
ELI STUDENT VOICES

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Note from the editor: Let's begin this edition of Student Voices with a message from our departing J.C. Casagrande Peace Scholarship winner.

My Life at the ELI

Takahiro Shinichi (Tio)

R/W 60

There are many languages in the world. Among these many languages, English is one of the most used languages in the business world, and English has also become the most usual language as a communication tool in the world. So, we are studying English now.

My purpose of studying English was to enroll in a graduate school in sports management. I have studied 3 semesters to achieve my purpose since the summer semester of 2004. Living in the US was the first time for me. I did not play with English well. My first trial was at Subway, which is a sandwich chain. When I went to Subway to eat a sandwich, I panicked in front of the counter because I did not understand anything the employee said to me. I just said, "Hello, how are you?" After greeting, I just repeated, "Yes, please, yes, please." As a consequence, it was a very shocking experience for me. How can I speak fluently and understand English very well? That is one of the most popular questions at the ELI. I often have asked the same question to teachers. During one year, I have learned a lot of things in Gainesville. I really want to write about my experience as a message to the future students at the ELI.

First of all, I really tried to use English even if I could not understand very well. English is not only an academic language for English speaker, but also the most common communication tool among us. Using English helps improve our level. I attempted to participate in the ELI weekend activities and the Coffee Talk. I especially have participated in the coffee talk almost every week. Through the classwork and several activities, we can know each other. As a result, now I have lots of friends all over the world. It is a very exciting opportunity and an unforgettable memory. It helps us to speak in English. The difficulty to speak English is to be afraid of making mistakes. We are international students and are non-native English speakers; therefore we are studying English at the ELI. Do not be shy and afraid to make mistakes. Making mistakes gives us good opportunities to improve our level.

Second, listening is usually the most difficult part for me. Even though I have lived here almost one year, I am still not able to listen perfectly. However, my listening has been improved in the last 3 months. During one year, I have watched almost 100 movies and the sitcom "FRIENDS". I actually

watched every movie twice. First is without subtitles, and second is with subtitles if I did not understand. This is a very useful way. For this reason, now I understand every movie more than 80 % without subtitles. Watching "FRIENDS" is to help me to learn normal conversation in the US. I learned many slang expression, idioms, and pronunciation. It is a good training material for communication in English.

Third, do you know how much we spend money at the ELI? It is 40 bucks a day!! If you skip all classes a day, you lose 40 bucks. It is too expensive, isn't it? Skipping classes is not only losing your money, but also valuable opportunity. I have tried to be on time every class because I do not want to lose anything. I have learned many new things. In addition, I asked some teachers to teach me some special skill, for instance, the TOEFL's grammar and its essay. I have taken CBT TOEFL including the ELI TOEFL. The first exam embarrassed me. I was shocked. However, by doing practice with them, my score has risen bit by bit. After 6 months, I got my target score, which is required by the graduate school. Thanks to their kind help, my TOEFL score has gotten better each time.

Finally, I have tried to get everything since the summer semester 2004 as much as I can. During one year, my English level has moved up drastically, but it is not enough. There is no goal to study English because English is "stupid." It is true; English is confusing! On the other hand, English is a very useful language for us. Even though we speak English only a little bit, we may be able to get new friends. It is amazing. I swear The ELI helps you efficiently. As a consequence, I was nominated as a scholarship candidate, and then I got a scholarship for the spring semester in 2005. In addition, I received admission from several graduate schools in sports management. My second stage in the US will start soon.

Thank you everybody, and let's meet someday again.

A Most Remarkable Woman (1st Place)

Brisa Rubi Martinez Llanos

R/W 40

Prostitution is defined as the sale of sexual services for money. The majority of the people think that prostitution should be eliminated, but some others do not care. In my opinion, it is hard to make a decision because I knew a prostitute many years ago. Her name? Maybe it does not matter. She was like many poor women of my country with a difficult life, many children, and no education. There are a lot of reasons why I admire her and why I think she is an extraordinary person. More than any other person I have known she tried to help the people around

her, educate her children in the best way she could, and be a grateful person.

First, she tried to help other people in many ways, even if she were not really able to do that. After all, she did not care if she had a lot of money or if she had little. For example, when she saw some children without food, she shared her children's food even if this was not much. Also she always had a spirit of solidarity. She was interested in her family and the poor community. She did many things, like to put a nursery for children in her house because she knew that some of the other prostitutes did not take care of their children. She taught me that you do not need to have a lot to help other people just . . . be willing.

Second, she tried to give her four children the best education possible. For this purpose, she worked a lot, though this meant more filth. She tried to give them the best example that she could give in order to make sure that they did not notice what kind of work she did. Unfortunately, although they knew the truth when they were young; she still raised up her children to be honest and fair. These values helped them later to appreciate the effort of their mother and to be good students.

Another reason I admire her is that she was always a happy person, and she led her life with dignity, even if that life was full of nastiness. In fact, she did not have friends, and she could not tell anybody her sadness or her problems, but she still kept quiet and she seemed happy. She understood her situation and tried to enjoy the good little things that she had.

There are a lot of prostitutes in the world. Some of them do the work for pleasure, others perhaps for a need. But who knows exactly the causes that push them in this way? So, who can judge a woman like her? She was a poor woman, without much education, she was without skills but had a big heart and a huge gratitude toward the good things in life that she did have. For these reasons, I still admire and think she was a remarkable person.

Eating Dog Meat, It Is Right (2nd Place)

Brian Lee

R/W 60

Recently the Korean government announced that Korea was planning to legalize the sale of dog meat by setting standards for hygienic slaughter and processing called "The countermeasure about dogs and other animals' protection and hygienic processing." And also, the *Korea Herald* reported, "The Ministry of Agriculture plans to set up enforcement squads to monitor cruel slaughter practices and that the government is currently looking into revising the country's animal protection law." Those Korean government's acts seem that they are trying to protect animals' right. Many organizations for animal rights from the entire world, however, are strongly protesting against this Korean government's policy. For example, according to PETA, People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, the largest animal rights organization in the world, "If the sanitary and environmental problems associated with the consumption of dog meat are so dire as to require governmental concern, efforts should be directed at

banning dog meat; not legalizing it." In other words, they want not to hygienically advance the way of slaughter but to completely quit eating dog meat. However, in this point, I am strongly against such their insistences and thinking for two main reasons: The dog meat is just the same food as other animals that people usually eat like pigs, cows, horses, chickens, and others; furthermore, eating dog meat is a kind of custom begun a long time ago by their ancestors.

