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ELI STUDENT VOICES

A Message from the Editor



Thank you to all who contributed to this edition of the ELI Student Voices. First of all, thank you to all the students who wrote and were brave enough to share their wonderful writing pieces with us. Thank you to all the ELI teachers who encouraged, helped, and supported the students to develop and polish their writing skills.

Also, thanks to Megan Forbes and the University of Florida Bookstore for arranging prizes for the winners and to our judges: Thomas Dolce, Patrick Klager, Patricia Moon, Jen Ramos, Debbie Sakalla, and Christine Voigt who took time to read the submissions and select the winning pieces.

Have fun reading this edition and keep writing!

-Olga Moody

Winning Pieces

First Place

“Story of someone I know” by Onyou Kang

Second Place

“A Story of Love, Gratitude, and New Beginnings”

by Danney Pamplona

Cover Photo credit – Olga Moody (this adorable Christmas Gator pillow was made by Jill Johnson)

FIRST PLACE**Onyou Kang****RW 40****Story of someone I know**

On March 1, 2022, he completed his long journey. Upon returning, he went to school the very next day. Memories of his recent journey lingered throughout the classes, hindering his ability to concentrate on studies. It wasn't just a desire to travel again; what he truly yearned for was to live abroad. Fortunately, he came across a school-offered program (ELI) and, upon seeing the announcement, decided to take a leave of absence. Providing a brief introduction to his personality, he was headstrong, inflexible, and had an impatient temperament.

Luckily, he was accepted, and eventually, he went to the United States. While he had dreamed daily of living abroad, the reality of his experience turned out differently from his expectations. It began with a typhoon, which forced him to stay at home for about a week. However, even after the typhoon passed, it continued to rain almost every day. He thought that the city was not Gainesville but rather Rainsville. He thought that the school was far away, transportation was terrible, and the weather was extremely unfavorable. Initially, everything seemed dissatisfying and negative to him.

However, these thoughts gradually changed as he attended school. At school, there were friends who greeted with a bright smile, people who held doors for others, cars patiently waiting for pedestrians, students who kindly responded even to sudden conversations, and teachers and LAs who conducted classes with enthusiasm. He couldn't help but change. At some point, he became more composed, and going to school became exciting, with each day being enjoyable. From a certain moment on, he always found himself thinking positively.

He didn't just learn English here. He acquired positive thinking and attitude. Before leaving Gainesville, he closed his eyes and reflected on the semester. From casual small talk with friends

to activities like R/W, GM, LS, LA class, CIP activity, Halloween corn maze, and Arabian dinner, memories flashed by, and he found himself smiling with his eyes closed. He thought he would miss this place when he returned to Korea. Leaving behind regrets, he boarded the plane. When the plane arrived at its destination, his eyes were moist, and there was something written in his notebook. The contents of the note were as follows: “ Robert, Sultan, Leah, Rachel, Dani, Isabela, Yuritzi, Nahomi, Abadey, Azzam, Jaime, Tiffany, Breana, Cortney, Khalid, Maza, David, Tate, Grace, Mathis, Will F, Paola, Anas, Emily, Mark, Jagger, Tony, Abdulrahman, Jacobo, Sana, Momo, Karin, Karla, Talia, Melanie, Gavin, Nawaf, Aaref, Claire, Sam, Nicole, Julia, Carlos, Baraa, Oscar, Claudia, Mary, Kohei, Carolina, Martine, Chelsie, Ibrahim, Mo, Musab, Estefan, Joy, Natalie, Will S, Olga, Lynne, Jane, Debbie, Christine.”

Goodbye, my friends.

Goodbye, ELI.

Goodbye, UF.

Goodbye, Gainesville.

See you again.

SECOND PLACE**Danney Pamplona****RW 41****A Story of Love, Gratitude, and New Beginnings**

The journey of life, sometimes unexpected, threads and weaves together, creating a unique and beautiful pattern. My story is a testament to this intricate design, where love, gratitude, and the courage to embrace change led me from my perfect life in Bogota-Colombia, where I owned an ambulance company and had a loving family, to the vibrant city of Gainesville, Florida.

It all began with a serendipitous encounter, the moment I met my soulmate. Our love story was written in the stars, and our love knows no boundaries, and it took me across oceans and countries, leaving behind my established life in Colombia. Gainesville, a place I now call home, became the canvas for my transformative journey, as I navigated the challenges of adapting to a new culture, language, and way of life.

One of my first and best decisions ever was studying at the English Language Institute (ELI). I vividly remember the moment I said to my husband, "The first thing I must do is learn English, but I don't want to do that in a random place. I really want to study at the best university." We searched online, and the University of Florida stood out, ranking among the top 5 universities in the United States. Of course, immediately I felt a good vibe, so we decided to reach out. My husband, who has been living just a mile from UF since 1996, naturally shared my enthusiasm. Our meeting with Daryl solidified our choice. His enthusiasm and detailed explanation of the course convinced us that UF was the perfect place for me to study English.

