

The ELI STUDENT VOICES



Message from the Editor

Thank you to all who contributed to this edition of the ELI Student Voices.

To the students who submitted their writing, thank you for all your hard work and for being brave enough to allow your work to be read by others.

To ELI faculty and staff, thank you for the encouragement and support you give our students on many different levels.

To the Student Voices judges: Victoria Dolce, Tiffany Frison, Olga Moody, Karen Owen, Jennifer Vann, and Christine Voigt, thank you for your time and attention in reading the submissions.

Finally, to all the readers, I hope that you appreciate and enjoy the different submissions as I have.

Lynne Clark, Editor

Winning pieces

First Place

"Italian Immigration in the United States of America and Venezuela," by Maria Fernanda Prati Gagliardi

Second Place

"I'm Locked in a Dream," by Yuri Pedro

Cover photograph: Maryam Aldossary, GM1

First Place

Maria Fernanda Prati Gagliardi

Italian Immigration in the United States of America and Venezuela

What is the best synonym for “hard work” or who can represent it? I was thinking about it, and after evoking in my mind about many circumstances of my life, I remembered one of the most important values that my family taught me; work. When I think in something related with “work”, I cannot stop analyzing the history and it is there where I get the answer to my initial question. I have the conviction that European people from Spain, Portugal, and especially people from Italy, during and after the First and the Second World War, taught us that work means strength. Work is the only way that we can get ahead because it dignifies us and makes us better human beings. The presence of the Europeans helped to develop many countries where they had to immigrate to after World War II. Behind their achievements, there was a lot of effort and they gave a message to the whole world.

I come from an Italian family and I am so proud of that because my grandparents and my parents have taught me a lot. Thanks to them, I learned Italian as a second language. It has been a long way where I have learned to value things as small as they are. My mom’s father left Italy when he was only 23 years old, looking for a better future. He left my grandmother and their son (my uncle) very small, not knowing when he would see them again. My grandfather just wanted to give them quality of life. Also he wanted to make sure that they had food after the hard blow that Europe received in the World War II leaving it devastated.

In the 1940s and 1950s, the Venezuelan President Marcos Pérez Jiménez promoted European immigration to his depopulated country, and more than 300,000 Italians emigrated to Venezuela. It was the perfect opportunity for Italian people because Italy was severely affected in the postwar period. More than 60 million people died between civilians and military. Cities, ports, bridges, roads and railways were destroyed due to the bombings, which affected the economy of countries directly. For that reason and many others of political and social nature, millions of people were forced to leave their countries.

My grandfather arrived to Venezuela by ship after 30 days of traveling on October 8th 1955. He arrived in an unknown country, full of insecurities, but he was aware that he would have to work very hard to take care and feed his family. After many hard days, my grandfather found his first job. His first job opportunity was thanks to an Italian company called: Fiat (Fabbrica Italiana Automobili) as a mechanic of cars. After many years of work and communication with my grandmother through letters, he returned to Italy 5 years later just for a few weeks. Although my grandparents were far away from each other for many years, they kept their love intact.

Initially agriculture was one of the main activities of the Italian community in Venezuela. However, most Italians concentrated on commercial and industrial activities. In these sectors the Italians reached important position in the Venezuelan economy. Definitely, Italian immigration was a decisive factor in the Venezuelan economy and the improvement of the quality of life of Venezuelans. Thousands of Italian people after a lot of years and effort achieve to have enough capital to open their own companies. The Italians wanted to thank the country that gave them so much in the most difficult

moments. They hired thousands of Venezuelans and became their employees. The Italians made great contributions to the Venezuelan community. They built important buildings, created newspapers, schools, large industries, restaurants, and everything was product of hard work. That is the image which they wanted to show them to their descendants and to the Venezuelans.

My grandmother arrived to Venezuela on December 29th 1966, by plane with my uncle and my mom, who was one-year-old. After 11 years, they would share as a family and they celebrated a new year together. The tears became in laughs after many years of separation. A lot of sacrifices became rewards because my grandfather made an important decision. He started his own business. He opened his mechanical workshop. This was the business that for more than 40 years allowed him to support his family and to be happily married for 60 years. Not only he supported his family but even traveled and helped so many other relatives who decided to leave Italy as he did. This proved his strength to keep going and his love for work and family.