First of all, it is suitable to eat dog meat because of the idea that it is just a kind of meat people usually eat. There is no doubt that in normal life, most people's favorite materials of food are cows, pigs, and chickens. People have even developed a variety of kinds of ways to cook them according to their taste. Why are they complaining and pointing their fingers only to people who eat dog meat while eating those poor animals, such as pigs? Don't they consider other animals' rights to live without being killed as humans' prey? According to article named "The Sanitizing of Violence in Our Society" from the web site, *all-creatures.org*, "At the same time we may be having these feelings towards our own companion animals, we may also be chewing away upon the flesh of another, just as lovable an animal, such as a chicken, a pig, or a cow." Likewise, It is clear that insistence on stopping only eating dog meat is egoism, which should be cured for social development.

Next, there is no qualification for people from other cultural areas to blame people who are from the cultural area where eating dog meat is right because it is one of their own customs since long ago. No, it becomes rather an important culture than a custom now. In that eating dog meat is not extreme relativism, which we should ostracize and expel such as a cannibal race's culture, there is no right to quit and suspend it. Todd A. Brian, a professor of the English Language Institute at the University of Florida, said, "Each person has several circles in his or her mind; there is the smallest circle in the middle of circles, and others are located while covering smaller circles like a whirlpool. The smallest circle's inside is the most important thing each person thinks, and the biggest circle's outside is reverse." Likewise, some people who hate to eat dog meat could put dog meat inside circle as the same that they put their family inside, whereas others who eat dog meat could put it outside the circle the same as putting cows outside. What I want to say is that people should understand cultural relativism among countries, and shouldn't blame it.

On the other hand, some people object to eating dog meat because dogs are one of a few animals that can sympathize with humans. Those people say dogs are loyal and honest. We, however, have to know that these dogs' characteristics are not attachment and devotion toward humans but just an instinct called "the pack instinct" they have inherited from their wild ancestors. ACT Companion Dog Club explains dog's pack instinct, comparing to wolf's-the club assumes that the wild ancestors of the dog are thought to be very similar to the modern wolf and it can understand our dogs better by studying the instincts of the wolf-"Within wolves' group a 'packing order' is established with a 'pack leader' (alpha dog). And most are happy to follow a leader." As far as a dog in a family is concerned, this explanation means that the dog in the family recognizes family members, especially a man, as a leader in that

group. We can also find such dog's instinct in our normal life. For example, suppose that husband and wife were fighting near their pet dog. In this case, we can see that the dog is barking at only the wife. It is because the dog recognizes the husband as a leader. In this sense, I want to say that don't misunderstand that dogs are sympathizing with you humans. They are just being faithful to their instinct.

In short, eating dog meat is right and reasonable for two reasons I have referred to above: first, it is the same meat as pigs, cows, and others. Second, it is a cultural part that should be respected. Some people, on the other hand, may still disagree with eating dog meat on the idea of dogs are their friends and family members. I can understand them. Who can butcher and eat a friend and a family member? However, they also have to understand the people who eat dogs. It is their life way and their culture. One Korean minister said in a social gathering, "Do you want to live 100 points (100 points mean perfect life in Korea) of life? It is easy. Just suppose that alphabet A is 1 point, B is 2 points, ... , and Z is 26 points. 'Love' is 54 points. Just loving someone is not 100 points of life. How about 'hard work'? It is 98 points. Also, just working hard is not perfect. 'Money' also gets 72 points. Therefore, what is perfect life? It is just 'Attitude'." As he said, how about changing your attitude about people who eat dog meat? Eating dog meat could be cruel to people who love dogs; on the other hand, they have to understand there are other people to whom it is just culture.

Differences Between Men and Women

Sara Alomair

R/W 60

It is very weird that those psychologists always try to distinguish the differences between men and women. And it is really funny that they think that they are about to discover new facts. They say that men want to be independent and women want to be close and secured. Men talk about sports, ladies and cars but women talk about house, children and money. Girls play with dolls and boys play with cars. I think these facts are so ridiculous!

There are no differences in interests or thoughts between men and women. It's difference in levels! Yes I think that GOD created men first then he had a better idea! I'm not saying that I wish the life is a world of females. No of course! How can queens be without their soldiers and slaves? What I'm trying to say is that men were born to serve the women and keep them safe. It is the nature that makes boys love cars to be drivers, play armies to be protector and kill animals to prove that they are with no heart naturally. But girls instead care about animals, how tender we are! And play inside the house with dolls and take care of our selves. GOD is preparing us to be queens!

You still can't believe me! Come with me to the mall and see how women dress and how men dress! Women love to wear skirts, makeup and care about themselves, but men are so messy that they don't give them selves a min. to take a look at the mirror! Even if they try to dress well we call them gays. Yes, that's true that 60% of men are gays and only 10% of

women are gays. That drives us to a fact that being a woman is better than being a man.

Also if you watch the both sexes behavior you will find a great different in levels. Men get angry often more than women. Lose their patience faster than women. If you watch the male in all ages you will see an annoying boy, a selfish teenager, a cheater husband and a bothering old man who complains all the time. But if you look at a female you are just finding the cure of a sour eye. The cute little girl who makes you feel that you're sank in the sea of love, the passionate teenager who will please you with her spoiled spirit and the woman who can guide the world behind her with her attractive smile. Do you think we women lose our attraction when we get older? No, of course, when we're grandmothers, we have these beautiful inner feelings that make people respect us and find us beautiful! Yes, haven't you heard about the inner beauty that reflects on our outlook. This is what we are: the most beautiful thing that GOD ever created.