When I started my English course here, I was incredibly lost because I could barely understand what my teachers and classmates were saying. However, the first thing that struck me was observing how effortlessly everyone communicating in English could connect with each other. This realization motivated me, and I told myself that "I can do it and I am going to do my best! I

wanted to learn, to speak, and understand various cultures.” This was my first encounter with such a diverse group of people from different countries, and I eagerly embraced the opportunity to learn about their unique backgrounds and perspectives.



My first source of support came from my teachers, especially Miss Melina and Miss Lynne, provided invaluable support through their excellent classes and patience in teaching. I felt incredibly comfortable and free to ask questions and clarify my doubts, and I consider myself extremely fortunate to have found other wonderful teachers like Miss Jane, Mister Todd, and Mister Matt, who, with their kindness and dedication, made a significant impact on all of us. Without their presence, none of this would have been possible, and for that, I am profoundly grateful.

I am also incredibly thankful to Miss Tate for her excellent organization of CIP activities, which offered me the opportunity to practice English in a relaxed, non-classroom setting. These activities allowed me to get to know my fellow students better, engage in games, and naturally improve my English language skills. I am grateful for her selection of excellent Language Ambassadors (LA) like Leah, Katherina, Alex, Danielle, Will, and Mathis, who brightened my day and made our conversations lively and engaging during LA class. Participating in CIP activities gave me the confidence to navigate various situations, such as going to a restaurant, supermarket, or beauty salon.

In addition to my teachers, I must extend my heartfelt thanks to the entire ELI staff. Their unwavering dedication, tireless support, and welcoming environment have made this journey of learning and adaptation possible. From the administrative personnel to the friendly faces at the front desk, their collective effort has created a warm and encouraging atmosphere at the ELI that

has made my transition to a new country and culture much smoother. I am immensely grateful for their role in my journey of personal and academic growth.

Furthermore, the CIP activities provided opportunities for socializing and language practice, and the exceptional help from my teachers. I must also express my deep gratitude to my love, my soulmate, for supporting and bringing me here, as without him, none of this would have been possible. Thanks to him, I've come to adore Gainesville and appreciate its abundant offerings, from dining at fine restaurants and enjoying the movie theater to indulging in ice cream. He has also taught me all about American culture, deepening my love for this city. Sometimes, life brings surprises that unexpectedly become the best part of our life. So, when life presents something new, embrace that opportunity; perhaps it is the key to a new and better life. It all depends on the gratitude we feel, the steps we take, coupled with the discipline and dedication we bring to each day.

Sultan Alqahtani

RW 40

The ELI

The ELI Institute, known as the ELI, is an institute that teaches English to international students. It is a professional institute in every sense of the word.

Within the main office of the institute, there is a distinguished staff working hard to make this institute distinguished. They have selected very good teachers and have different ways of successfully teaching international students. They have developed strategies according to a clear approach for the institute's success, and they conduct surveys about teachers and the institute for students to continually make this institute distinct. They carefully test the students before they begin their studies to determine their levels before the start of the term. We are very keen on ensuring that the student has good housing and good medical insurance, and they always seek

to help students both inside and outside the institute. To have a successful institute, having a very professional staff in the main office is a must.

The teachers at this institute are very hardworking. The teachers of this institute are very nice and wonderful. At first, they welcome the new students and make them comfortable as if they were in their home country. After a while, you feel like you are with your second family in another country. They explain the curriculum, vacations, activities, the passing requirements, the allowable absence percentage, and the grading distribution in the class. They work late hours at



night for the students, providing homework and tests and correcting them. They always give advice to international students, and if they need something, they help them immediately. Sometimes they ask us about our cultural

celebrations and make the class entertaining, sharing a few jokes before the start of the class so that the students feel in a good mood before the lesson starts. This institute has distinguished teachers who stay up late at night to see the results of their teaching efforts. There are very kind language assistants. In the beginning, they welcome you, introduce themselves, and get to know you, as usual. For me, this is the best institute to teach English. They communicate with the teacher for speaking and listening activities, determine the level of each student, and understand their proficiency level. They introduce engaging daily lessons as games that help the student remember the lesson and the day later. They participate in the activities and are close to the students, making them feel like they are among their friends. Sometimes they schedule the last lesson at the end of the school day in a coffee shop or restaurant, offering a variety of lessons

that put the student in a good mood for learning. Honestly, this institute has very nice and professional language assistants.

Last but not the least, this institute is the best English language institute in the USA for me.

Minseo Choi

RW 20

Spicy Noodle Challenge

Have you heard about Korean spicy noodle challenge? This challenge was popular a few years ago. The challenge is about people eating Korea's spicy noodle. It is so spicy that some markets sell it with a warning message. So, if you really want to try it, you should watch the challenge video before buying.

