The ESOL Ambassador

Volume 16, No. 3: Spring 2015

Cover art by PCC student Minh Le
The ESOL Ambassador

The ESOL Ambassador is a quarterly publication of the Sylvania ESOL Department. Essays are written by students at all levels of the program and submitted for publication by ESOL instructors.

Subscriptions: The ESOL Ambassador is distributed to various individuals and departments at PCC. If you wish to receive issues regularly, please contact Sarah Bailie at CT 206 or by email at sarah.bailie@pcc.edu.

Editor: Sarah Bailie

Editorial Board:

Sarah Bailie
John Sparks

Artwork:

Minh Le
Ahmed Ali
Ali Alahmed
Thinh Le

Special thanks to all teachers who contributed student work:

Wendy Kogan, Megan Esler, Jill Nicholson,
Patti Schilasky, Dominique Brillianceau, Luciana Diniz,
Tina Sparks, Claudia Nawas, Patty Berger, Ilka Kuznik
John Sparks
Level 1 Students Wrote about their Differences with Friends and Family

**Different In Many Ways**

My name is Olivia and my husband is Pokky. We are different in many ways. For example, I love to drink milk. Pokky doesn’t like to drink milk. He likes to drink beer. I like to exercise in the morning. Pokky doesn’t like exercise. He likes to sleep in the morning. I like to do housework. He doesn’t like to do housework. He likes to watch TV. I like to go shopping. He doesn’t like to go shopping. He likes to stay home.

By Kanokwan Olivia Tonsirach

**My Friend and Me**

My name is Sami and my friend is Ahmad. We are different in many ways. For example, I like soccer but Ahmad doesn’t like soccer. I like to speak with everyone but he doesn’t like that. He only talks with friends. I love old songs but he doesn’t like old songs. I love cooking, but Ahmad doesn’t like cooking. We’re different in many ways but we are still good friends.

By Sami Bahrami

**Things We Like and Don’t Like**

My name is Adhraa and my husband is Qusay. We are different in many ways. For example, I love very warm weather. Qusay doesn’t like very warm weather. Qusay likes Coca Cola. I don’t like Coca Cola. I like to walk. He doesn’t like to walk. I like to watch the news. Qusay doesn’t like to watch the news.

By Adhraa Mohammed

**Marilena and Steve**

My name is Marilena, and my boyfriend is Steve. We are different in many ways. For example, I love corn tortillas. He doesn’t like corn tortillas. He likes hamburgers. I don’t like hamburgers. I like to watch Spanish news. He doesn’t like Spanish news. I like warm water. He doesn’t like warm water. He likes to take showers in cold water. I don’t like cold water.

By Marilena Higuera
This short story was written by a Level 2 PCC ESOL student, who had a memorable experience at the post office.

Woman Rare

At the beginning of the summer, here in Oregon, it was sunny and Friday. I moved recently with my husband and children to Beaverton. I don’t understand a lot of American English and I can't speak well. I was forced to take my kids and go to the post office because my mother got sick in Iraq and did not respond to treatment. I decided to send her medication.

I arrived at the post office. I was confused. How could I deal with the employee? How to speak to him? The employee said to me, “I don't know what you said”.

My face got red with shame. In this moment a blonde woman with eyes similar to the color of the sea advanced towards me. She was waiting in the row. She talked for a moment and offered to help me. She spoke to me very clearly and slowly so I could understand. They wanted me to send express mail and left her to help me. Her name was a “Laura”. She waited with me for three hours. I was trying to paint a smile on the face of my kids because they were tired of waiting for me. Medicine was sent to my mother thanks to this woman. Laura planted tranquility in my heart, so thanks to her.

Written by Asraa Khalil
Level 2 Students at PCC Sylvania wrote short paragraphs about their favorite things.

My Favorite Thing

My favorite thing is my computer. It is best for me. I don’t know everything about it because it is new for me. It isn’t easy for me but I am trying to learn about it. I never tried using it in the past. I think it is the best invention in the world. I admire people who know everything about computers.

Written by: Vera Mantovani

About My PCC

It is very large. MCC is multicultural. It has a lot of students. It has many cafeterias. It has many nationalities. It isn’t close to my house. It isn’t small. It doesn’t have old buildings.

Written by: Rasha Abbas

Laptop

My favorite thing is my laptop. It is lightweight and easy to carry. It is a midsize computer. It is black and shiny. It is a good computer that makes my work a lot easier. It is easy to use. It isn’t good for my eyes due to radiation. It isn’t secure to connect with Internet. It doesn’t have replaceable hardware. It doesn’t have a loud voice. It has a big document saver.

Written by: Ali AlQaysi

Apartment

My favorite thing is my apartment. It is beautiful. It is small. It is cheap. It is on the second floor. It is far from PCC. It isn’t big. It isn’t expensive. It isn’t near PCC. It isn’t on the ground floor.

Written by: Amani Alabdullah
Cell Phone

My favorite thing is my cell phone. It is a very essential tool. It is a good way to help me. I like it because it is very useful for communicating. My cell phone is very nice. It is a way of entertainment. It makes me many things and it is important. It takes my time when I should be working. It is not good for my son because he always plays games. It is very slow on the internet. There is no working camera.

Written by: Rocio Delores

Level 3: Future Plans

My future has a lot of options. I do not want a new job, but I do want to make more money. I will move from Vancouver, Washington to Tualatin, Oregon. I will finish level four and five because I want to understand and speak English really well. I’m not going to get married, but I’m going to buy a truck because I want a side business by myself to make more money. I want to live in a house, that’s why I’m going to make jobs for myself because I need more money to pay my rent.

Written by: by Hector Velazquez

Next summer, I am going to study English in level four, and I will take a week for vacation. On my vacation, I will go to Orlando Florida. After the vacation, I am going to go to visit my sister in California. Next summer I am also going to buy many things, clothes, shoes, hats and many things to enjoy summer. I hope my next summer will be very good.