So finally and before I get into the end, I would like to ask those men to go back to their work in serving women, and you women I wish you the good luck in life and to the better.

Choosing a Major

Viviane Salomone

R/W 40

For many students it is not so easy for them to choose their major. Sometimes, it is even necessary for them to change their major after they have already started. On the other hand, some students do not have any trouble choosing and feeling secure with their choices. And you? Why did you choose your major? What aspects did you consider in making your choice? In my case, it was a hard process to define my major because after I started doing one, two years later I realized my professional vocation. So, I had to go back to the University to apply for another major. Therefore, when I finally made my choice, I had considered three important points: my real interest, the future opportunities, and the potential for financial success.

Regardless of major, it is important to consider your real interest because maybe you are going to work your whole life in it. For you to discover your real interest, you can follow some steps. For example, you can ask some questions of those who have already completed the major you intend to do. With this information, you will be more prepared to compare options. In addition, you can visit universities and talk to teachers who teach the subjects you are interested in. Yet another step is to talk to students and ask them if they are enjoying the courses. There are also many books in libraries and other information about careers that can be useful to help you choose the best major. And if you still are not confident to make your choice, you can talk with a counselor to develop your ideas. Sometimes it is good to talk to somebody neutral who listens to you without judgment. Even though choosing my major was not an easy process, I considered these methods useful in discovering my real interest.

Another point to consider when choosing a career is to analyze its future opportunities. You need to be aware of these opportunities so you do not become frustrated with your major. The best way for you to get up-to-date information about the career is by reading journals, business magazines, and talking with people already working in it. In business magazines there are rankings with other professions and ads for available opportunities to work in the field. Also, there are some programs you can work in during the summer while you are studying. This is excellent experience because you can work before you finish your studies, and if the employer likes your business profile, you may get the job permanently. Looking for future opportunities is a hard process, but if you do this early in your schooling, probably you will have more success in your choice.

Financial success is another significant fact to be considered. Many people choose a major but forget to analyze their potential to earn money by it. It can be a big risk. For example, an academic career is a profession with many advantages, such as flexible schedule, summer vacation, school holidays, but it is not a profession you can earn a lot of money in as when working in financial marketing in New York. Every major has its financial advantages and disadvantages, so you need to be able to decide how important this is in your life.

Nonetheless, even though it is impossible to know exactly the profession in which you will have the most personal and financial success, these are several points to consider in order to ensure a safer and more mature choice in your career.

My Best Rival

Bum Hong
R/W 60

I was raised by my grand mamma in rural Korea for 3 years. At first I entered an elementary school in Seoul, the capital of Korea, but I had to move to a southern part of Korea because of mom's health. My mom was very sick and my dad had to work, so there was no one to take care of me. At that time my younger brother was studying in my grand mom's house. I used to meet my brother just on vacation. I remember it was my first time to live together with my brother. To a little boy nature was the best toys and playground. After class we went fishing or collecting insects. Furthermore the fact made me happy was that I could do everything with my brother. I am three years older than him, and in childhood three years have a great difference. So I was superior to him in every field. I was taller and stronger than him, and I could run and swim faster than him, and I got a better grade in school. After sunset we used to play Chinese chess together. It was an exciting game playing each with 16 pieces of chessman. Of course, I had always beat him and I sometimes got a handicap by playing without 1~2 chessmen. I can't exactly remember the day but my brother won the game for the first time. At first I thought I made some mistakes, so I offered one more game to him, but I lost again. I was a little nervous about that because I had won and I was supposed to win every game. It was a great dishonor to me to be beaten by a little brother. However, it was only a

beginning for 'Passion of big brother'. My brother got to grow faster than me and he won the first in his school. After the chess game, he surpassed me in every field. Now, he has become a big guy, and he is 4 inches taller than I. Whenever we play basketball, it has been tragedy to me. Our rivalry is continuing until now, but I love him as a good competitor and my 'little' brother.

Why Going to the Theater for Movies Is Better Than Watching at Home

Erman Yasar
R/W 41

I am a movie fanatic. I always go to the theater to watch movies in my free time, and I always follow the latest news about actors, actresses, new movies and Hollywood. I especially prefer horror and comedy movies to the others but, actually, I like all of them. Watching movies in theaters is the best way to enjoy them because of the atmosphere. You can see other people's reactions to a movie, and you can share the excitement, sadness, horror and fun together. This is why I strongly disagree with the author of the essay we read in class titled "The Hazards of Moviegoing."

First of all, watching movies on TV has some disadvantages. For example, when I watch a movie on TV, I can't concentrate as well as I do in the theater. This is because sometimes the doorbell rings, or sometimes other people in the house make noise. Also, TV channels have lots of commercials so you lose your concentration on a movie when you try to watch it on TV.

On the other hand, in the theater you have the opportunity to see the reactions of other people. You can feel the atmosphere more and so you can focus more. Also, there are no neighbors, no commercials, no phones, and no noise, so it is a good way to keep your concentration and enjoy the movie.

As a result, I can guarantee that you can have a better time in the theater, rather than watching movies on TV. You can enter the magic world of stars, and you can feel like acting in a movie just like the actors. Finally, you can watch new movies earlier than people who just watch movies on TV.

English and Korean: A Little Similar, but Rather Different Languages

Jang Hoon Park
R/W 50

When many Korean students learn English as their second language, it seems to be very difficult. Because they have already learned and used their native language, it must be hard to learn another one. Are Korean and English totally different languages, then? Are there any similarities between them? What is the reason of the differences? In general, most differences are caused by using their own alphabets - Hangul and English. On the contrary, in the case of Spanish, it has many similarities with English, because they use almost the

same alphabet. Language reflects history of its native country. Korean and American have different ancestors and different histories, so Korean and English became different languages in many aspects: writing systems, grammar, etc.