Then why Koreans eat spicy food? There are two major reasons for this. The first cause is cultural factors. 17th Korea, salt was a valuable ingredient managed by the royal family, so people could not get salt easily. Therefore, people needed a seasoning to use instead of salt and started using gochujang, a sauce made with spicy chili peppers. Afterwards, a food culture using gochujang developed, and most Korean food began to become spicy. The second cause is social factors. Korea is famous for its competitive society. Many people are stressed out because everything is a competition in Korea. So, they want to eat spicy food because spicy food releases endorphins to relieve stress and boost your mood. In addition, spicy taste is addictive. So, people look for spicy food when they are stressed.

As a conclusion cultural factors and social factors caused Koreans eat spicy food. If you meet Koreans, you must talk about it because many Koreans don't know about it.

Chaeyeon Lee**RW 40**

When I was young, my grandmother's house was in an urban town. The house was deep in the forest and there was no light at night. One day when the moon was full, my sister and I went out the home and started to find the restroom. Because the restroom was not inside the house, we needed to find where it was. Suddenly, we found it, and I was waiting for my sister in front of the door. Because of the full moon, the night was not too dark to wait. However, the clouds covered the moon, and I couldn't see anything. At that moment, I heard the wolf's howl and saw a werewolf standing on the heel. I was screaming and knocking on the door. When the door opened, a werewolf was staring at me instead of my sister. I fainted. After that, I woke up at my grandmother's house, and I realized last night's event was dream.

Sujeong (Jay) Kim**RW41****New and amazing experiences with the ELI**

I went to Clearwater Beach on September 30 at the ELI event. The weather was so hot that day, but I was excited to see the beach. I woke up early in the morning and went to Tampa by bus with my friends. My friends and I were excited at the moment. After arriving at the beach, my friend and I ate chicken at a restaurant called Hooters. It was the first chicken that I ate in the U.S. Unlike the chicken in Korea, it was very greasy and salty, but it was really delicious! After lunch, we took a walk on the beach. I felt like my body was burning in the hot sunlight, but the beach was really beautiful, so I took pictures with my friends. When I looked at the beach, I had many thoughts. In particular, I thought it would be nice for my family in Korea to come here together. Two hours before I left Tampa, I watched the sunset with my friends. We watched the sunset without saying anything because it was so beautiful. It was the best moment of my life. As soon as the sunset, we took the bus back to school. Everyone looked so tired, so it was quiet on the bus. I sent the pictures that I took the day to my family on the bus, and my family admired me that I went to such a beautiful place. It was a perfect day from morning to night.

Ariji, Hajar

RW 20

My Best Experience in the USA

My best experience in the USA was studying English at the English Language Institute (ELI). Before I came to the USA, I did not speak English, and it was difficult to learn English. Also, when I arrived in Gainesville, FL, I felt lonely, and I could not make friends because I did not speak English. Therefore, I decided to study English at the ELI. When I studied at the ELI, my life became easy and wonderful. For example, I am learning English with Zoe, and I improved my reading, writing, and grammar skills. In addition, I made friends from different countries, such as South Korea, Haiti, Brazil, and Saudi Arabia. I gained new habits. For example, I get up early every day, and I read stories in English. I learn different cultures. My experience in the ELI was very good and amazing. Learning English changed my life for better.

Baraa Sati

RW 40

In a mystical cemetery, cloaked in the enchantment of Halloween, an extraordinary black cat named Luna faced off against Skully, a skeletal guardian awakened from centuries of slumber. The night bore witness to an otherworldly duel, as Luna's agility and clever tactics clashed with Skully's spectral strength.

Their eerie battle under the moonlight led to a mesmerizing chase through the cemetery. Luna's cunning use of illusions and nimble moves left Skully disoriented. In the end, with a graceful leap and a victorious paw strike, Luna emerged as the ultimate champion, proving that life could triumph over death on this mystical Halloween night.

As dawn broke, Luna departed the cemetery, her emerald eyes reflecting the spirit of Halloween. She had become the guardian of the ancient graveyard, a symbol of life's enduring power even in the darkest of nights.

Maha Alhathal**RW40****Halloween Story**

In a local cemetery, when the Sun went down on Halloween night, a black cat suddenly appeared. It's glowing eyes and scary presence made every one jump. Under the full moon, a horrifying scream echoed through the night. A spooky bat circled overhead. Little did they know, some one's life changed that night, as they uncovered mysterious ancient grave, and the town's secret began to unravel.

Aaref Aljasmi**RW 20****The International Student from U.A.E**

This is the end, but it is not the end of my studies or life, and today I will write to you my story and my life in America, especially in the city of Gainesville at ELI. ELI really helped me reach my dream of changing my life in English. ELI is a great place to learn English and change the life of anyone who wants to learn the language and get started. I started my journey with ELI for the

first time on January 1, 2023, and continued in the last stage from September 05, 2023. On 01/01/2024, I will return to my country, the United Arab Emirates, for my family and my private life. Of course, I will miss the institute, the teachers, and my classmates that I met during my studies, and I



hope to come back to the institute and my academic life. I lived a beautiful life at University of Florida in Gainesville with my adventures there. As the days go by, I will remember every moment of my academic life and my travel adventures in America. Also, I will never forget this experience for the rest of my life, and I will talk about it to my family and children about my story about the institute. I will never forget my loved ones who helped me learn the English language and the wonderful weather in Gainesville. Of course, I will not forget all my teachers and classmates. My teachers are very nice and helpful, and my classmates are from all over the world.