Written by: by Pepe Hernandez

I am going to finish level 4 and 5, but I want to finish level 8 too. I am going to move to live in another state, I’m not sure when, but I’ll do that and I am going to visit my sisters in my country with more frequency. I’ll get a new job in two years, and I hope I will speak English more than now. I am going to get married someday.

Written by: Maria Aldana
These Level 3 Students wrote about their Past

In summer 2014, I went to Chicago. I went to visit my friend Nicol. She was happy because she bought a home. The home was bigger than my home. After one week, I went back home. And a few weeks later her friend Austen classed me to give me some bad news. Austen told me my friend Nicol was dead. I was so sad, and I cried. A few minutes later I thought Daniel called me “Ali, Ali wake up! You are late for work!” It was a dream. I was happy it was only a dream.

Written by: by Alireza Mirkazemi

Three years ago, I went to Europe with my friend. We had a ticket on Iron Air Airlines. We flew from Tehran to Koln Germany. When we arrived in Koln a Police dog barked at my friend. Wow 20 police officers came and we were scared, but the dog barked at someone else not us! We stayed for three days in Koln then we went to the Netherlands. Our friends waited for us in Amsterdam. We also visited Paris for four days. Next we went to Belgium. Finally we went back home.

Written by: by Tirdad Dehghani
How would you describe your lifestyle? These Level 3 students wrote about their lifestyles.

Of course my lifestyle is not healthy. I have several things I need to change. I am going to begin only with the most important things to do: eat less, floss my teeth and do exercise.

Losing weight is my number one problem. I like to eat food. It doesn’t matter if it is Mexican, Italian, Thai or American. My plate is always big and full of food. Sometimes I eat some cake or apple pie. I love it. I put salt on all my food. I don’t eat vegetables and fruit, but from now on I plan to eat less. I am going to divide my plate in 3 parts. More vegetables, little meat or fish or chicken and little rice or soup. Between meals I can eat a little bit of fruit and have my dinner as early as possible. I will drink more water. I will put less salt on my food. Some people say that it is the best.

Last Saturday I went to the dentist to clean my teeth, and she told me that it is necessary to use floss every night because brushing my teeth is not enough. I need go to the dentist every four months and I need to take a C vitamin. My plan is to use floss every night.

Finally, I need to exercise more. I have to walk almost 3 times a week. Walking is easy and free, but I don’t like it. However, I must do exercise.

If I follow this plan for change I am sure that my lifestyle will be healthier.

Written by: Tommy Alamillo
In general my lifestyle is healthy, but there are a few things I need to change.

I have breakfast every morning. I usually eat fruit, and then I have a sandwich with peanut butter or cereal or yogurt. I drink a small cup of coffee and a big cup of green tea every morning. Also, I drink ten glasses of water with lemon every day. Most times I don't have lunch on time because I eat snacks after breakfast, so I'm not hungry. I usually have another meal at three or four. I eat an omelet with cheese and some vegetables, such as mushrooms, green onion, chili, zucchini and tomatoes. Sometimes I eat salmon or chicken with green salad, garlic and jalapeños.

But my diet isn't perfect. I love to eat sweets. I like ice cream, chocolate and everything that is sweet. And another problem is that I cook for my husband late at night, because he usually eats dinner at nine or ten. So, most of the time I eat late too.

Fortunately I like to do sports. I do exercises every morning for ten minutes and twice a week I jog four or five miles.

I need to lose weight, so I will try to eat less sweets and also I'll choose a time for three meals a day, and I'll eat at that time.

Written by: Antoaneta Gheorge
Afghanistan Culture

Afghanistan is located in heart of Asia, and its Capital is Kabul. It shares borders with seven countries. The borders are from the south with Pakistan, from the west with Iran and from the north with Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, and China. Afghanistan’s official languages are Pashto and Dari. Afghanistan’s population is made of several nationalities, but the famous are Pashtun, Tajik, Uzbek and Hazara.

When Afghans meet each other, if they are women they kiss on cheek, or if they are men they shake hands or hug each other. They just say hello to strangers. Afghans like to go and visit their relatives.

Families in Afghanistan are big. They live together, and usually grandparents also live with them. They respect their grandparents a lot.

There are two religious and several other holidays celebrated in Afghanistan. Among all these holidays the two Eids: the small one and the big one are celebrated with much pleasure. People count days for these two holidays each year. The other famous holiday is the first day of the year. Every new work gets started in this day and people, usually families, go on vacations to far places.

Afghans are very hospitable. They like to eat meals together. Afghanistan has a lot of delicious and outstanding meals, like Qabuli palaw, Ashak, Manto, and so forth.

Most of the Afghan cultures have the history of over 5000 years. Like the trend of Bozkashi, Nawroz, and the wedding style continues the same as it was thousands of years ago.

Written by: Fareshta Bahrami
ESOL Level 3
Nepali Earthquake

Nepal is my native country. It’s between China and India. It lies on the top of Indian and Eurasian tectonic plates. Movement of these two tectonic plates triggered an earthquake in Nepal.

April 25th, 2015 we call a 'black day' for Nepal because a 7.9 earthquake came. At least 8500 people died as while 20,000 people were injured. Millions of people lost their homes. Some people lost their business. Some people lost their parents, children, brothers, sisters. They are praying to god. People who are alive have no good food and no homes to live in. Now they are living on the ground.

My country is one of the poorest in the world. The government can not help all of the people; however, I’m glad that many countries are helping the Nepali people. They help with medicine, money, and food. Many people went from America to help them. Unfortunately, 4 of those people died in a helicopter accident. I will always remember and salute them.

I’m surprised the earthquake is continuing. Small and big earthquakes are coming. The government says since April 25, 160 earthquakes have come. People are scared. It’s especially affecting the children. They lost their school. So I request to everyone, please help them.

Written by: Sanjeeta Thapa
ESOL Level 3
Sound Man

I am a sound man. I have over 25 years of experience for sound and lighting. But I like play the music for weddings the best. I think: Music is the key to every moment of the wedding day.

Almost every weekend, I have a show for a wedding or dance. Usually they send requests for songs they like.