Venezuela provided many legal facilities to receive immigrants, other than the United States. After the World War I, the United States took severe legislative measures and restricted the entry of thousands of people. Nonetheless, the United States has a big Italian community because at the end this country extended a hand and valued all the efforts of so many families that had been formed and had grown up in North America. Today, a lot of people can visit many neighbors called: Little Italy, in a lot of states in the country, such as, Pennsylvania, California, Connecticut, and Massachusetts, as well as important cities like New York and New Jersey.

My grandfather passed away almost 10 years ago. He is an example to follow for me because he taught me the importance of fighting for my dreams. He also taught me to respect and understand the thoughts of other people, but above all, he taught me the simplicity and equal treatment. He is my inspiration and my reason to keep going. Six months ago, I got my major as a Lawyer and seven months ago I left my country because we are going through a very complex political and social situation. I also left looking for better living conditions. For that reason, my first step was to come to the United States and learn English at the English Language Institute (ELI). When I left my country on January 7th 2019, while I was flying, I was thinking about my grandfather, and I was trying to imagine how difficult it was for him to leave his country and to start his life in a new country.

I left Venezuela with the hope of return in democracy. In the meantime, I will follow my grandfather's advice, so I will work for my dreams and goals. I hope to give back to my country everything that it gave me just as my grandfather did. Let us look for what inspires us to keep going and live to fulfill each of our dreams. Let us work honestly and if at any moment we go through a hard situation, let us think that all the effort will be rewarded.

Second Place

Yuri Pedro

GM 1

I'm Locked in a Dream

I'm locked in a dream
A dream of nature
A dream of water flowing
A dream of kids playing around till they can't get enough

I ask myself
Where am I ?
This world is a paradise
With the wind blowing
Making everyone dance
The animals saying thank you

I'm locked in a dream
Where I wake up every morning
With a smile stuck to my face
Hoping that this paradise never ends

I'm locked in a dream
Wait, I think I spoke too soon
The dream that I was in was just a dream
All that was just fake
I wake up in a world of disaster
No animals to tell a story
No wind to make me dance
I just wish that it would be a paradise again.

Eunseok Choi**RW 2****Let's use English.**

I took part in Cafe Friday. Many friends came. There, I met a friend named Andreessa. I talked with her about food as much as two hours. It was amazing that I could talk about a one topic for two hours!! I had no confidence in using English. But this experience has made me confident. We were studying English whatever if you want or not. We're just not enough experience about using English. Beginners of English should not be afraid. If you're a beginner of English at the ELI, please have confidence. Are you ready for using English? See you at the Cafe Friday.

Faisal Alrashidi**RW 10****The ELI**

ELI is the best English Language Institute. It's a wonderful place like Gainesville. It has a beautiful campus. There are nice buildings, and the weather is very good. It's very quiet and hot in the summer. I guess it is reverse in the winter. There are a lot of the activities like Monday Mixer and more. There are many good teachers. They offer a lot of services such as: the bus, movies, and internet and more. I wish I could keep another semester. I will not forget this experience for the rest of my life.

Refah Alrabie,**RW 20****Be Positive**

Be positive. Life only needs you to smile in your face. You live one life and then die. Make it full of purity, love, and optimism. Enjoy a happy life. Make yourself smile in all your situations. Smiling is the most beautiful line of defense against the attack of despair, and despairing the key closes the doors of dreams that you build. See yourself as a successful and confident person, and listen to your own conversation well. Delete the frustrating words because the height of your moral spirit is your own responsibility. If you cannot be positive, do not convey your "passivity" to others! Instead of criticizing yourself and others, look for something you like about yourself and everyone you know, and instead of focusing on your failures, focus on your success and achievements. Do not think failure is a failure, but see it as a delayed success. Our greatest weakness lies in surrender, and the surest way to succeed is to try again. Positive person does not end his/her thoughts, and the passive person does not end his/her excuses. Be positive! If you are not, bad things will fill your negative thinking, narrow your horizons, and you will live miserably.

Zeyad Alahmadi**GM 1****Monday Mixer**

Hi ! My name is Zeyad, and I will talk about Monday Mixer. It was from 6:30 to 9:30 at Reltz Union every Monday. It is amazing day! I was with my friends, and we played ping-pong. It was the first time to play. I am so bad at this game. Then we went bowling and we were me and two friends played and I got two strikes. I was winning with 123 points. It was a challenge, and I beat them, so they invited me to lunch. It was amazing day and the best activity!