The Korean alphabet, Hangul, consists of 10 vowels and 14 consonants. To make one word, it requires three types of sounds: an initial sound, a medial vowel, and a final consonant (the last one is not essential). Especially, a single vowel must be combined with another consonant, and then it becomes meaningful because Korean is a syllabic language. On the contrary, English consists of 5 vowels and 21 consonants. Vowels and consonants have same forces, so one word is made by a linear arrangement of alphabets. Sometimes only one vowel can be used to make a word. It is a difference between these two languages in writing systems, and it makes Korean student hard to study English.

In grammar, many differences can be easily found. First of all, a fundamental structure of a sentence is different: the position of verb. For American, it is natural that a verb is written just behind a subject. For Korean, however, a verb is the element mostly placed in the last of a sentence. By that reason, when people speak in Korean, they must listen to others' sentences carefully and perfectly because verbs take the most important role in most times. In other words, in Korean, people speak their decision at the last part of the sentence. Second, in Korean, honorific words and sensible words are much developed: many honorific expressions of nouns, verbs, even adjectives. In case of sensible words, there are about fifty kinds of different expressions to express yellow tone.

Hangul and English, both are phonetic letters, it can be a similarity between two languages, but they are not totally same. Each vowel and consonant of Hangul has its own sound. In other words, there is only one pronunciation for one alphabet in Korean. In case of English, there are some principals of pronunciation, but there are so many exceptions. For example, 'ch' sounds in 'cheese' and 'Christmas', 'a' sounds in 'rate', 'advice', and 'ant', they are different sounds in spite of same alphabet. It is one of the most difficult parts for some students to learn English because they must memorize a lot of vocabularies how to pronounce.

Fundamentally, American and Korean have their own histories for centuries. Including certain Germanic tribes from the continent in the fifth century A.D., there has been some ethnic groups who lived in the Britain, for example, Norse, Anglo-Norman, etc. So English had been formed naturally, and come under the influences of many other languages like Celtic, Anglo-Saxon, Norman-French, Anglo-Norman. On the other hand, Korean was invented by King Sejong and some scholars in 1443, distributed in 1446. Compared with English, Korean has not much changed because Korea has been a racially homogeneous nation for two thousand years.

By now, it is natural that English and Korean are a little similar, rather different, because of their own ancestors and histories. Though both alphabets are phonetic letters, there are many exceptions. In addition, writing systems and grammar are totally different.

The Causes and Effects of Good Health

Cristina Levi

R/W 41

The most valuable asset that we can possess is good health. No other is as important. Material wealth, fame or power combined cannot equal the value of having and maintaining good health.

Good health does not come automatically. We should constantly work to be in good health and once we have achieved it, we must continue to maintain it. To acquire good health, we must do three things: eat nutritious and healthy foods, exercise regularly and maintain a positive mental attitude.

When we eat nutritious and healthy foods, we give our bodies the right fuel needed to fight illnesses and diseases as well as providing our bodies with energy to perform whatever we need to do each day. Exercising helps to strengthen our bodies and tone our muscles, and burns excessive fat as well as calories. It also helps provide for the release of hormones that help our mental health. Lastly, maintaining a positive attitude helps us to avoid depression, anger and other mental illnesses that can lead to poor health. A positive mental viewpoint gives us a bright outlook on life, a "can do" attitude and a willingness to put our best foot forward.

By using these three "remedies," we can guarantee ourselves better health on a regular basis. If we avoid abusing our bodies by doing things within limits, this helps avoid stress. Exercising too much or not at all, and not resting enough can cause stress in our bodies.

When Benjamin Franklin wrote his now famous saying: "Early to bed, early to rise makes a man healthy wealthy and wise," it basically meant for us to not abuse ourselves. "Going to bed early" means that we get enough rest for our bodies and minds. This helps us to get a good start each day and keeps us healthy. We are thus able to work better and this leads to being prosperous and staying smart.

Although these three factors, eating healthy, exercising regularly and having a positive mental attitude sound easy, they aren't. They require careful thought and the understanding of nutrition and exercise as well as a strong resolve. Yet, the effort is worth the result. A long healthy life is worth its weight in gold.

The Secret of Success in Multicultural Organizations

Jang Hoon Park

R/W 50

Due to progress of transportation and mass media, nowadays, the world is globalizing much faster. It is not difficult to find people who go abroad to study or work. It is a very desirable thing not only for the person concerned because it can be his or her good experience and career, but for the whole group because it helps them achieve more successful result. In the case of the whole group, however, if it does not

consider some policies and practices for multicultural people, it will not succeed in obtaining the synergy effect. The University of Florida English Language Institute (UFELI) is a good model of a multicultural organization that uses this consideration. There are four main policies: a free atmosphere in class, a language assistant system, some after school or weekend activities, and a promise between teachers and students.

Some students come to the UFELI to improve their reading, writing, listening skills or grammar. However, most students want to speak in English fluently before everything else. It is not easy for them to speak in English because they have hardly experienced talking with native speakers in their countries. Therefore, the UFELI tries to make a free atmosphere in class. Teachers come to the class casually dressed, and students can feel comfortable and make conversation without hesitation. Around fifteen students in a class, fewer than in their own country, are also proper for students to speak free in class.

Second, a language assistant system provides valuable aid for students who have much trouble in speaking in English. There are two language assistants in each class of the UFELI. They take half of the Listening/Speaking classes. They are young enough - almost the same age as students - to be friends with students; therefore they can be at once both teachers and friends. Of course, instructors mostly have much more experiences in teaching than language assistants. Sometimes, however, language assistants can teach better than them. They can easily sympathize with the students because they have been students until comparatively lately or are current students, too.

After school or on weekends, UFELI students can join in some activities. On weekdays after school, every day from Monday to Friday, teachers and language assistants prepare different activities. There are some sports activities like playing tennis, soccer, and bowling. Students can make friends from all over the world while they are enjoying the activities and competing with them. Other activities are entertaining activities like coffee talk, cooking, watching movies, and shopping. Students can hang out with friends to chat, to discuss, or sometimes to debate, of course, in English. The entertaining activities are very good opportunity to improve ability of speaking in English.