First, I play dance songs. I usually celebrate their love with these songs: “Cause I Love You” or “In Case of You.”

Cutting the cake is wedding tradition. It is important for their marriage. I usually play: “Because You Love Me” or “When A Man Loves A Woman.”

For the last dance, sometimes I play music with powerful sound, and strong beats for people dancing. I like the songs “Girl On Fire” and “Wake Me Up.”

A DJ for weddings has to spend a lot of time on the weekend, but I like my DJ jobs because that is my favorite thing to do.

Written by: An Tran
ESOL Level 3

Soccer in the Neighborhood

Soccer in the Neighborhoods is very common in the Middle East. Boys like it very much because it is fun and doesn’t require any cost. In this picture, my neighbors are playing their favorite game. First, they are dividing into two groups. Next, the referee is declaring the beginning of the game. Now, the two teams are playing and recording goals. One of the teams is playing very fast and very good. Now, it takes one goal lead over its rival. The time is finished. The referee is declaring the end of the game. The winning team is very happy. It is rejoicing and jumping, but the losing team is sad; it is crying. Now, everyone is shaking hands and laughing. They are saying, we should play again tomorrow. It is a good day for them they are enjoying and not waiting for any prizes.

Written by: Najwa Al-Wasabi
ESOL Level 4
Future Software Programmer

My classmate Astrid has a dream. She wants to be a software programmer. She likes numbers. She is very excited when she can prepare a new computer program. Her favorite language is Java. Her interests started when she was in high school. She studied two years at Mariano University in Guatemala. Four months ago, her life changed. She moved to Oregon from Guatemala. Now the first thing is to learn English. Twice a week she goes to PCC and studies English at ESOL class. She has a year and a half old son, then she has a lot of things to do at her home. Astrid has high aspirations. She wants to finish education and find a job as a programmer in five years. Her dream helps me believe in my dream.

Written by: Ewa Malinowska
ESOL Level 4
After reading a text about haiku, the Reading 5 students were courageous enough to try their own non-traditional haikus.

**Real Love**  
The place where  
you were happy  
you don’t have to return  
(Gary Zambrano)

**Singer**  
A singer is popular, famous  
a lot of money, so many girl  
comfortable life  
(Jaime Cabrera)

**Limitless**  
Love doesn’t have limit  
But the world is limited  
let’s die together  
(Muge Yilmaz)

**School**  
Still in class  
And no rest or water glass  
Nevertheless, have to be focused  
(Mahmoud Al-Janazreh)

**Orphans**  
Helping children  
Center or home for orphans  
Education  
(Frank Mollel)

**Wind**  
Wind blowing  
Makes trees play  
As a couple in love  
(Davan Sem)

**Journey**  
Long long way  
Looking for me and make my story  
When I die it’s complete  
(Hiroki Takahashi)

**My Wife**  
My life My wife.  
love. My Treasure  
With me forever  
(Haitham Al Bachachi)

**Friday**  
No class, no stress  
I can do anything  
It’s called Friday  
(Hikaru Owatari)
Long Arms Eric

Eric is a volunteer at an active center. He is my table tennis partner. He came to the US from Belarus. Eric has brown eyes, gray hair, and white skin. He is six and a half feet tall. He is a slim, handsome young man. When I met Eric in the active center in winter for the first time, I was very surprised that he had long arms. He stands so far from the table end line but he can still catch the ball very near the net. This ability is very useful for table tennis players. When we began practice, I found he also moved fast and smashed powerfully. His loops spun quickly. We had a good time that afternoon. From then on, we have been playing table tennis every week.

Written by Jun Zhang
ESOL Level 5

Patch

My pet is a small dog. His tail looks like a cinnamon roll and his eyes are big and tender. He always looks sad, but he is a happy dog because the whole family spoils him. When he wants some treats, he usually stands in the kitchen because he knows when we are cooking, he can have a treat. My dog’s name is Patch. The name is so unusual because my daughter says he looks like a pirate, I really don’t know why she thinks that, and she explained to me, "He is not a pirate. He is the pirate’s patch." Well I don’t know. Patch likes to watch TV, run in circles and eat too much. He walks with grace, and when he runs, his ears fly in such a funny way. We moved to Portland one year ago and we had to leave him with my sister, who cares for him and loves him a lot. She sends me some pictures of him. My daughter wants to go to Mexico and bring him back with us. I am thinking about this, and I hope we can do it next summer. But my sister told me, "No. I love him too much. Why don’t you adopt a new pet?” I am so confused because my daughter misses him, but my sister loves him too.

Written by: Rebecca Amador
ESOL Level 5
My Little American Niece

What do you think of the fact that some parents give their children unusual names?

I was very surprised when I found out that my niece born in faraway America has the Russian male name Misha. It is like a girl named Michael in the United States. My best friend at school was Misha, too. First time I met little Misha in 2009, during my first visit to a distant and unfamiliar America. My niece was only six months. It was Christmas Eve. City streets were filled with colored lights; the sound of bells and Christmas carols were heard everywhere. When I met little Misha, I couldn’t take her seriously. My niece was like a doll for me. She was very quiet when she slept, but she could cry loudly if she was hungry. During my second visit to America, I saw a little girl who didn’t speak yet, but rapidly reacted to everything that was happening around. Every year when I come to visit Misha’s family I can see her grow physically and intellectually. When Misha was only 2 and half years old, she knew many poems by heart. Her parents had immigrated to the U.S. from the former Soviet Union, so in the beginning she spoke only Russian. It was difficult for Misha to communicate with other children at school. Fortunately, children learn a second language much easier than adults. I have been trying to learn English my entire life, but she did it very fast. My niece will be six years old next month. Misha has many hobbies. She plays soccer, takes swimming classes, enjoys drawing, writes short novels, takes piano lessons and goes to drama school. At age 6, Misha has become a smart, kind and beautiful girl. I believe that in the future she will grow up to be an educated and successful woman named Michelle.