Saud Bin Rimal**RW20****Library**

Libraries are the places for success in universities or schools. A library is the place where makes people become professors, doctors, or engineers. Many people study in this place. There are a lot of computers and comfortable chairs. There are a lot of books and a lot of restaurants near them. The library is very quiet. Everyone comes to study, and they don't take a break. Everyone tries to face their challenges. Everyone in inside of the library studies by themselves or together, but nobody makes noise. There are many smart people, and when someone is lazy sees them, they feel challenge themselves to become like them. The library is the start point for smart people. The library says, 'I'm waiting for you to show me your talents and successes, and I will help you to be successful.'

Zeyad Alahmadi**LS 1****Self-Intro**

Hi ! My name is Zeyad. I am 19 years old. I am from SAUDIA Arabia. I graduated from high school last year, so I will study mechanical engineering to fix the planes next year. I have 1 brother and 2 sisters and both are older than me. I like to play volleyball, but I don't like to watch it. Football I like to see on TV more than to play it . Thanks for your listening to me . And I hope get better in English with Debbie.

Ahmed Albiliwe**RW 2****My Self**

My name is Ahmed Albalawi. There are 3 treasures in my life. My family is one of the treasures. We were living together but I went to another country to study. My friends are second treasure in my life. A lot of them contact with me every day that is why I love them. Lastly, my country is third treasure in my life. I really like my country because I grew up there. There are 3 important treasures in Ahmed's life and a lot of people have the same feelings.

Miguel Henrique Rosa Franco**GM 1****My Last Vacation**

Hi, my name is Miguel. Last year I went on my vacation. Went with my Brazilian friends to Cancun, Mexico. It was my favorite vacation. Cancun, has good parties and beautiful tourist places. My favorite tourist places are Astecas pyramids and Coco Beach dance club. This trip was very fantastic. We had a lot of fun and went to many localities in the Mexico. It was big opportunity in my life.

Mohammed Alshddy**Family****LS 1**

Hi, my name is Mohammed Alshddy. My birthday is April 11,1990. I am from Saudi. I live in Riyadh. I speak Arabic. My family is my mother, father, three brothers, one sister, and me. My mother is a business woman in the house. My father is a professor at King Saiud university. My brothers like football and video games. My sister is a makeup artist and an artist for my family. My family is very connected, and we love traveling. Nice to meet you.

Taro Sano**Switch of Heart's Engine**

I am Taro Sano from Japan. I am 25 years old, but I look like younger than same age people because of cute dimples. I have been studying Sports psychology for 7 years. Today, I would like to introduce about my life experience that I figured out what the turning point is. There is a myth in Japan, which is that human beings have an engine of heart. However, occasionally our engines can break down and we need to repair them. A turning point is one that greatly affects our lives, and often turning points contribute to the repair of our engine of heart. Have you ever experienced any turning points in your life so far? Perhaps many people have experienced the turning point. It means life has its ups and downs like a roller coaster, which somebody screams or enjoys the ride. Additionally, I have some questions for y'all. Is the turning point inevitable? Or are we able to earn the turning point by ourselves? I think that it can be created not only by chance but also on purpose because I had the experience when my heart's gear collapsed.

When I was graduate student, I was a lecturer of seminar. I was missing something, which was not big deal, but I do not know why I was so depressed. I was annoyed about that after a couple of weeks, and my heart's gear seemed to have gotten out of joint. One day, I ate out with my best friend. He asked that why I feel down, and gave me advice that I should check my diary. I found the goddess of chance, Kairos, had only long bangs, who suddenly appeared in front of me when I was running in my life marathon. If I was not preparing, I would not notice the goddess, or I would not be able to grab the goddess bangs. I noticed that even if I feel down and look down, I cannot grab a chance. The opportunity is always like this, which is important how I am ready with my mind-set. Thus, I was able to reset the gear of my heart. Otherwise, I would have gotten lost in my life marathon.

After few days, I took my professor lecture, which was about motivation. The lecture was that there are three types of people he asked, "What do you want to achieve of your life?" The type A person said, "I wannabe billionaire." The type B responded, "I wanna win a championship." The type C person replied, "I wanna represent my country and be a top athlete who changes history," with pride in his/her voice. They answered to same question, but each of them have different answers. In other words, the type A people have a desire, the type B people have their purpose and goal, and the type C people have a ambition and dream. If we have type B or type C, we can make much energy and be more aggressive, which leads to realize that I should reconsider what I want to do, and impacts my behavior that is my powerful vitality and keep making an unflagging effort. Therefore, that is because I got a mental toughness, I could go on running in my life marathon because the gear of my heart got gasoline named motivation, and finally my heart's engine was repaired and was able to restart. Few weeks later, I realized that I could step up my life. Eventually, I noticed that tiny mistake in the seminar was my turning point.

