more than a high school education. I moved to the US in 1970 and never had a chance to go back to school until now. I have always wanted to further my education. I always knew that my spelling was not very good, and I hope it will get better with these ESL classes.

Y Dinh, Vietnam, Grammar & Writing V

In the ESL classes people study English as a second language. They take ESL classes for many different reasons; such as, for their future careers, new experiences, or to improve their English. I take ESL classes because I want to improve my English and prepare for my future career. When I came to The United States the first time, I could not speak and comprehend English well. I felt very sad and wondered if I could study and find a job that I liked to do. However, after I took the first ESL classes at Kingwood College in the summer of 2006, I did not feel the same way like I did before. In my reading class, my teacher taught me new words and how to identify the main point of the essay. In my writing class, I was taught how to write a paragraph, then an essay, and review a lot of grammar. I felt different after that course. I feel more confident now to communicate with people and make new friends from different countries. I think that if I continue to take all levels of ESL, I will be ready for college. I hope that my English will be good enough to study and become a pharmacist.

Olga L. Najar, Mexico, Grammar & Writing V

Before I moved to United States I had never had the interest to learn English, even though I lived on the border with Texas my whole life. When I got married, I came to this country and decided to take English classes for three reasons: to communicate with people, personal achievement, and to be a bilingual.

First, when I moved to this country, I was unable to speak English at all. I was by myself almost all day because my husband was working out of the U.S. Since I got married and moved to this country, I had to communicate with different persons for different reasons; such as, shopping, making new friends, or solving common problems.

Next reason, for me learning a new language was a challenge. I never though I had to learn another language than Spanish. I also thought that I was too old to do it, but I decided to come back to College to learn English. Now I am still taking these classes for personal achievement.

The last reason, which I had been thinking about since I moved here: if you have to live in a new country, you must learn its language. I am taking ESL classes to be truly bilingual someday. In summary, most of the immigrants who come to this country, discover the importance of learning English just like I did. We all must go back to college and take English courses to communicate with others in schools, jobs, or when we go to the stores, or just for personal accomplishment. I know I am doing the right thing and one day not so far I will be a bilingual.

Lin, Yu-Jen (David), Taiwan, Reading & Vocabulary II

I came to the US a month ago. Iím taking ESL courses because my mom thinks I should before I start high school. Some of my momís friends told her that their kids didnít go to ESL classes and as a result did not do well in high school. Thatsís why she wants me to study English before starting high school.
Antonio Ajucum, Guatemala, Reading & Vocabulary II
When I came here I didnít speak English. When people said something to me in English, I didnít say anything. When I tried to say something in English, I was very nervous. Then, my friend told me about the free ESL classes at Kingwood College. This happened about two years ago. That class was two days a week, and it was too slow for me. I needed to speak more English. My teacher told me about the ESL classes in the morning that met four days a week. In these classes, I can speak every day and donít forget what I study. Now, I can speak more English. My plan for the future is to speak more English, find a good job, and make more money to pay for university and have a career.

Michael Barreto, Colombia, Reading & Vocabulary II
The main reason why I decided to take ESL classes was to learn English. I believe that by learning English, I will have better opportunities in this great country. I plan to someday earn a college degree, but my first goal is to perfect my English. Iím very glad this program is around and look forward to speaking good English one day.

Rosalinda Munoz, United States, Grammar & Writing VI
I decided to go back to school to achieve my goals. I have been struggling to make it without an education working for companies that donít pay enough. It is very hard to try to survive from paycheck to paycheck. I am working hard to make my dreams come true taking one step at a time day after day. Last year I came to Kingwood College to take my first step toward the goals I set for my life. I registered in Nurse Aide courses in the Continuing Education. Right after I finished the program I got hired at Kingwood Medical Center as a patient care assistant. My next step is to get all my prerequisites out of the way. Iím taking two or three classes per semester. I really want to get into the Registering Nursing (RN) Program. The ESL program has really helped me a lot in improving my grammar, writing, and vocabulary. Learning good writing, reading, and communication skills in English will open a lot of doors for me in my career and in my future. I know it is hard to take care of my kids, obtain a full-time job, and go to school full-time, but I know that after this sacrifice I will be compensated in many ways. I know that my efforts and success will increase my self-confidence, result in a better salary, and create a more secure future for my children and me.

Ana Rocha, United States, Grammar & Writing VI
English is a very important language, especially if you live in the US. I am studying English for many reasons. As a native Spanish speaker, English has become an important subject for me. As a resident of the US, I have been studying English for the past 10 years, and I am still trying to get better at it. First of all, I am studying English to be successful in school and to reach my goal of getting my masterís degree as a bilingual teacher. I would love to work with children that are exposed to more than one language and teach them the importance of knowing English.

In addition, I am learning English to communicate better and have a better social life. For example, to express my feelings and thoughts, it is very important to communicate with others in English. Also, if you live in the US and do not speak English, it is like being nobody. You canít take advantage of the freedom of speech that people have in this country. Finally, I am trying to improve my English to have better job opportunities, so that I can support my family and have a decent life. •••
## 8 week courses — Spring 2007

Kingwood College Intensive English Program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Course Number</th>
<th>Section</th>
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## 15 week courses — Spring 2007

Kingwood College Intensive English Program

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## Hybrid Courses

For the following courses, students must have access to IBM compatible PC, Internet, and MS Word. This course requires at least 3 hours per week for online assignments.

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## Acknowledgements:

This edition of Diversity was possible thanks to many people, including ESL student contributors, ESL faculty, and Pam Clarke and her Designs in Print intern Jorge Garcia. Special thanks to Rosemarie Goos for editing the studentsí submissions.

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