Written by: Vasily Drots
ESOL Level 5
The Haunting Memory

War ends when people feel tired and when the history pages are written in the blood of their beloved or of strangers. Human beings died just because of some dollars. My mother said that. In the scorching summer heat back in July 1975, a thin lady with pale skin stood like a stone and hugged the cold little body of her son in her shaking arms. That woman is my grandma. Her son died just because she did not have any money to take him to a doctor, even though she had sold everything in her house.

This happened in the recovery stage after the Vietnam War. The life was harsh and everyone was deeply in poverty. There was no food, no medical care. My grandma had to work for a rich family to pay off the debt of her husband’s gambling and feed her eight little children. The eldest child was born with illness. He was always sick. As usual one day, my mother stayed at home and looked after her unlucky brother. When they were playing, the little boy got a high temperature and seemed unwell. Therefore, my mom asked her neighbor to help her while she went to find her mother.

Everything around her meant nothing to my grandma after she heard the bad news. She left all her work and went home immediately. Then, she rocked the little boy on her back and ran as fast as possible under the exhausting heat to the house of the landlord. She begged the landlord to let her receive her salary to take the boy to the doctor. In a high tone of voice, the landlord teased, "Do not even think about that. How could I lend you my money when you have nothing to pay? Your paycheck is also not due yet. Go home!" Then she asked my grandma to leave her house. My mom said she could not forget that day and that cruel sentence.

With no treatment and medicine, the little body of the boy could not stand anymore. Before his last moment, he was going to raise his tiny hand to touch my grandma’s face but he could not do that. His eyes closed. At least, he felt no pain after that. My grandma was silent. My mom called her several times but my grandma could not say a word. It was not because she was mute, but just because the pain was too much. All my mom saw in the face of her mother were the tears. They were like rain. With her baby in her arms, my grandmother walked home slowly.

The most pain is not the pain which leaves scars on the skin; it is the pain that leaves scars on the heart. The kindness of a human is always the greatest treasure in this life. Every time I am in trouble, I remind myself of this story and feel stronger.

Written by: Hieu Nguyen
ESOL Level 6
My Living Room

What’s your favorite room in your house? Everyone has a room in their home where they feel comfortable. I would like to go back in my memories and remember my favorite place in my house. It wasn't a common place because it was the perfect place to rest, study and spend some quality time with the family. I’m talking about the living room in my house in Mexico.

In the left corner of the living room we had a big TV and behind the TV, there were our family pictures. My family and I used to watch our favorite TV show after dinner. This TV was on all day. My mom got up early, so although she wasn’t seeing it; she had to listen to the news. People who came home loved those pictures behind the TV. We were cute little kids making funny faces.

In the center of the living room, an old couch and a beautiful red carpet on the floor decorated the room. This couch was very old but good looking. I remember every time my father’s friends visited us they asked about that couch. My father liked to take a nap on the couch while I gave him a massage. The colorful red carpet was my mom’s favorite part of the living room. I could hear her voice saying that it wasn’t a simple carpet. It was from Guatemala made by hand. My mom told us to be careful with her beautiful carpet, so we had to stay away from it if our shoes were dirty.

In the right corner of the living room was my favorite part of my whole house. My desk with my computer and books were there. I remember those long nights doing my homework and studying hard for high school. I had many books about history, and I loved to read them at night while everyone was sleeping. I could read and do homework all night long but my dad was alert and he used to say, “Nina go to sleep” it’s 2 am. Then I knew that it was time to go to bed.

This was my living room in my house in Mexico. I like to remember these beautiful moments that I had there because those were the best moments that I have had in my life. I don’t know if someday I will be in that living room again, but I just learned that in my mind I can be there whenever I want.

Written by: Marylu Robles
ESOL Level 6
An Unforgettable Night of my Childhood

It was a dark night of winter in Abbottabad, Pakistan in 2001. There was no moonlight and the streets were dark. There was complete silence outside. Our house was located last on the street. My big family and I were living in the same house. Because of a certain incident that evening, I have never trusted any strangers. I am always afraid that one day, they may hurt you.

That night from my uncle’s room, I heard very bad yelling and the sound of outsiders. It was 8 p.m. and everyone in the family was sitting in their rooms. A group of robbers came to our house. One of the robbers climbed on the wall and opened the door for all the others. They entered the house and spread out. Except for three, all of the others covered their faces with black scarves. Those three were standing in front of the garage door. One among the three was a former driver of my uncle. He was the master mind of the robbery. He wanted to get revenge against my uncle because he had fired him from his job.

First, they entered my uncle’s room. When he saw them, he started yelling for help. We all heard his cries and came out from our rooms. We saw that two robbers were standing outside of the room. They pushed us into the room. They wanted to put all of us into the room. When we entered, the others two robbers were pointing their guns at us and were saying to keep quiet. Suddenly, they went out from the room. Immediately, we ran and closed the door after them. They were trying to push the door to come in, but luckily we had locked the door. My cousin called our relatives who were living in our neighborhood. My aunt took the gun out from the cupboard and gave it to my uncle. He started firing from the window. When the robbers heard the shots fired, they got scared and ran away. After that, when our relatives came to our house, we opened the door and came out of the room.

It was a scary night of my childhood. When I saw the robbers, I started crying. I thought they were going to kill us and would steal everything, but they did not take anything from our house. Their plan was destroyed. From this frightening incident, I learned that we should not hire people we do not know because sometimes they commit crimes.

Written by: Zar pana Wahab
ESOL Level 6
My Family Traditions

My family celebrates several holidays as other families in America; however Christmas is a special date to celebrate and spend quality time with my loved ones. My family has a good tradition during Christmas; some prepare delicious food; others have a family reunion and the majority celebrates at midnight.

There are many kinds of food we cook during Christmas. First of all, in the morning we begin to do a delightful chicken soup which has some vegetables namely potatoes, zucchini and cilantro. Another important thing that women do is make a lot of tortillas. During this time we make everything for the tamales. For example, we make mole with tomatoes, onions, garlic, pepper, etc. In the afternoon, we start making tamales which can be corn, potatoes or rice. We wrap up the tamales with banana leaves and foil. We make one hundred tamales, so we have to use a big pot. Also we prepare enjoyable hot juice which has pineapple, apple, papaya, grapes, plums, etc. or other people prefer to drink hot chocolate.