If you have an experience of the turning point, what timing did it invent? Someone can misunderstand that a turning point was established by big moment, but it is not true. It does not matter a big moment. Whatever phenomenon may be the turning point like my turning point. Basically, we are able to get chance of the turning point anytime, anywhere, and from anyone. The important thing is how much you are ready to change your life. We can use our hands to switch on the heart's engine.

Finally, where are we now? We belong at the ELI, which looks like the world with many different countries people, many different ethnics, many different ages, and different gender unlike general school. Anyone who has experienced this ELI should have the opportunity to gain willpower, and get the turning point. Not surprisingly, it was a big turning point that I came to this ELI. It has changed me who disliked English and who was shy. That is why I was able to get many changes from the ELI besides "learning English." However, I think that is because I had been preparing as having the feeling that I would change. The chance of the turning point is always in front of you. Everything is up to you. Before the article end, I have a final question to y'all. What turning point do you want next?

Najjlal Al-Aidaros**RW20****The Beautiful Memories**

Sadly, this summer will end soon, but then the most beautiful thing is that I have a lot of beautiful memories in my heart. For example, Independence Day was a different day for me and my family. We were waiting on Tuesday eagerly to watch the fireworks. On Tuesday morning, as usual I went to school (ELI), and I was happy to see everyone like the staffs, teachers, and students happy. In the evening, it was raining heavily, which made me come out with my children because we love rain, but I was disappointed that the fireworks postponed for half an hour. At 8:30 PM, we went to the place of celebration, and I was happy to see everyone was dancing, singing, and playing. Finally, at 10:00 PM, the fireworks were then launched and were very beautiful and professional. After the fireworks, we returned to home, and I could see that the joy was painted on the faces of my children. I wish to spend more time in this wonderful school.

Lu Wu**RW20****My ELI Life**

My name is Wu, Lu, and I'm an ELI student. What is the ELI? It is an English school. There are a lot of people from different countries, and they meet each other here. It is really cool to think about it. There are 233 countries in the earth, and we all choose here, the ELI. I like the people at the ELI, especially the language assistants because they are just like my sisters and brothers. There are good teachers, too. They always help and teach us about American culture or life. When I came here for the first time, I thought I would have a bad time in here because everyone doesn't have a good time in school in my country, Taiwan. However, everything is different from my county in here, and I like it. Right now, I'm having a good time with my wonderful teachers and my friends. They are my family, my ELI family!

Maryam Aldossary**GM 1****Fireworks**

On July 3rd, I went to Flavet Field to watch the fireworks and celebrate the U.S Independence Day. I went with my two sisters and my nephew. There were a lot of people. we had fun there because it was a new activity for us. There were many food truck. I talked with someone who owned one, so I asked her some questions. She shared me a lot of information, and she was very kind, helpful, and beautiful. Also there was a stage and music band. I was very excited to see the fireworks. Then at 9:30, it was dark and the fireworks began, and that was interesting, wonderful, and adorable thing That I ever saw in my life. In my country, we have a fireworks, but it is smaller more than here. We really had so much fun! [Editor's note: Maryam's photograph is our cover photograph for this issue]

Saud Alqahtani**RW20****My Classmates**

My classmates are special. They are helpful. They support me if I need help. For example, They help me with grammar. My classmates help me because I am their best friend. My classmate are creative and beloved. They smile all the time. When they finish class, they sometimes drive to my home with their cars. They are my best friends through my experience of ELI. My classmate are great.

Abdullah Tekin**LS 1****Self-Intro**

Hello, my name is Abdullah. I'm from Turkey. I'm 20 years old. I'm study at University. I have a sister. She is younger than me. My mother is teacher, my father is professor. I was born in Gainesville. When I was 5 years old, I left here. I want to talk about my story. Last summer I went to holiday with my friends. This holiday is special because it was our first alone holiday. We did a lot of activity. We went to swim, dance, soccer and we stayed there for 1 week but it was awesome.

Sultan Awad Awwadh Alsulami**RW 10****The ELI**

I study at the best place to learn English language. There are best teachers like Ms. Zoe and Ms. Olga. Teacher Zoe gives us a lot of homework to help us learn English every day. Teacher Olga gives us new vocabulary to help us speak English well every day. There are good activities every day. I like to play soccer with my classmates and know new students in the ELI. I'm happy because I study here.