I want you all to know that each and every one of you has the potential to achieve this and so much more. It's not about perfection, it's about perseverance. It's about believing in yourself, even on the days when it seems impossible. To all the students, I wish you success in your academic life in Gainesville. As for the new students, I want to say: Welcome. This is the beginning of a new chapter, and you have the pen to write your own story. Seize every opportunity, ask for help when needed, and never let failure hold you back. They are just a stepping stone to success. Let my story and journey be a testament to you of what is possible when you believe in yourself and work hard. If I can do it, you can do it. Let's make our dreams a reality, together.

Yureidy Jimena Chinchilla Romero

RW 50



I have wonderful memories of Halloween when I was a child. I wore a gypsy costume on Halloween every year until I was nine years old. When I was ten years old, my father passed away, and I had to live with my grandparents. Despite this, I wanted to wear a gypsy costume again. My grandmother, who is a creative person, started to look for a gypsy costume in her things, but when she started to look for pieces of the costume, I realized that my gypsy costume

became a clown costume. That was my last time that I wore a costume. Nowadays I think it was



a fun experience because my grandfather joked all night that I was a beautiful gypsy even though I was wearing a clown costume.

In some places in Colombia, especially where I live in Nátaga, Huila, it is not common for adults to wear a costume. For this reason, I was happy to have the opportunity in the United

States to wear a costume, because for only one day, I can be whoever I want.

This year I had the opportunity to wear two different costumes. My first costume was a devil. I wore it to a club on October 28th, and my second costume was a gothic doll which I wore to my ELI Classes on October 31th. It was an exciting experience. I was happy because I saw many different beautiful costumes of my classmates. I could take many pictures, get a lot of candy, and I felt like I was nine years old again. I believe that all students who wore a costume could feel similar feelings as me.

Halloween is a special day that I would like to spend in the United States many times as I can because I can do many great activities that transport me to a magic world.

Alghamdi, Muath**RW 20**

My Journey at the ELI

The ELI has really helped me and changed my life in English. ELI is a nice place to learn English. I started my journey with ELI for the first time on October 18, 2023. I will continue next semester. From the first day I met many friends, I started meeting all my teachers and classmates.

My teachers are nice and help me learn English, and my new classmates are very cool from all over the world. The school building has a beautiful design and a beautiful location. The building is spacious and comfortable, so I like



it. All teachers teach in different ways but they are all nice and enjoyable so we can understand. Teachers take time with students who need help. ELI is an ideal school for anyone who needs to learn English. In the first stage, I met new nice colleagues, and I am very happy that I got to know them. I am not ready to part. I met other good colleagues. We learned English excellently at ELI. For myself and my fellow students, we thank the administration, teachers, and activity organizers for their efforts. I hope that the hesitant students will come. This is the best place to learn the English language. I wish everyone progress in the English language, good study, good luck and lasting success. I wish to be a student at UF to complete my studies [Bachelor's Degree in Mechanical Engineering].

Luisa Velasquez**RW 51**

Social Media and Its Impact on Young People



Social media has become an integral part of modern life, with billions of users worldwide engaging on platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and TikTok. The rise in popularity of social media and what effect does it have on young people? Various factors. This essay explores some of the key reasons behind the emergence in social media usage and delves into the profound effects it has on young people.

One of the primary reasons for the rise in popularity of social media is its ability to connect people in the world. It allows individuals to communicate with friends and family, both near and far, in real time. Young people, in particular, have embraced social media as a means to maintain and strengthen their social connections. This instant connectivity fosters a sense of belonging and helps combat feelings of isolation, especially important in an increasingly digital world.

Social media provides a platform for individuals to express themselves, share their thoughts, and showcase their creativity. For young people, this aspect is particularly appealing, as they are in a phase of self-discovery and identity formation. Through photos, videos, and posts, they can shape their online personas, explore their interests, and connect with like-minded individuals. Social media becomes a canvas for self-expression and a space for personal growth.

The diverse content available on social media platforms contributes to their popularity. Young people are drawn to the endless stream of entertaining videos, informative articles, and engaging discussions. The algorithms used by these platforms tailor content to individual preferences, creating a personalized experience. This keeps users engaged and encourages them to spend more time on social media, consuming a wide range of content.

The fear of missing out is a psychological phenomenon that has intensified due to social media. Young people often feel pressured to be active on these platforms to stay in the loop with their peers. The constant updates and curated images of their friends' lives can lead to feelings of inadequacy or anxiety. The need to keep up with trends and maintain an online presence can have detrimental effects on mental health.