Christmas is a good time for family reunions. First of all, in the morning we gather together and get ready for the night. In the meantime we talk about how the family is going. Sometimes we remember relatives or friends that have passed on and talk about funny stories and things we treasure about them. We try to remember everybody in the family. But at the same time we spend time talking about good things like the children’s success in college or we talk about the goals for the future. When it is almost 6:00 pm, all the family goes to church and prays for the well-being of the family. After that, we are ready to get the dinner, and then everybody enjoys the delicious tamales and hot juice.

Although we are very sleepy, my family members stay awake until midnight as a tradition. The entire family celebrates the birth of Jesus by giving many hugs and by lighting fireworks. But after that, all the family gets together and prays around the Christmas tree. Then everyone opens the gifts and surprise themselves with their presents. When it is almost 1:00 am, the second round of tamales starts.

The combination of all these traditions makes me happy to have my family. Getting together as a family is the most important thing for Christmas because we enjoy preparing food, and we enjoy the conversations and everybody's friendship. I would like to continue with these traditions in the future and I am going to show my daughter everything.

Written by: Ana Ramos
ESOL Level 6
Baby Steps

America is the dream land to my family and me. In August 2012, we came from Iraq to the United States as a refugee. It took a long time to get here. We changed airplanes four times, we stopped at three airports and we stayed one night in New York. It was hard for me to change the culture that I used to live in since I was born. I encountered different stages of cultural shock such as excitement, withdrawal, adjustment and enthusiasm.

The first stage, which is the excitement stage, was wonderful, but it did not last for a long time. The weather in this area is very beautiful. It’s hot in the day and there is often a breeze during the night. In the summer, sometimes it rains at night. This rain keeps Oregon green.

When I was in the car on the way to our new apartment, I saw the forest and I was amazed because this is the first time I saw and walked inside the forest. Also, something else made me excited at the United States which is that there were huge stores that a person can shop at. For example, the first night I came to Oregon, I went to Target, and I was amazed by the size of the store and the items they sell in all the departments, such as home appliances, electronics apparel and home furniture.

Then I bought plates and tab lamp.

After the first week of excitement had gone, the second stage, the withdrawal began. The first barrier was the language because English isn’t my mother language. I couldn’t understand people when they talked to me, and I didn’t know how to respond. As a result, I found difficulty in my communication with people. Also, being away from my sisters and relatives was too hard for me to handle. I miss them so much. In addition, I didn’t have neighbors to visit or talk to at that time. In contrast, in my country, I used to visit my neighbors and my relatives, and spend good time in weekend or religious holidays. Furthermore, I missed our traditional food. Iraqi food is very delicious cuisine.

Then I entered the third stage, I felt isolated from the outside world, so I decided to change my life to keep communicating with people. I went to the community college and registered for English classes. I started at level two, and now I am in level seven writing and I’m doing well. I have learned how to write an essay, even though I have some mistakes and my teacher taught me how to correct them. I wish to continue all the English classes and get good grades because of my improvement in the language. I can go to the stores by myself, and I can talk with American
people. For instance, when I go to the clinic, I can talk with the doctor and understand what he/she is saying without someone translating to me.

The last stage is the enthusiasm. After two and a half years, I found a job in the Iraqi society organization. I am working as a volunteer. I am happy in this job because I help people and I teach how to solve their problems, such as filling the government applications or banking transactions, how to finding jobs, and how to paying the bills online. Every Sunday we have meetings with Iraqi people, we talk about the life in the U.S. and how to overcome all the barriers.

In conclusion, the four stages of adapting in a new life and new culture are not easy for most people. It’s like a baby when he or she takes their first steps. Yet all people have the power to move forward in their life and acclimate. I faced difficulties and made the decision to overcome them.

Written by: Lubna Alkattan
ESOL Level 7

Two Hares Caged in Cram School Education

It is difficult, maybe impossible, to count how many cram schools there are in Korea but easy to imagine that Korean students go to cram school before or after school. According to the research surveyed by the National Statistical Office, last year Korean high school students spent ten hours in a cram school every week and two hundred forty dollars for a cram school education every month. The time for a private education is not surprising me at all because it is comparable with what it was twenty years ago when I was in high school. I was, however, surprised at the rates of household spending for private education costs. Despite government efforts to reduce it, it consistently goes up. Why can’t people turn their face away from a cram school education? There is the case for and also against. In order to choose which is right, we need to know both sides, the pros and cons, of cram schools.

The first advantage of a cram school education is providing the opportunity of prerequisite and remedial learning. There isn’t anyone who wants to get left behind the others. But all students don’t equally have the proper learning ability. A number of parents and students look for cram schools due to this reason. They can learn ahead of the others and make up for what they lack at public schools. The second advantage is providing a customized education suited to the personal abilities
and interests of each student. There is a limit as to what public schools can do this because the purpose of a public education is universality rather than individuality. Public schools must focus on an education in the middle level so the quality of a public education can’t satisfy all of the demands of all students. In contrast, cram schools focus on individual demand. Cram schools provide education on diverse levels and on the particular purpose so that students can optionally take a class. The next is function as a care institution. This doesn’t mean a day-care center for children. Parents wish to make sure that students are controlled over by a cram school’s instructor when parents are not together with them. A cram school’s instructor is another teacher after school and another parent outside the home. They can give students a definite sense of purpose toward learning.