The most important and recommendable policy of the UFELI is a special promise between teachers and students. At the very beginning of each semester, teachers propose that students always speak in English. Of course, it can be difficult for new students. However, after they become conscious of their goal, studying English, they do their best to speak in English not only in classrooms, but always and everywhere. Teachers, language assistances, and even all the staff in the office try to help students speak in English. They wait until students make a full sentence, and then correct it. In the case of students, they try to take seats with the people who speak a different first language. Also, it is a common thing to make a trip in a group composed of international students rather than the same nationality. Teachers and students, both of them trust each other.

Many organizations could not succeed because of not considering the multicultural facts. It is indispensable for both of employers and employees, or teachers and students. In the

case of the UFELI, teachers and language assistants try to make a free atmosphere and to plan helpful activities for students. In addition, students always have the promise about English in mind and practice it. Good policies and trust between teachers and students made UFELI one of the most popular and best institutes in the U.S. Other multicultural organizations like international companies and schools should be required to learn the UFELI's policies.

Looking Out the Window

Freddy Aguilar

R/W 40

When I wake up early and look out the window, I can see people ready to go to their jobs. Some are walking and talking with each other. Other people are running because they will be late to begin their work. On the corner, you can find all kinds of food vendors ready to begin their labors with customers waiting to buy. Other people are only eating breakfast or drinking a cup of coffee and enjoying another beautiful day. Looking in the other direction, I can see birds flying or hear them singing in trees under a beautiful blue sky. However, the most important thing that I can see is that I am alive, and it is another beautiful day to enjoy life, sometimes difficult, other times easy. All things considered, this is a beautiful life and a beautiful place to live while enjoying the miracles of nature. We as human beings are very blessed to be here. Thank God!

My Parents' Role

Juan Felipe Serna

R/W 40

Since I was a child I have been trying to be a better person each day. My parents have played an important role in my life as a student and as a person by helping me economically - they buy my clothes, food, pay for my tuition, and pay for my living expenses; and spiritually - they teach me moral values and give me advice in order to be a better person. These two factors have helped me become the person I am today.

We are a big family and I admire my parents for raising my brother, my sister and me because we have a lot to learn from each other. They raised my older brother and sister in such way that they would give me a good example, as well as the other younger children in the family such as my cousins. My brother and sister are very responsible; they went to the University and now that they have finished their majors they have professional jobs. Now I am following their example and I am a Civil Engineering student, and I will graduate in one year. We have to thank our parents because they have encouraged us to study so we can be better persons.

Since we were little, my parents have bought many books for us. These have taught us many things, from children "stuff" to science, culture, and many other important things. Two of these books that are important to me are "Cien años de

Soledad (One hundred years alone)” and “La Bruja (The Witch),” both written by the famous Colombian writer Gabriel Garcia Marquez, winner of a Nobel Prize in literature several years ago. These books opened my mind to see life in a different way, and they changed my way of thinking. For example, after reading “Cien años de Soledad”; I realized it is sometimes good to be alone because you can learn new things about yourself. But now that I am studying, my parents buy me books in my major, and this has helped me become a better student and a good reader.

Another thing that I have to thank my parents for is that they have encouraged me to have certain experiences that have taught me about other cultures. For example, I have visited the United States many times on vacations, but when I came here the first time as a child, I was shocked when I went to Disney. Nowadays, I can compare USA’s culture with mine and learn how different we are. But my parents think that the most important thing is to learn about our own country first, so in Colombia we have made many trips around the country. They think it is important to value our own customs and traditions. They have also taken us to museums, and the one I like the most is the “Antioquia’s Museum” located in Medellin. It has a collection of paintings by a local artist named Fernando Botero; now he is the most important oil painter in the world. We also have gone to the Gorgona’s Islands to see the whales and other animals; my parents wanted us to see how beautiful nature can be. So thanks to the different things they have shown us in our country and around the world, we have learned to admire different cultures and nature.

My parents have helped me in every way they can. Thanks to them I am part of a happy and educated family, and we are able to better understand each other. In short, I owe all these positive qualities to the efforts my parents have made to give me economically and spiritually support.

La Feria de la Chinita

Patricia Padron

R/W 60

The most traditional holiday in my city, and maybe in Venezuela, is “La Feria de la Chinita” that translated in English means “The Chinita’s fair”. People celebrate it on November 18th of every year. It’s a holiday because many years ago the Virgin Mary appeared to an old woman, and many people, most of them elderly, thought this was a miracle.

The elderly usually go to the Maracaibo Basilica, which is in the downtown. Young people go out all night until dawn, which is another way to celebrate this important holiday. It is more common that young people go out all night long while others go to pray in the Basilica.

The night of the 18th day of November people gather and go out together to one of the many parties that are organized for that night all over the city. These parties are popular because famous artists perform there; but the main reason why they are popular is because people dance and have fun until dawn.

With that big holiday the Christmas season begins in my city and consequently, in the whole country. It happens because citizens usually “re-decorate” their houses and decorate the Christmas tree. The main avenue of Maracaibo is decorated with many, many lights which make the avenue beautiful and bright in the night time. This holiday brings happiness and pleasure for all the citizens. Sometimes people from other parts of the country travel for spending some days in the city.

Those days, on the radio a specific kind of music is played. It is named “Gaita”. The gaita is the typical music of the city and it was chosen for being played at Christmas as well because the holiday brings Christmas with it.