Saad Alqahtani**RW 10****The ELI**

The ELI is the best English school for international students. There are many useful activities for students, so they can practice. The ELI activities are fun, so many students have motivation to speak more in English. Also, you can make a lot of friends. There are many excellent teachers at the ELI. Many teachers are very patient. They explain well, so many students can understand better. The location is convenient. The bus stops are next to the school. There are a lot of restaurants, cafes, and supermarkets. I am happy because I study at this school.

Mary Roa

RW 60

"No made" decisions

The country where people develop themselves has a strong impact in the decisions they make. Accordingly, this is definitely my case. Venezuela is a beautiful country full of kind people, landscapes that take the breath away, delicious and oily food but over all, there is the feeling of always trying to show the best of us. I have always loved my country because it is the place where I grew up; it lended me a space where I could share many of the most important moments in my life and a space to share with people I do care about. Venezuela is going through a difficult social and political situation which, unfortunately, only leads to a higher rate of emigration every day and increases the number of poverty inside the country. Even when Venezuela has innumerable of good things, I cannot leave aside some factors as unsafe, lack of medicines, food and basic services (power and water) that each day make venezuelans take the decision of leave the country in order to find new opportunities and a dignity life.

During my 20 years of life, I have developed strong feelings for three topics: animals, youth and homelessness. I grew up with a religious family which awakened the feeling of serving in my community. When I was in my confirmation process, I wanted to help in pastoral work with youth which guided me to be part of a group of young people dedicated to serve less fortunate individuals and to develop life skills. The process of pastoral work included visiting poor communities, guiding young people and provisioning food. I met people from all my country whose stories influenced my life due to their hard work and challenging life; I shared with many people in very different situations which made me reflect and encouraged me to continue helping people who do not have the same opportunities than others. During these years I did social labor and retreats which enriched my life with virtues that today lead my life and define me: leadership, discernment and service towards others.

I made all my levels of education in Venezuela. I graduated from high school where the situation of my country combined with the challenges of youth, help to improve one of the skills that today lead the life of many venezuelans: **resilience**. Because is hard to study my country due to the big economy problem, I worked hard during my high school years in order to get good grades and apply for a scholarship. Through these years, I was not sure about what I really wanted to study, so I just applied to a scholarship and let that decide for me. When I finished the high school, many of my friends were leaving Venezuela and many people kept telling me "You need to go to another place" or "If you get a degree here, it is not going to have any value". Despite of these comments, I tried to be positive and I won the scholarship to study a four-year degree in Chemical Engineering which I thought could be a great idea because I was good in Chemistry and Math. I made two years and a half of this degree; I met the most wonderful friends I could ever ask for, I expand my abilities in every single field of my life but overall I learned that every person should follow what they love instead what they think is correct. While I was studying, I tried to convince myself that I took the correct decision, but one day my mom just told me "I need you studying what you like in a safe place where you can expand your opportunities, because in Venezuela, you cannot do that anymore". I refused to make this decision, how could I leave all my friends and my family alone for my well-being? For me, that sounded a bit selfish. However, day by day, I realized that this was the only viable solution for me. Because I needed to go out, I found the ELI as an excellent way to improve one thing that will be helpful during all my life: English. I felt very bad about leaving everything that I had done in Venezuela and even more, I had to give up my

scholarship that with my effort I had achieved; the fact of “giving up” not because I wanted to but because I had to, has been one of the most important and difficult decisions of my entire life. Similarly, I had to leave aside my friends from my childhood and my catholic group which was an essential part of my life. With my mom, we were forced to take the decision of sending me to United States to do just one semester at the ELI and try how I feel in other country. Now, I realized that everything happens for a specific reason, even when you do not know how when, or why, it happens. I consider that I always try to do my best in every single challenge I accept, that is one of the reason of my scholarship in Venezuela, but when I got here, I was very excited to try something new again, in a place where I would meet people from all over the world and where I could feel good.