Parents who are against a cram school education say private education costs are exorbitant. They say these expensive costs encourage discrimination of opportunity of an education. For instance, participation rates of a private education have decreased for the past decade while spending for private education costs has been increasing each year. It is being actualized that poverty gets passed on to the next generation. The second disadvantage of a cram school education is increasing students’ pressure caused by excessive competition. They are under extreme pressure to enter good universities. Cram schools push students into this competition. The last is deprivation of self-realization. The primary object of an education is not success but process to reach self-realization which is the ultimate goal of life. However, many students consider success the first because most cram schools focus on achieving good grades and some teach so. They don’t learn life values from cram schools. The reason that students who entered good universities suffer for losing life’s goal is due to miseducation about life values in cram schools.

Where do you stand on cram school education? As you know, everything has its pros and cons. It means you can’t eat your cake and have it too. There is a saying in my country, “it is difficult to chase two hares at once.” After all, an education system is not changed in an instant.

Written by: Inhwan Park
ESOL Level 7 Writing
Follow the Dream

America is a free country that is also the center of most of the best technology in the world. Many people from different countries have a dream to live in the United States. Most of them are from undeveloped countries. Why do people want to come to the United States? There are many causes of immigration to the United States.

One major cause of immigration is that people want a better life. If people are born into a third world country, it will be difficult for them to have a successful life in the future. In fact, in undeveloped countries, many people wish that they could escape from their poverty to a better place. For them, America is a unique place that represents a variety of greater opportunities in the world which they are looking for. Steve Farkas (2003, MPI, Making the U.S Home) points out that 80 percent of people all over the world would come to the U.S if they had a chance. In addition, they think life in America is the same as in movies or on the television.

Another leading cause of immigration is that people want a better way of life with freedom. Indeed, they want to run away from oppressive politics, wars, and religions to a better place. America is known for freedom. Living in the U.S is the greatest thing most individuals could ever dream of. Unlike many
countries, they might do whatever they want as long as it is within the law. Even if they want to practice their religion, they have the right to do so. There is virtually no oppression by a dominant group in the U.S. As a result, immigrants believe that America is the land of their dreams, with freedom of choice, beliefs, cultures, and traditions.

Education and employment, which open opportunities, are the underlying cause of immigration. The United States of America Job Organization (2009-2015) describes that many people in the world look at America like the Promised Land, with “milk and honey”. As a matter of fact, America is the best place for studying English as well. According to David Walked, in 1997, there were approximately half a million international students in the U.S. If someone with education from the U.S, he/she will have a good chance to get great jobs even in different countries. In addition, working in the U.S has better pay then other countries. That is the reason why many people come to America, searching for the good benefits of employment opportunities and more money. Therefore, they can support their family in their home countries.

America is always a dream for people who live in third world countries. People make different in order to make their dreams come true. Whatever the reason for immigration to the U.S, immigrants want to live in freedom, without fear, without fighting, and they hope for a better future.

Written by: Anh Barton
ESOL Level 7
Working While in High School

There have been many arguments about the effect of jobs while in high school. It is not easy to be an excellent student as well as a good worker. Those students who work after school would be tired enough to handle their job in a good manner. However, students in almost all around the world work and study to handle some of their expenses. Working varies from country to country. In some poor countries, students have to work almost full time, so they quit school. However, in industrial countries, working after school is not necessarily to handle the family’s expenses but to spend it for their own sake. To investigate the effects of working in education and a student’s future life, it is important to examine the advantages and disadvantages of working to see if students strengthen their skills or it gives them more stress.

Studies show that students who work are more confident and able to manage their time more effectively than students who are not employed. Working a part-time job could have a positive effect on a high school job. Students can realize their potential when working. They would learn responsibility and time management. If the student shows up late for work or doesn’t show up at all, someone is probably going to get mad at him. The teens might get yelled at. They might even get fired. Their parents might forgive them, but the company they work for will always remember. Working teaches teens that they are accountable to somebody and that there are consequences to not performing. And during the time the students are at work, they will be forced to complete tasks on time. In most part-time jobs, a worker is responsible for serving the public or producing a product. A teenager has to successfully train and understand how the company works. A manager supervises some aspects of the job, but no one is by the student’s side every moment to check job performance. The student has a set of work schedules to adhere to either after school or on weekends. The teen has to have the motivation to be present at work, even if the student has to miss fun activities with friends. He will more easily learn to multitask and manage his time simply because there is no other option.

Learning to manage money is a lesson that is better to learn early in life, rather than later. This may be a teenager’s first time making money and being responsible for it. If the student is working to save money for a goal, the teen should try to save the most part of the money while only spending a small amount so the student will not feel deprived. One of the greatest benefits of teenagers having jobs is that they learn to manage money and know the value of it. This is something that many children start learning when they
get an allowance because they need to save up for items that they want, but an allowance rarely provides the same amount of money as a job, nor does it require the same level of work. Having a job teaches teenagers that to earn money, they need to do hard work, such as cleaning toilets or tables, so they are more likely to be responsible with the money they get and to spend it on items they really want or need. As they earn larger amounts of money, they will also learn to spend it wisely, and even to save a portion of it for college and their future.

Although children often start to learn to work with others in school and sports, a job can further teenagers’ abilities to work as a team. In most jobs it is necessary for teens to work with others because most of the places that hire them, such as grocery stores and fast-food restaurants, are team environments. The work that they do will involve working around or with other people, including customers and coworkers. Employers expect teenage employees to have a positive attitude and to get along with others. Through jobs, teenagers learn to deal with all types of people, a skill which will help them in school and in their future careers.

On the other hand, experts agree that students who work more than 15 to 20 hours per week often experience decreased school success, which can lead to dropping out entirely. Working long hours can also limit opportunity to build friendships and explore interests that enhance intellectual and emotional development. Some teens who work after school may experience a drop in their grades because school ceases to be a priority. After school, they go straight to work. When they get home, they may not feel like doing their homework. In addition, teens who work after school go to bed later and may have trouble getting up on time for school. This may result in being late to class. Teens who work often fail to exercise and eat a well-balanced meal, which can affect their ability to stay alert in class.

A job can take up so much time that there is no time for fun. Spending time with family is crucial for teenagers. They are at the stage of life where they face pressure from many outside influences. Spending time with family helps the teenager maintain family values and provides them with a sense of worth that cannot be found outside the family. Teenagers also need time to spend with their friends. Lack of time spent with family and friends can result in stress that will negatively affect other areas of the teenager’s life.