My Sister

Sara Alomair

R/W 60

My sister is the best person I have ever known, and the tenderest person ever. She has this nice and quiet smile that no one could resist its kindness meanings. I can’t understand how GOD created this perfect human and put the most beautiful things inside her big heart. This person is a school of love or maybe it’s better to say this person is Love itself. My sister taught me how to be good to people even though they never do anything that made them deserve my kindness. She treats everyone as a special person, and she gives each person the love and the care that he needs. My grandmother came once to visit us and she intended to stay for three months. No one loved her or even could stand her because she was so selfish, complaining the whole day and she repeated the stories that she said again and again and again. She was such a boring grandmother. But my sister was so patient and she always listened to her with a big smile on her face. When I asked her: “How can you stand her?” she said confidently: “She’s my grandmother and no matter what, we have to give her that love and that time that she spent her whole life giving to our mother.”

She taught me how to love, care for and respect people. I know she never meant to teach me but her great emotions were so bright that I could see. I used to be a spoiled non-caring girl and had never smiled to a person unless he was a cute guy, until my sister opened my eyes on the importance of people in our life and the need of being friendly to the others. And now as I’m far away from her and missing her I still have in my mind the lessons of life that she taught me before. Now I’m here in the USA giving a great deal of love, care and respect to the others.

The Pressures of Being a Student in a Foreign Country

Juan Serna

R/W 40

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT! Do you fear about living and studying in another country? Are you thinking that it is impossible to live in a foreign country? Do not worry about it. Everybody feels the same when they arrive in a different

country. I am going to help you with some advice about a few aspects that can be problems while living here in the USA. This is based on the experiences from people who study here or in other countries. The pressures of being a student in a foreign country are found principally in three areas: social, economical and emotional.

There are many different cultures around the world, and people in each have their own habits. In the United States, you can find people from all countries. Furthermore, there is a mix between the different cultures making this society the melting pot of the world. You may agree or disagree their ways of doing things. Maybe you do not like their ways of eating, dressing, studying, or whatever. But my advice is that you use the best aspects of each culture and learn from them all. These aspects should not be a problem if you stay here. If you want learn another language, you need know about these aspects of other societies and cultures, and it should not be a pressure on you.

Cost of living is a big problem for an international student learning English in the USA because it is very different from other countries. So, this can cause difficulties if you live here. When you go to buy something and you convert the price to your country's money, you might say "OOHH!!! My God!!!" But if you compare it with how much you can earn when you enter your career, you will see that the cost of learning a different language has its rewards.

The most difficult aspect to living well in a foreign country is the emotional. Because your emotions drive your life and what you want, living far from your family and friends can be very boring and painful, but you have to remember that what you are doing is for your own future; after you return to your country you can live well and see your family and friends whenever you want.

In conclusion, just live your life and do not feel any of these pressures day by day. Learn about other countries and assimilate the good from the new cultures. And never think that it is impossible to live in another country. **YOU ARE STRONG, SO DO NOT FEAR FACING THE WORLD!**

My Arched Window

Juan Serna

R/W 40

My arched window is full of hope and many good things from my past, my present and my future. About my past, if I would be born again, I would want to do the same things that I have done in my past. My present is wonderful – I have my mother, my family, my girlfriend, and I have many ideas about being a civil engineer and a good person. In my future, I see that I will live well because I have been working hard to that. So through my arched window, I can see happiness and a few moments of sadness, but they will all serve to mature my personality and my way of thinking about the world.

People Who Have Influenced My Life

Vanessa Cueva

R/W 60

Even though I believe we learn something from every person we meet in our life, I have to say Jesus and my mother have been the most responsible for the way I'm today.

First of all Jesus, because for me he is my model to follow. I really admire the way he lived and gave his life for all of us. I admire especially the way he loved everyone even though some of these people hurt him, laughed at him, and even killed him. So for these reasons and for others more, I can tell he has made of me a better person, who every day tries to be more like him.

And last but not least, my mother. She is the person here on earth, who more represents the way I want to become. She is a very intelligent, decisive, kind, dedicated, responsible, accurate and restless person. She has made my life a bit easier because she always taught me how to do things the correct way, so I think she has saved me from making a lot of mistakes in my life. I really love the way she takes care of all the things and everyone without saying a word. I only hope one day I can be the great mother, daughter, sister, wife, friend and person she is.

The Best Game in the World

Erman Yasar

R/W 41

Soccer is not just a game for me; it is really much more. For me, soccer is life! I've been going to soccer games since I was 7 years old. When I was a little kid, I knew all the best soccer players in the world. I followed all the championships.

In soccer, you experience victory, passion, pain, and disappointment, so it really is like real life. You can even feel happiness and disappointment both in a couple of minutes. During a 90-minute game, you cannot just sit and watch. You have to feel the excitement, if you're a real soccer fan.

I remember that on my 16th birthday, my team in Turkey, Besiktas, lost to our big rival Galatasaray, and that night I didn't speak to anyone and didn't celebrate my birthday. On the other hand, I also remember two years ago that we won the big game against Galatasaray and took the title! We didn't sleep for two days and everyone celebrated the championship in the streets.

Soccer is just like that: it's not just a game, it's life! I love this game and that's why I think it is the best game in the world!

Dream--One Day I Became an Ant

Kyung Ok Hong

R/W 60

Whenever I think of the time that I dreamed a little bit odd dream, I can't understand why I dreamed like that. With an

election of the class president one day ahead, I thought who would be a president before sleeping. That night, I dreamed an unforgettable dream. I was under the ground. When I looked around me, I discovered everything in there like wall and bottom were covered by soil. While I was thinking where I am, suddenly a lot of ants came into my room. I couldn't believe what happened in front of me. They bowed before me and one of them told me something. To make matters more surprising, I could catch what the ant said. How? It was not for some time that I noticed I was also an ant. I cried out with surprise. Without enough time to think what was happening to me, the ants urgently demanded to be told orders. What they were waiting for hearing from me was countermeasure against cockroaches. A swarm of cockroaches was invading our area. After knowing that, I had to take an action to prevent them from invading us as fast as I could because a cockroach is the most loathsome insect for me. I gave orders but I didn't know what I ordered my ants. Then I realized I was the queen of their ants. Following my orders, they repulsed an attack by the cockroaches. They gave a shout for joy and applauded me. And then they bowed before me. In a moment, many things happened one after another. Although I couldn't understand why I was an ant, I enjoyed being the queen of them in my dream. Next day, more surprise happened!