The rise of social media has coincided with a concerning increase in mental health issues among young people. Excessive use of social media has been linked to feelings of loneliness, depression, and anxiety. Comparing oneself to others based on carefully curated online personas can lead to unrealistic expectations and low self-esteem. Cyberbullying and the pressure to gain validation through likes and comments further exacerbate these problems.

On the positive side, social media has opened up new educational and career opportunities for young people. It can be a platform for learning, networking, and showcasing one's skills and talents. Many individuals have leveraged their social media presence to launch successful careers as influencers, content creators, and entrepreneurs. This aspect of social media's impact on young people demonstrates its potential for empowerment and personal growth.

In Conclusion the rise in popularity of social media can be attributed to its role in enhancing connectivity, self-expression, entertainment, and information access. However, it also brings challenges such as mental health issues, and unrealistic comparisons. Understanding these factors is essential for society to strike a balance between the benefits and drawbacks of social media, especially for young people who are most deeply affected by its influence.

Reina Tatewaki**RW 40**

When the sun went down, five of my friends and I went for a drive around my house. Suddenly, we found a haunted house. It was a little bit weird, but we decided to enter it. There was \$5 fee. It was inspired by an abandoned hospital. After we entered, a lot of ghosts startled us. It was very frightening, so we ran away. Some zombies and mummies followed us, and they startled us. It was hard to find exit, but finally we found. We went out the exit of the haunted house. We talked each other how we thought of haunted house. We noticed one of my friends didn't go out the exit yet. We never saw her again.

Hanan Alqutami**RW 60**

The "Starry Night" is a painting painted by Vincent Van Gogh in 1889. Every time I see this painting, I feel lonely and strong pain in my heart. It is like when something is stuck in your throat and preventing you from crying. The houses with fires, but without people in the Starry Night shows for me how Van Gogh lived in loneliness. Also, in the lower left



part of the painting there is black thing is looks like a tree, but I do not think it is tree. It looks like a nightmare which represents the bad psychological state he lived through. The painting depicts winter in a long time ago when there was not electrical.

In 1889, many people were killed almost 2,200 after heavy rain destroy the South Fork Dam. I believe if there is some thing going on in the world cause so much pain and deaths it will

affect the psychological state of the rest of humanity, especially people who have weak psychological stamina. So, in my opinion Van Gogh was showing us how the world is scary and lonely.

Diana Carolina Barragán Caicedo,

RW 60

How To Live A Hundred Years?

Have you ever heard about blue zones? Blue zones were first created in 2004, by Dan Buettner, a National Geographic Explorer, who highlighted places of extreme longevity and the causes of this phenomenon. Buettner and the team found that there are many aspects related with lifestyle habits that makes longevity the secret of all blue zones, and they called them Power 9. This is a compelling finding in the last decades that has been studied widely to achieve the goal of living longer and healthier (New York Times, BBC, 2023). Sardinia, Italy, is one of those places where researchers have been studying centenarians for the last 50 years. To illustrate, Villa Grande is an Italian Island tucked in the mountains, which has one of the highest concentrations of centenarians in the world (10% of the total population of Sardinia), which is three times higher than the national average, according to Seth Doane (2021). Researchers attested that the main secrets for living longer are related with eating healthy, being active, working and connecting socially, They suggest that beyond the family environment, there are genetic factors that influence survival and longevity. (Montesano A. 2011)

Well, some people might say that longevity isn't related with lifestyle or genetics, they argue that the only necessary thing to live longer is accumulating material wealth, but the truth is that there are a host of variables that affect the life expectancy of each person. Genetics are an important factor for setting you up, but the rest is just lifestyle, particularly the diet, regular exercise, community, family and education.

Furthermore, talking about genetics, longevity has a strong genetic component, such as the presence of APOE gene and FOXO3A gene, which are “involved in the protection of

cardiovascular diseases, which have been shown to be associated with longevity in nearly all studies” (C. Caruso et. al, 2022). The aging process is influenced by the molecular damage that affects the performance of each person, and the way people adapt to the environment. These mechanisms slow down the damage but they can be affected positively or negatively by various factors, such as: nutrition, exercise, stress management, genetics, sex and gender, socioeconomic and educational status, and social support.

Researchers have homed in on a specific genetic mutation that plays a role in cardiovascular diseases, one of the most important studies demonstrated a novel form of gene therapy that could rejuvenate aging hearts. Many centenarians carried a specific, unique gene mutation in the gene BPIBF4, associated with lower rates of cardiovascular diseases, leading to a gene therapy that in certain ways has the potential for rejuvenating heart cells and in some cases reversing several signs of heart aging. (Haridy R. 2023) Dr. Leiper, Medical Director at the British Heart Foundation states that these discoveries could pave the way to a treatment that reverses the decline of heart aging.