There is always a risk of facing some unexpected issues while teens are dealing with older people. Teenagers who work after school often work with people who are older than they are. Some of their coworkers may smoke cigarettes, drink alcohol or use illegal drugs. They may influence the teenager to participate in these activities. Supervisors on the job do not provide the same level of supervision the teen receives at home. This increases the likelihood for indulgence.
Substance abuse is common among teenagers, and parents should discuss the risks before consenting to an after-school job.

Having a job may add stress in teenage life. Some students cannot handle to balance the stress of working after school and doing school work. Others work because they are in real need, and others are forced to work by their parents in order to learn responsibility. Some want to save up for a trip with their friends in senior year, or to have freedom to buy whatever they want. Whatever the case may be, working can be a positive or negative aspect to teenage life.
A Blank Paper

A blank white printer paper was handed to me with an inexpensive black pen by my friend “Write your name and sign on it right now” he said. At first, I would not do it because it was kind of a weird request.” Just do it, and you will understand soon” he said. Then I realized that he had just started attending a course in personality analysis through handwriting. However, there is more than one theory to classify people’s personalities, and one of them is the theory of Multiple Intelligences by Howard Gardner, which has nine categories. Two of the nine intelligences are linguistic intelligence and existential Intelligence which are defined based on people’s skills and abilities.

First, linguistic intelligence is defined as the ability to use the words efficiently and efficaciously to achieve goals and explain concepts whether it is written or spoken language. We can classify people who have this intelligence by looking at several skills they might be good at like reading, playing word games, making up stories, and understanding the link between words and their deep meaning. These people are assumed, based on their personality type, to succeed in plenty of roles such as writers, lawyers, journalists, speakers, trainers, copy-writers, teachers, poets, editors, linguists, translators, PR consultants, media consultants, TV and radio presenters, and voice-over artistes (www.businessballs.com).

It is easy to notice a person who has linguistic intelligence. My oldest brother has it, and I think that he was born with it because my mother said that he started talking before his peers did, and he was a straight A student in language classes according to his Arabic class teachers. In addition, he has been improving this intelligence while he grows up. Now he works for Aramco (Arabian American Oil Company) in the public relations department, and he gives out speeches for the company. Recently, he started writing for pleasure, which proves the Intelligence he has.

Secondly, existential Intelligence is known as the ability to be insightful of, wonder about, and make up or pry out questions about life and human existence. People with this intelligence have the courage to wonder about questions that refer to the life’s deep meaning, or consider questions such as Why am I here?, Why are we here?, Why are we born, Why do we die, What is consciousness, or How did we get here? (www.buildfaith.org). These people are good at several jobs, for example, research and creative philosophy.

This kind of intelligence cannot easily be known at the first meeting because it requires knowing of a person closely to notice if they have it or not. However, a close friend of mine has it. I used to spend most of my time with him when I was in Saudi Arabia, and I still contact him while I am in the United States. He used to discuss with me about what he conceptualized about life and human existence. For example, once he came
up with a question about how long humans will be on the Earth, and whether plants have a spirit.

In conclusion, Howard’s Multiple Intelligences Theory is based on several standards which are people’s skills and aptitudes. Furthermore, some of the intelligences can be gained by practice, and some cannot be gained because people are born with them. That reminds me of an Arabic proverb which is “Everyone is guided to what he/she is created for”.

Written by: Asem Alafaleq
ESOL Level 8

**Getting More Money or Getting Love**

“Stop playing games, Thinh. Go brush your teeth and get ready to sleep.” “But mom, I am just about to reach level 69. Let me complete level 70 to get a new set of armor. I will sleep right after that.” This is one part of the daily conversations between my aunt and her son, a nine-year-old boy named Thinh. My aunt usually complains about her son using technological devices too much every day. Besides school time, he mostly spends his time in front of the screen in his room. This problem occurs in a lot of American families today. The *Telegraph* reports that some youngsters had been spending up to 10 hours a day on electronic devices during 2010. The researchers point out that children devoted an average of seven and a half hours using social entertainment during a typical day (“Children Spend 7 Hours 38 Mins a Day Online”). If this amount of time, plus sleep and school, is calculated, a person might see how much time children spend on other activities: around one or two hours.

Technology development is one of the main causes of kids spending too much time on electronic devices. For decades, a single American household had only one or two electronic devices. Now each person has at least one. Some children have probably been using technology since they were one year old. Furthermore, it is obvious that smart devices are very convenient for people today as they can do nearly anything on them. On the other hand, overworked, busy schedules, and a high living standard means parents are unable to have free time for their families. They do not have a lot of time to play with their kids. The kids do not know what they should do at home in their free time as they cannot go out by themselves, do not have friends to play with, and worse, they feel neglected. Thus, spending time on devices is the best choice for them to find entertainment. In consequence, family members do not really talk face to face and spend time together. Children seem to be more interested in looking at screens, not playing outside.
and interacting with their parents and peers. However, there are some helpful solutions that parents can try to get their children away from looking at screens.

First of all, the main solution for this problem is parents should spend more time with their kids. Many parents claim that pressure from a responsibility, earning more money to raise a better family, makes them not have enough time to play with their children. It is a wrong idea, since maintaining happiness in families is the most important thing. Nevertheless, parents and children both get benefits from spending quality time together. Kids feel special when their parents spend time doing something with them together, like telling bedtime stories at night, helping kids with assignments, and doing some outdoor family activities, such as picnicking, hiking, and camping. Furthermore, family time is the best way to have emotional bonding within the family. It is obvious that children would prefer to spend time on these activities with their parents than on an inanimate device in their own rooms. However, living in a modern society, dropping working time means the standard of living will go down. Although this is the big limitation to this solution, parents need to think about what they should choose to get benefits in the long term.