I was elected a class president by my friends, not ants. Sometimes I think this dream was likely to be related to being a president.

Cross-Cultural Differences in Teaching Styles

Natsue Kin
R/W 41

I find big differences in the teaching styles of college instructors in America and in Asia. College students in America can attend their classes in a freer atmosphere than students in Asia can. For example, both instructors and students in America sometimes bring coffee and cookies to their morning classes. They even drink coffee or eat cookies in the middle of classes. On the other hand, instructors in Asia seldom bring coffee. Moreover, some instructors get angry if students drink something during a class. Another example is that instructors in America often talk to or pose questions to students. Sometimes they even have conversations! On the other hand, instructors in Asia don't talk to students very often. They just keep talking in a one-way direction. Students in Asia just listen during their classes. In summary, classes in America are friendly, just as the people in America are friendly.

My Shadow!

Sara Alomair
R/W 60

Barbara always copies what I wear. She bought her sunglasses after she saw me once wearing them. This woman drives me crazy. When I said I love pink, surprisingly her

closet turned into a world of pink! Her stuff, trousers and shirts, are all the same as mine. She also likes what I like to eat or drink. She eats vanilla ice cream just because I do, and she never drinks coffee because I don't. All in all, I don't blame her.

My Best Teacher

Jinmi Koo
R/W 41

In my life, there is a teacher who has had a strong influence on me. She was my tutor and she taught me for three years. When I was a freshman in high school, I really hated English. I did not study hard in English class. So, my English grade was poor. As a result, my mother thought that I needed a tutor and decided to look for someone who had lots of teaching experience. Fortunately, I met such a person. Her name was Yung-mi Song and her major was English Education. She taught me easily and comfortably. Sometimes, I was judged on my homework or test grades. If I could not get an "A" in my English class, she would give me a lot of homework. As I look back on Yung-mi, I realize that she was a very positive role model in my life. Without her help and dedication, I would not have been able to overcome my fear of learning English. I am really glad that I was able to learn from someone who had so much to share with me. I hope that one day my English skill will be at an advanced level so that I may have an opportunity to help someone just as Yung-mi helped me.

Out the Arched Window

Maria Chincoli
R/W 40

I am looking out the arched window at the wonderful countryside. This countryside has many different flowers and trees. At same time, I see people walking, a mom with her sons, couples, children playing. I feel the soft wind on my face and it is very relaxing. I don't have any stress. Every one looks so happy. I see the butterflies. I hear the song of the birds. It's wonderful. I feel very good!

Note from the editor: The following paragraph is a group activity using random vocabulary from The Giver, the assigned novel for this Semester B class.

Monday Morning

The Class
R/W 500

When I woke up, I was *overwhelmed* by the thing that I had dreamed. But then I realized that it was really funny and I started to *grin*. However, I had to stop grinning because I wanted to start my morning *ritual*. But my father saw that I was still grinning so he *frowned*. We started to fight about my waste of time sleeping and that made me *ponder* my behavior.

Even though I did not have any bad intention, I began to *murmur* and that made my father annoyed. I was a little nervous, so I started *giggling* and my father became really mad at my *transgression*. It was true! I was *apprehensive* because, once my father gets angry, he loses his temper. He *beckoned* to me with his finger and I came to him.

Note from the editor: In these last three essays we explore the case of Teri Schiavo, the young woman who recently died after a long legal battle. The first essay describes the case. The second essay argues in favor of Michael Schiavo, Teri's husband. The third essay is a counterargument of the second essay. Which side are you on?

The Schiavo Case

Patricia Padrón

R/W 60

On Thursday, March 31st, 2005; Theresa Marie Schiavo, commonly known as Terri, said “Good bye” after living 15 years on a vegetative state since Feb. 1990, when potassium levels came down because of bulimia. This caused a lack of oxygen in her body provoking the brain collapse that carried her to bed for one and a half decades.

Even though her parents were against her husband, Michael Schiavo, he tried to find an authorization from the court to remove the feeding tube that had been feeding his wife, but the petition failed many times since May 1998: The first time was on April 24th, 2001; when he succeeded in having the tube, but, after two days, it was reinserted. The second time happened on October 15th, 2003 when, Mr. Schiavo convinced the court to have the gastric feeding tube removed again, but after five days it was reinserted one more time. But he didn't rest. Finally, on March 18th, 2005 Florida court allowed that the PEG tube (percutaneous endoscopic gastrostomy) could be removed and, fortunately or unfortunately, this time the decision was definite. She stayed without any supply of food or water during 13 days, driving her to death.

Her husband wanted to apply euthanasia because he alleged his wife told him once she did not like to live in that way, even though Mr. and Mrs. Schindler (Terri's parents) wanted to keep her alive, hoping that someday she would possibly wake up from that state because they said she could respond to some stimulus. For example: They claimed Terri moved, smiled, blinked, cried, even, she used to make intents for trying to talk; but doctors disagreed. They said these types of reflexes were normal in a person that lives in a persistent vegetative state (PVS); also, that people who live in this situation are unconscious, which means, they can't feel, think or reason.

Why I Support Mr. Schiavo

Tae Hong Chang

R/W 41

The final decision in the Terri Schiavo case is to not overrule. Last Friday, March 18, 2005, the Florida Supreme Court and the U.S. Supreme Court refused to overrule the order to remove the feeding tube, as was requested by Terri Schiavo's parents. We, however, have to consider this case carefully. Why do Terri Schiavo's parents want to put back the feeding tube and why does her husband want to keep it removed?

Her doctor in charge said that she is in a “persistent vegetative state.” This means that she can neither behave nor feel anything, and that she does not even know that she is hungry. She just vegetates like a plant.

So what should we think of this situation? Actually, removing the feeding tube at her husband's insistence, or keeping the tube at her parents' insistence both have grounds. I, however, support her husband's opinion. The reason is this. First, we do not know her real mind. Does she want to continue to live or not? Second, living without one's ego is not a real life. Third, her husband is also a person who has his own life.