Centenarians are people with a beautiful long life span, above one hundred years, but what are their secrets? Johnny Pes, professor of the University of California, interviewed many of them to study this phenomenon, with incredible results. This community reveals that their secrets for living longer are starting in celebrating themselves every day, drinking a coffee in the morning and honoring their longevity. Likewise, the whole world talks about Sardinia; researchers found their own analysis that working hard for long periods of time, even at an advanced age, is one of the factors which kept centenarians totally active and healthy. Diet is another important factor that the researchers found to be a common healthy behavior in centenarians. Centenarians fasted during work hours, followed by a diet with more protein and fat in later years, which contributed to longer life spans (*An Italian village celebrates its many centenarians* 2021).

Some people might say that accumulating material wealth is the way to achieve a long and healthy life, also known as longevity. Admittedly there is a correlation between social status, economic stability and longevity. Nevertheless, studies suggest that the associations observed between wealth and longevity were modest; the result of the study shows that there is a 1%

absolute difference in the correlation of survival and wealth. At the very end, there is not enough evidence to support a strong relationship. Follow up analyses are needed to confirm the magnitude of these associations (Finegood, 2021). Examples are evident when analyzing the variable of GDP per capita and longevity. There are many outlier countries with a lower GDP per capita, but higher longevity values, such as Chile, with a GDP of 22,105 and a life expectancy of 80.7 years; compared to the United States with a GDP of 55,335 and a life expectancy of 78.99 years. Another example is South Korea with a GDP of 37,928 and a life expectancy of 83.34 years, compared to the United Arab Emirates with a GDP of 76,398 and a life expectancy of 79, 63 years. (Zijdeman et al. 2019). With this in mind, it is possible to conclude that there is not a general rule for making a strong correlation between wealth and longevity.

Education is another important topic that is worth mentioning. One social factor that is directly related with longevity and that many researchers agreed with is Education. Even more important than race and wealth, keeping young and old people in school can make the difference. A few years of extra school is associated with extra years of life. In 1999, a graduate student at Columbia University published a doctoral dissertation in economics, which corroborated the correlation between education and health. Investing in education is like investing in your own health and life span. Dr. Lleras Muney, assistant professor in Princeton, performed a study where she compared the life span in the population census before and after the government law changed, making children go to school for longer periods of time. The results were unbelievable: people who attend just one extra year to school live one and a half years more than their peers who don't. Finally, Dr. Lleras states that educated people are better at controlling their impulses, which can help them to make better decisions and plan for the future. There are definitely a host of advantages that education could bring to everybody's life.

Furthermore, living in a tight community can also be an important part of healthy lifestyles. Social cohesion could be another secret for living longer. A lot of studies have shown associations between religion and longer life expectancies. Specifically, the explanation in some studies was that people who attend religious services regularly show a reduction in their body's stress responses and even in mortality. Marino Bruce and his team from Vanderbilt University, measure clinical settings, such as blood pressure and hormones related with stress responses,

and demonstrate a significantly lower risk of early death in churchgoers (46% less likely to die). Similarly, Nigel Barber (PhD) studied the relationship between religiosity and longevity and concluded that religious Americans have stronger immune systems and they are prone to promote healthier lifestyles. As a result they improve stress management and establish better social support and a bunch of health advantages (Barber, 2021). In conclusion, all of these studies are trying to demonstrate that the important factor about longevity in religious people is that they are a very tight community, they support each other. In short, social cohesion is another secret for living longer.

With this in mind, how to live a hundred years? You must think about many factors that are directly related to longevity. There is not just one specific topic that you can focus on. There are many scientific studies and empirical evidence that demonstrates that the most important factors are eating healthy, being active, working and connecting socially. It is true that genetics play an important role in the life span of each individual, but that is not enough. There is a wide variety of lifestyle habits which can change the way you adapt to the environment and the way your genes are expressed. For this reason we need to debunk the belief of accumulating material wealth, because the correlation between wealth and longevity is modest. There are other factors that pave the way to pursue longevity.

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Nahomi Carrazana

RW 41

One of my best experiences since I started studying in Gainesville was going to Clearwater Beach. It was a trip with my friends from ELI. It all started with a two-hour bus ride from Gainesville to Tampa. That trip was a lot of fun. We were singing and dancing. When we arrived, the first thing I thought was that the beach was very nice and the weather was very good. Before we went to the beach, I went to eat with my friends at Hooters and the food was delicious. Then we went to the beach and were in the water for more than two hours because the water was warm. After that, I went to eat pizza with friends and we were waiting for the sunset. One of the best sunsets I had seen. After sunset, the bus went to pick us up and we had a two-hour return trip in which I rested a lot. It was one of the best experiences and if you have the opportunity to go to Clearwater Beach, I recommend that you go.