Another solution is to try and find alternative activities that compliment children’s personalities or interests. Early age is the best time to explore kids’ interests and skills while developing their brains at the same time. Parents can either teach kids themselves or take them to some private coaches or teachers to develop a different skillset, such as in sports, arts, and music abilities. For instance, my uncle and my aunt, owning a restaurant in San Jose, California, said they did not have time to take their daughter, Vivian, to go out on the weekends because the restaurant was always crowded on these days. They thought it might have been a good idea to take the girl to local community centers rather than leaving her alone at home. Since Vivian was in middle school, my aunt has taken her to the local community church to study the Bible and learn to play piano every Sunday. My aunt also bought a good piano for her to practice every day at home. Now, even though Vivian does not have time to get any lessons or practice regularly, she prefers to play piano when she has free time instead of looking at a screen as her friends do. The limitation to this solution is it might not work well with every child depending on his or her individual interests, skills, and nurturing.
The third solution is to set a time limit on the amount a child can spend on the computer each day. This solution should be done step by step: first, determine how much time is acceptable for a child. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that entertainment “screen time” should be limited to no more than two hours a day (“Kids and Screen Time: What Does the Research Say?”). Second, parents should have a strict rule that makes the kids obey the time limit. Third, set the computer in a family room or somewhere you will be able to supervise the children while they are using it. This way helps parents enforce the rule easily and for children to follow it. Moreover, parents also can see what the children are doing on the computer. One limitation of this solution is parents may make mistakes when they force their children to follow the rules. For example, my friend’s nephew likes to play video games. Instead of restricting the time gradually, his parents decided to not to let him play anymore by hiding his laptop. As a consequence, the boy went around the house crazily to find the laptop. He did not eat or drink anything, yelling and crying until his parents gave it back to him.

Technology is invented to make human lives more convenient and to connect people to people. However, lacking control from parents, children today are isolating themselves from others by spending most of their time on computers. While having a wealth of knowledge from using technology, too much media exposure at a young age can have long-term consequences. Although parents are working hard with the purpose to give the best things to their children, they should think about what thing is more important: having more money or losing the hearts of their children.

Written by: Alice (Nhu Ngo)

ESOL Level 8

A Parent’s Struggle with a Child’s I Pad Addiction

“Their eyes were very good before, but now they have to wear glasses, I wonder if there are any changes in their life,” the eye doctor said after he checked my children’s eyes.”They have used an I Pad for six months,” I replied. My heart was broken and the sense of sadness came over me when I heard these words. Addiction to technology, such as using the I Pad for many hours a day, is a serious problem that parents should find solutions for. It affects their lives and causes many medical problems, such as eye problems. It also causes social problems because children prefer spending time using the I Pad instead of communicating with others. Children are attracted to the I Pad because it is easy to hold and use.
deal with this problem and reduce the effects that the I Pad causes.

First, one of the effective solutions is that parents can hide the I Pad on school days. At the beginning, children may not accept that and start to cry. Parents should not give up and try to explain to them that too much of a good thing can be bad. For example, when I told my children that using the I Pad is not allowed on school days, they started to cry. They did not like my decision and they complained a lot. After that, everything started to be fine because they understood the effects of spending too much time on using it. They have started to play with other children instead of spending their time playing online games. As a result of that, they have started to improve their skills in writing and reading because they have a lot of time. Every day they read stories and like to go to the library to borrow books. This solution was very useful because it changed their personalities and made them be more social. I took them to do the regular exam, six months later, and the doctor told me that their eyes got better. They were very happy when they heard that.

Second, the other important solution is that parents should spend time with their children. When parents hide the I Pads, for sure children start to feel bored. They need something that fills the space that the I Pad left. Parents should be ready for this stage, and they should find appropriate ideas to fill this space. Parents can spend time with their children and pay attention to them. Some parents are busy all the time with their devices or work, so they ignore their children. Parents need to be aware that when children see their parents on devices, they will want that, too. Dr. Rani Gereige, a pediatrician and director of medical education at Miami Children’s Hospital, said" Parents should be role models, turning off the television or cell phones during family times, like meals, and not texting while they are all together.” For example, I created a flexible schedule for my children, and they shared their ideas. I asked them what they may like to have in their daily schedule, actually our schedule because I share with them, and what activities they may like to add to. In this schedule there is time for drawing, doing homework, and playing together. We update the schedule every week to avoid boredom. They like this schedule because they choose what they like to do and this is the important point.
Third, reading is a good way to open our mind and get information that may help to solve our problems. When we read about this issue, we can find stories of other people that may fit our situation or find solutions. Addiction to the I Pad is an issue that a lot of parents complain about, so there are a lot of articles posted by parents who have this problem. Sometimes their solutions do not solve our problem or have limitations that make it inappropriate for some families. For example, I read about a family that realized that their four-year-old son was addicted to the I Pad, so they have started to take their kids to stores to buy expensive toys every week. They do that every week to make their child forget about the I Pad and made him busy with his new toys. This kind of solution did not work for me because it costs a lot of money. On the other hand, I read about a family who posted a solution, and it was very good to follow. Since some children do not believe what we say about something that they are addicted to, they may believe if they read about it by themselves. They made their child, the 7-year-old, read an article about the effects of spending a lot of time on the I Pad. Their child was sad because he had to stop playing games which he most liked for many hours. I used this solution and it was useful. This solution has limitations because it is only for the children who know how to read.

Some parents found that the I Pad is a good baby sitter. The home becomes more quiet and children less interested in reading stories or playing outside. They replace their baby sitter with the I Pad. Some parents like that, but some of them start to worry, like me, about these changes. Gradually, they start to realize that their children’s childhood is stolen. They notice the changes in their personalities and health. If parents start to find solutions to this problem, they can control it. Everything needs time and patience to be done. Children need to feel their parents support them all the time. They do not need this device to distance them from their parents. Anything that steals childhood deserves a solution. The American Academy of Pediatrics (2011) stated, “If parents choose to engage their young children with electronic media of any kind, they should have clear, concrete strategies to manage it”.

Written by: Manal Saeed
ESOL Level 8 Writing