First, nobody can know Terri's real mind. She cannot say, hear, or see anything. Doctors or nurses cannot know whether she is now satisfied or not. They just feed her to extend her life, the same as we do to a plant. Accordingly, I think that her husband hates this because the people feeding her do not really care about his spouse. They are just feeding her. For this reason, I think that her husband wants to remove the feeding tube, although the feeding tube is her line of survival. This feeding is not real care for her.

Second, someone who lives without his own identity is not living a real life. In her case, she cannot express her ideas. She can open her eyes, but that is all. She just sees something. She has no imagination. Moreover, she does not have her ego right now. We call her by her name, Terri, but she, unfortunately, does not know that Terri is really her. Is that a real life? I think that I can say very straightforwardly: “she is not alive with us; she merely stays with us.” Continual feeding is not necessary, I think.

Third, I read many articles before I wrote this essay. I, however, cannot find any description about her husband, Michael Schiavo. No newspaper or magazine is concerned about her husband. He is also one person who has his own life. The broadcast media and other people are not interested in him. I think that we have to consider her husband's life. He probably has also anguished about his wife's pain for FIFTEEN YEARS. I think that now it is time to release him. He has dedicated enough of his life for his spouse. He has to care about his wife, but he has done so for 15 years, day in and day out. Individually, he also has his own life. We have to allow him his personal life. Fifteen years is not a blink of the eye.

Indeed, making a decision is almost too hard in this case. I, however, agree with Michael Schiavo because we don't know what she, Terri, thinks about the feeding tube, and Terri's ego is not with her. Also Mr. Schiavo has his own life and he already has devoted enough of his life to Terri. Therefore, my

opinion in this case is that we should not replace the feeding tube, just as her husband wants.

Mr. Shiavo Has No Right!

Sara Alomair

R/W 60

A human is born weak, rises to be stronger and then loses his strength in his late ages. This is human, blood, feelings and thoughts gathering together in a well-created body supported by God and blessed with his love. Terri Schiavo: every newspaper's headline and the main topic in each discussion, even in the class! Her problem began in 1990, when she got into a diet that causes a heart attack. Her brain hadn't received oxygen for about 4-5 min., which causes brain damage. Since then Terri became a vegetable patient in a Floridian hospital. Doctors looked for the living will of Terri but they didn't find it. So they asked her parents to decide for her. They wanted her to live on the feeding tube but her husband refused and said: "Terri told me she doesn't want to live that way." The American law decided to unplug the feeding tube of Terri. So Terri stayed with no food or water and waited for her slow death, which happened on Thursday, March 31st.

From this point people are divided into two groups, the parents' side and the husband's side. The thing that amazed me is the essay of a student in the ELI. He was with removing the tube of Terri Shiavo, not because of her suffering, but because her husband is sick of being the person who cares for her! I'm not saying that I'm against the court judgment, but I dislike the student's point of view because it wasn't for Terri's best, and this is big nonsense, at least to me. The ELI student said in his essay, her husband is also a person who has his own life. Ok. You're right, but what if I tell you this: Terri's husband won the case of removing Terri Shiavo's feeding tube which was the most hard and complicated situation in the States, why didn't he ask for a divorce since the beginning? Then if her husband's reason is to get rid of his wife then he shouldn't be the one who decides what is better for her because he doesn't love her enough. Her parents were the only people who might decide the best for her because they lived with her for 20 years but her husband lived with her 5 years. Then parents are the people who will always love and care about their children even though they grew up, but husbands sometimes cheat, lie or even hate. Terri's parents are the ones who brought her to life and the ones who raised her. Her husband saw her, loved her, and then married her. Does that make him more responsible for Terri than her real parents? One thing that made me mad at her husband and parents too, is that while Terri was sick and dying, they were fighting who will see her! When a big situation happens, the thing that we used to consider big became small in our point of view. But not for Terri's husband and parents; they were fighting who will be in her room and even when Terri was dying her husband didn't allow her parents to see her. Is that what we call love? For me, I don't think so. If her husband loved her then why did he always fight not to allow her parents to see her while she was dying at the hospital? I'm not saying

that I'm against unplugging the tube but I'm against the reason of taking the tube!

The guy said next in his essay that someone who lives without his own identity is not living a real life. I would like to explain to these type of people who never think about others who they never know, that there are many kind of diseases, cases and situations which make the person unable to express their feelings, though they have their own identity, like psychological problems, paralyses and other kinds of brain damage. This thing doesn't mean that they deserve to die. What I first heard about the Terri Shiavo case, I thought that she was clinically died, but when I saw her on the TV smiling and looking I thought: "Oh my God what a poor woman." I'm not saying she shouldn't have died, but at least not starving to death. Even though she couldn't think, she felt! If she breathes and opens her eyes, she must be feeling. A doctor in an article I've read said that he didn't know whether she was suffering or not! In mercy we kill animals so why didn't we let her die in peace. "Doctors or nurses cannot know whether she is now satisfied or no." This is what the guy said in his essay, which he wrote while Terri was still alive, and without the feeding tube, and that supports the fact that no one knows what is moving inside Terri.

Anyway, Terri Shiavo has passed away and whether I like it or not it happened. What I have to do is just pray to God to keep our families, the loved ones and ourselves healthy, and ask the government to stop controlling our lives which is not a US property: "Free at last, free at last, thank God almighty, we are free at last."

Thanks from the Editor

Thank you students for sharing your writing with everyone. I hope you enjoy reading your fellow students' essays and paragraphs. Also thanks to Megan Forbes and the HUB for arranging the gift certificates, to Todd Allen for publicizing this issue of Student Voices, to the Reading/Writing instructors for supporting their students in their writing, and to Leah Shapiro, Eunice Johnson, Karen Owens, Hilary Hodge, and Todd Allen for reading and evaluating the entries.

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