Lee, Gyubin**RW 20****Mosquitoes**

My experience about mosquitoes in Gainesville was awful. Since I came to Florida, I have been struggling a lot because of mosquitoes. The mosquito bite was swollen, itchy and left a scar. I could not sleep well at night because it was so itchy. Florida is warm and humid, so there are too many mosquitoes. Therefore, you need to be careful about mosquitoes during outdoor activities. There are some good ways to take care of mosquito bites. Use an ice pack on the itchy areas. It can reduce swelling and itching. Take antihistamine medicine can also help reduce the itch. Additionally, use creams that reduce itchy can be effective. My recommendation is Benadryl Extra Strength Itchy Stopping Cream. You can buy it at CVS, Amazon, Walmart, or any stores. The most important thing is avoiding getting bite by mosquitoes. Use Mosquito repellent on your clothes or try to avoid mosquitos as much as possible during activity times. Mosquitoes are generally more active before sunrise and after sunset. Watch out for mosquitoes while you're in Florida, and if you get bitten, try the methods that I explained. I hope it helps.

David Ariza Pena, Wendemi Nikiema, Shehab Alkandari**RW 31****Burkina Faso, Colombia, and Kuwait: Three Beautiful Countries**

There are several difference and similarities between three countries. First, these countries are on different continents for that reason, they have different traditions. Let's talk about our amazing customs. Burkina Faso is in West Africa. There are traditional events for the custom *Moosi*, during this time a lot of people wear traditional clothes called *Faso Danfani* and do the activities like parade on the road. Colombia is in South America, and have many different holidays, festivals, and carnivals depending on the city, but our most important celebration is the carnival of Barranquilla. Therefore this week the peoples put on colorful clothes, the streets are decorated and the parade is an incredible opportunity to know our history. Kuwait is in Asia,

specifically in the Middle East. We have so many things just our country does it like Kuwait National Day. We do a celebration called *masira* and also another celebration, *eid alwatni*. We have fun with both days because it's special. Kuwaitis, and other Arabs, are famous with the tall uniform we wear any time and it's very simple dress.

Burkina faso



kuwait



Colombia



In Burkina Faso, there is a national team who often plays friendly matches, but the most famous competition is African Cup of Nations. Thus, Burkina Faso has not yet won this cup, but in 2013 it got the second place against Egypt. Many people really want to play soccer, but unfortunately there is no financing for them. The people in Colombia like the same sport as Burkina Faso. In addition, the fans in Colombia really want their team to win every tournament. We have many different teams but when our national team plays, everybody supports our team. In Kuwait, our national team won the Asia Cup in 1982. Also our team was very good at football in the past and they took a high number in football and the fans and people in Kuwait enjoy our matches.



Laura Gomez Soto

RW 41

Bogota a Good Place to Visit

Even though Bogota has a bad reputation for traffic and security, it is a fabulous city in South America. The capital of Colombia offers a great variety of activities to tourists. If you don't have any idea, I recommend some things to do when you visit. First, Monserrate is a church that is located at the top of a mountain approximately 3,100 meters above sea level. You can get a cable car, train or walk up. In this place, you'll find restaurants, handcrafts stores, and obviously a beautiful church. Then, going down from Monserrate, the La Candelaria neighborhood is a good choice. This place is considered a colonial symbol for its architecture and narrow streets. There are different cultural places, such as theaters, museums, street entertainment, local gastronomy and more. On the other hand, The T-Zone is famous for having many shopping centers, parks, hotels, clubs, and businesses. There are a lot of options for lunch or dinner based on the money in your pocket. The T-zone has the best nightlife in the city, there are a large number of bars with magnificent terraces and delicious cocktails. If you have considered a trip to Bogota, these places should be on your list.

Solange Pierre Paul

RW 20

My Experience at the ELI

ELI is a very excellent program to learn English. Before studying at ELI, it was hard for me to make a sentence in English. It was difficult and hard to find correct words and speak to people. After studying two weeks at ELI, my English level started to progress because I learned a lot of vocabulary and did my homework every day. I began to listen and understand better what people were saying. I learned a lot and I want to thank to the ways that teachers help us and make a lot of good interactions between students. At the ELI, I have a very good conversation partner. I also have opportunities to talk to other people on campus. I am very happy to participate in this English program. It helped me improve my English level. I would recommend any friends to study in this program in the future.

Yamilia Morffe Tillan**RW 60****The Dynamic landscape of Immigration in the US**

Immigration has increased significantly in the US over the last decade. According to Reading 1, nearly 14% of the US population are immigrants, which represent 44 of the 327 million people in America's population. This influx has not only impacted the demographic landscape, but the labor market, educational level and health of the nation. Immigrants are a vital segment of the workforce, contributing to the economic growth of the country. The US has vast resources to offer to individuals who are seeking educational opportunities, and immigrants take advantage of that fact upon arriving in the country. Moreover, exploring the intersection of race and health, foreign-born individuals shed light on their intrinsic experiences. It is time to reconsider the narrative surrounding immigrants and evaluate their contributions, emphasizing the need for comprehensive and equitable policies. While critics argue that immigration has become a burden and has caused negative effects on society, we highlight the undeniable contributions that immigrants make to the country, and their multifaceted impact should be considered in the nation's prosperity.