I always was repeating myself “Why do I have to make decisions just because of external factors?”; nonetheless, I enjoyed every class and activity during the first semester. I tried to make my essays and presentations about topics that interest me and I always tried to be successful. May 25th of this year was one of the most special days of my life; It was the day I understood that everything happens for a reason, that all the good that you do is returned back to you in a better way. This was the day when I received the letter of my nomination for one of the scholarships that the ELI offers. This day I was just thinking about “I need to do it very well in the interview”, but at the same time I thought that I already won another scholarship in my country before, so it can be almost impossible to win another one. The day of the interview I felt so nervous that many negative thoughts came to my mind and I could only think about the final results. When I was notified that I was one of the winners, I just thought about everything I left behind me, everything I had to give up because a decision I did not want to make but I should make. My thoughts now are totally different, I met amazing people that I consider my friends and who will last forever in my life, they have made me feel part of many cultures very different from mine, but above all they have made me feel so appreciated and supported that I feel I am home. Additionally, I came here just with the idea of doing one semester; I am coursing my second semester at the ELI, my English gets better each day and I will do my degree in one of the best colleges in Florida. Now, to this point, I understood that when “one door closes, another opens” and it does not matter where you are, it is all about how you do it and the people that supports you.

Dr. Amal Alaidrous**GM 1****“ Amel “**

I am Amel, and I am nickname is Amollah. I come from S.A. to study English at the ELI at UF in Gainesville. I will talk about my feeling before and during studies in the ELI. Before coming to the ELI, I was scared and worried. I asked myself a lot of times, “Can I succeed in my new experiment?” During my stay in the ELI, I feel warmth with my teacher “Debbie” and friends indifferent classes. Debbie is a smiley, serious, intelligent and friendly teacher, so I like her technique in the classes because I think the best teacher who can wins with a mind and heart the students inside the class. I advise every student want to be best in English language coming to the ELI one time then you can decided about a good students in the ELI.

A A REUM Oh**GM 1****Lake Wauburg**

When : Saturday, July 6th, from 11:30am

Where : Lake Wauburg

Who : I participated in the activity conducted by the ELI.

How : In the lake. If you have a student ID, you can rent a kayak, pedal boat and yacht.

What : I rode kayak with Evelyn.

Why : I didn't have much time to talk to Evelyn, but it was a good time to get more familiar with each other while riding a kayak. And I was very scared not to be close to water but I wanted to ride kayak. It was fun and not scary.

* Point : If it is short in the future. I would like to make good use of the time remaining and make good memories with friends from all over the world and Korean friends.

Victor Tover Leal**RW20****My Experience in ELI**

My experience in ELI is very good. My first day in ELI I was scared because I did not know what my experience would be like. That day, I knew different people from different cultures and countries. When classes began, I was adapting little by little to this lifestyle because they have different cultures, norms, and laws that one has to follow or rather respect. Our first week in ELI was introductory. They taught us how the university was and what rules to follow. They gave us a tour of the university, and they also evaluated us to know what levels of English we are. I have had an excellent experience in ELI, and I hope to continue having it.

Dr.Amal Alaidrous**LS 1****Myself "Amel"**

My name is Amel from Makkah city in the west of S. A. . I stay in the ELI at summer B then I will comeback to my country. I have a big family. I have six sibling , three brothers, three sister and two children. We are live in a big building but different apartments. I live with my children in a beautiful apartment. My major is mathematics. Math is a logic science or number language. This major gives me empower for my life when I can solve any math problem. I have a lot of hobbies but I can't doing them because I have a job and children. My hobbies are jet-skiing, dicoraision and swimming. I hope to be best all my life, and I hope everyone will be happy.

Thoughts by Abdullah Mesfer S Alqahtani**RW10****Written by Refah Alrabie****RW20****ELI**

On May 14th, the amazing summer semester at ELI, UF began. I am one of the students in this Reading and Writing class. One day, a new stage in my life began when I decided about which country and institute where I would like to study. During the research, I found out about that the ELI is excellent. There are many international students whom the ELI helped in achieving their goals, and that the UF is an excellent university. There was a big obstacle in front of me, which was moving away from my family for a long time. How could I be absent from my family members for a year while I used to meet them daily? However, this horrible idea has faded away since the first day at the ELI. The administrators at the ELI are friendly and helpful as much as possible; receiving and responding directly through e-mails without any delay. Beginning with Daryl Bish who warmly welcomed me and encouraged me to speak with him about any problems that I have at the ELI or outside of the ELI, such as enrolling my children at schools or GRE tests. There is Victoria Shelly who asks about the needs of students and helps them to find accommodation and overcome all the difficulties they face. Jennifer Vann gave me the opportunity to complete the required papers. In the reception of the main office, there are very friendly Tiffany and Min. I have great teachers this semester, Olga Moody and Zoe Witty. There are many good qualities in them, and I will focus on the two most important characteristics that make me proud of being my teachers are discipline and diligence despite the big individual differences among students. When my school day ends, my relationship with the ELI does not end where many different activities are held every evening except Sunday. These activities enable me to practice English in an enjoyable way to gain American culture. The ELI has a great plan in innovative ways that motivate students to speak in English, including the idea of a conversation partner. My partner in this semester is Michael Snyder, and I am so pleased to meet him. Today, it has been almost two months since the first day at the ELI, and I found my second family whom I spend happy days with. I hope my study at the ELI will help me to get an admission at the UF to complete my education, so I can solidify my relationship with the people of the ELI.

Hatim Alzahrani**RW 20****How to Lose Weight**

There are easy ways to lose weight if you follow these steps. First, you should have a healthy food schedule. If you want to lose weight, you should stay away from saturated fat. Before you go to the gym, you can eat a little food. Second, do your exercises. You can do a cardio for a half hour every day. Third, you can get help from having a coach for exercises. They can help you with fitness. If you follow these steps, you can lose weight more in the future.

Ilmuk Lim**LS 1****My Mini-Story**

Two years ago, I traveled to India with my friend. When I did military service (Do you know? Korean men have to military service. It is mandatory.), my senior soldier recommended to travel to India. His travel story was impressive to me. After I was discharged from military service, I started to make a plan to travel to India. And then, I left Korea to go to India.

One of the best places in India is Leh city. There are mostly Tibetan people living there. Leh has a fabulous landscape. Because Leh consists of the Himalayas. I swam in the melted lake. You can be sure, if you go to Leh, that you can see one of the best places you have ever been.

Miguel Henrique Rosa Franco**RW 2****My life**

I have a good life. I go to the USA to study English because this language is very important for my job in Brazil. I'm working in my country in the agronomy area of a company fertilizer with name MF Consult. I have a doctorate in the science of soil and plant nutrition, and I intend studying more of this area at the UF. Before my course in ELI, I intend go to the Agronomy teachers in the UF and talk to them respect for the new researchers which use de fertilizers in the EUA. Before, I intend to apply for the scholarship with these researchers.

In my country I have a good family. My father is working on the Family farm. My father is an old man and his happiness is going to the farm every day with my mother. I love my Family and my work. I'm happy.

Alexandre Ginez**GM 1****Football/Soccer**

I worked in Sudan for two years between 2010 - 2012 as a physical trainer on a professional soccer team. There were five Brazilians. I was responsible for the preparation of the players. Sudan is a very different country from the culture of my country, food and religion. We worked out always during the night because it was very hot during the day. The big difference was food and eating habits. The religion is very different in Sudan, people pray five times a day and stop at any moment to pray. But I decided that it was the best experience of my life. I was learning many things with this experience. I will have one new opportunity back work again.

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Mohammad Zorqan**RW 2****Introduce Myself**

Hello, everyone! My name is Mohammad Alzorgan. I am from Jordan, I live in Amman the capital. I was born on October 16 , 1991 . My family is big. I have my mother, father, and three brothers. I have no sisters. I have a college education. I have a bachelor's degree in English. My interest in English start in high school. I have many hobbies . I like playing soccer, watching movies, playing video games, and swimming. I got married in July 2016. After that me and my wife travelled to U.S to study. My wife and I have been in U.S for three years now. My first year we've been in Chicago city in our first year. Then we moved to Gainesville to now we are studying at the UF we been here for two years. I had my first child on March 5 -2019, her name is Rahma, she's the most beautiful thing happened in my life, I love her to death. Now I am an ELI student. My plans after I finish from the ELI is to start my Master degree. My message is in the end, we are all special in our own way.

Yuri Pedro**GM 1****My Grandfather and Grandmother**

Today, my 75-year-old grandfather who has been blind from the cataract for almost 15 years has told me, "Your grandmother is the most beautiful thing in the world, is she not?" I stopped for a second and said, "Yes, she is. "" Darling, "my grandfather said," I still see her beauty every day. In fact, I see more now than I used to when we were young. "

After the words of my grandfather, I could see that beauty is much more than what we are accustomed to see, I was sure that the beauty is not only abroad but inside, I felt an emotion and energy so positive that is difficult to explain, but I realized what he wanted to convey to me.

Jeehoon Paek**RW 2****CIP Activity**

I went to Lake Wauburg on July 6th. Before I went there, I just a wondered a little because weather was so bad. But, soon the weather was getting better, so we could go to Lake Wauburg. When we went there, a huge lake was inviting us and many ELI students and I went to water for diving and swimming. When I was swimming, I saw many Kayaks on the water. And me and my Korean friends couldn't wait for it. So we went to ride kayaks immediately.

After we played and we were going home, I saw such nice scenery out the window. Horizon and sky were so beautiful. It might be just natural scenery in Florida. But, in my country, there are so many buildings that most people can't see this horizon and sky.

Lake Wauburg was so nice place to visit. Because I made lots of memories there. I might hope I never forget this experience. And also I want to recommend this place for everyone.

Thierry Clabaut

Hello everybody,

Today I would like to introduce myself to all of you.

If you have any questions, feel free to ask me.

First at all who am I ?

My name is Mr CLABAUT, but you can call me Thierry. I am the Marketing and Sales Manager for the F.O.T. F.O.T. is an acronym for French Overseas Territories and that means everywhere you have French land outside of French hexagon.

Now to be completely honest with you, I was not the excellent student you had to be yourself but I did some late studies anyway. I hold a Master's degree of management and a University degree of HIV Virology.

Finally I would like to talk you about my values, what make me progress every day. My values are family, safety and equity. It's why I work hard and spend a lot of time with my family when I have free time. It's also why I'll treat each of you as she or he deserves when we work together.

Thank you for listening to me, now I'm ready to answer your questions. Today and every day I will remain the most available as possible.

Abdulrahman Alrizqi

Hi everyone

I want to start by telling you the story of when I rode the bus from New Jersey going to New York and back again to New Jersey

It was my first time when I decided to try using the bus instead of taxi or Uber.

First of all I went to the bus station and rode to NY to met my friends there. I finally arrived after an hour of time and met my friends and we enjoyed a lot in Time Square and we ate at the hard rock restaurant hamburgers and french fries. I really recommend it to you guys it is so delicious.

When we finished I went to the bus station alone because my friends live in New York and I waited until the bus to New Jersey arrived, I rode the bus to New Jersey because I live in Paramus. When I was on the bus I heard a call from the driver but I did not notice what he was saying I thought he asked or changed the directions , after one hour the driver told me it is the last stop you have to leave when I looked around but Unfortunately it wasn't Paramus!

I was shocked then I left the bus, The place was very dark because it was midnight and there was no one else and it was a new area for me called Englewood. I was thinking what I supposed to do then I decided to call my sister she lives in New Jersey as well. Thankfully my sister came to take me after half an hour .

Now I want to share with you what I learned that day:

- First I will never use the bus to go anywhere.
- Then I will never go alone, finally I will use Uber or taxi that's much easier.

Thank you everybody for reading my story today and I hope you enjoyed it.

Ana Silva

Why I came back to The ELI after 7 years ...

My first time at The ELI was August, 2012. I was here for 1 year, studying three full semesters in Reading and Writing, Listening and Speaking, and Grammar classes. For one semester I took an extra preparatory course for *TOEFL*. It was a wonderful time, I had been here with my family, including my husband and daughters. Despite the fact that I was a full-time student I had a plenty of time to travel, make friends, and enjoy the amazing Gator nation. I really love Gainesville! I'm not sure why, but when I came back to Brazil I felt like I was leaving home, and since my second day there I started to figure out what I needed to do for coming back to Gainesville and also to the ELI.

But Why? Probably there are more than an easy single answer. First at all, I really loved my English classes. I think that the ELI methodology differs far away from the way Brazilians teach and learn English. I have been doing it there almost my entire life, but I felt that it was not effective enough due to my still lack of fluency in English. The different classes for Reading and Writing, Listening and Speaking, and Grammar that the ELI provides don't exist in Brazil, and probably in the majority of others countries, which permit students to be allocated in different levels for each skill that they need to improve. Second because being here is an immersive experience with the language and also with the American culture which allow us keeping practice outside the classes. The ELI also offers many options to keep immersing with the language, conversation partner is only one of many opportunities available here. The third reason to be here again, probably the most personal reason, is the opportunity to keep distance of my routine and reevaluate the pros and cons about my previous choices, and the way I have been conducting my life. In Brazil some of us used to say: *"if you are inside a deep forest, be careful because you rarely will be able to see any whole tree"*. In other words, sometimes we are totally immersed in certain kind of situation that it is almost impossible for us identifying positive and negative sides, and also figure out how to deal with ours issues. Gainesville is not a "forest" for me, here I can reflect about these issues, probably it is my "home away from home", as a very adorable American friend said welcoming me when I arrived here in this second time.

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