The labor market, in particular, has been significantly influenced by the presence of immigrants. They were about 17% of the workforce in the US in 2014, being a prominent part of the growth economy. For example, in that year, almost half of domestic workers, 36% of textile manufacturing, 33% of the agriculture and 32 % of the accommodation, were immigrants (as cited in Reading 1). They fill essential roles across various sectors, from manual labor to highly skilled professions, addressing gaps in the workforce and sustaining economic growth. Immigrants contribute to the development of the country.

College-educated immigrants form a noteworthy segment of the immigrant population, contributing to the intellectual capital of the US. In Reading 3, authors show interesting statistics which demonstrate that in many cases, immigrants are more proficient in English than in the past, and they tend to have more advantaged degrees than Americans, "In 2018, 14 percent of immigrants college-graduated held professional or doctoral degrees, compared to 10 percent of their US born counterparts." (Reading 3) Those individuals also bring new perspectives and

expertise, fostering innovation and competitiveness on a global scale. Often the majority of college-educated immigrants have highly educated spouses. Educated immigrants should be recognized and their potential should be promoted as a crucial aspect for maintaining the US position as a hub for research, development, and progress.

The intersectionality of race and health among immigrants gives another layer to the debate. Looking at the health path of immigrants, we can find valuable insights into the future health of the US. By observing nativity and racial disparities in hypertension, diabetes and obesity, the Reading 4 highlights how immigrants' health outcomes vary as they stay in the country context even though some immigration policies increase the hostility that immigrants face and limit their access to social services. In general, upon arriving in the country, immigrants tend to have better health profiles than their native-born counterpeers, which improve when they access the social services and adapt to the local culture (Reading 4) This is another benefit that foreign-born people bring to the US. Understanding the challenges faced by different racial and ethnic groups in the immigrant community is essential for crafting policies that promote inclusivity and well-being of individuals.

Some may argue that the increased number of immigrants has caused negative effects on American's society. It is true that the immigration system has spiked in the country, and more than 1.1 million of immigrants are pending for VISAS in immigration courts. However, my point still stands because the policies for this matter have not always been stable and efficient, and political parties have prioritized their interests over the human reasons, (Reading 1). Immigrants contribute economically, culturally and socially to develop the country, enriching the American tapestry in ways that extend beyond essential values.

In conclusion, the evolving landscape of immigration in the US needs a nuanced perspective. Immigrants impact positively on the labor market, educational level and health of the nation. While immigrants continue to shape the nation's identity, policies must adapt to foster an environment that recognizes and values their contributions. Embracing the cultural, economic, and intellectual richness that immigrants bring ensures a brighter and more inclusive future for the US.

Jiyeon Park (Journie)**RW 40**

I'm in CASA Dance, which is a dance club at UF. CASA Dance is the Chinese American Student Association's dance club. I applied for CASA Dance with my friend Kattee who studies Chinese at UF.

CASA Dance participates in every major event such as cultural shows, mid-autumn and Chinese new year. I had a performance for the Mid-autumn festival. We usually have 3-4 weeks of practice before the show. Within these 3-4 weeks, we have regular practices and hell week. In my experience, hell week was such hard work and I spent the whole 7 days after school on top of garage 14. When I have practice, I come to events with an open mind, good attitude, willingness to learn, and most importantly, to have fun. In addition, I've never tried to dance like this before I came here. Although I didn't have any experience with dancing, I enjoyed the dance community. The performance was so wonderful. Everyone enjoyed dancing together and had fun. While I prepared for the show, I met a lot of friends in CASA. Also, I shared Korean culture with friends who love K-pop. My new friends and I will throw a "Kimchi" party. As you might know, dance makes us harmonious and gives energy to each other.

If you want to have some more interests about CASA, you can get started by following their



Facebook page. There you will see updates about all things such as dance calendars, workshops, and programs!

Yerin (Elly) Kweon

RW 41

Painting a pumpkin and seeing bats for the first time!



I went near UF Bat House to paint a mini pumpkin on October 29. I really wanted to decorate some pumpkins because it is not culture to carve them in Korea, my country. I only saw Jack-O-Lantern in the movies and on the Internet, and there are many kinds of pumpkins and unique patterns. In that place, I chose a little pumpkin that I want, squeezed the colors on the plate, and painted using brush on the bench. After thinking about what to draw, I decided to draw a poisonous apple from Snow White. While I painted the pumpkin, I could meet and talk with many people like my ELI friends, LAs and CPs. We shared the idea that we have, and praised each other's work. They have creativity and I loved watching pumpkins with their own tastes.

Surprisingly, there was a friend who had a poisonous apple as a tattoo that became the motor of the pumpkin I made! It made me laugh. Finally, all had finished painting pumpkins, and sun was setting, and we could see a flock of bats coming out of the house. It was amazing, but spooky. Next time, I want to make Jack-O-Lantern by myself.



Hongil Choi, Victor Gutierrez Cedeño, Omar Alanizi

Similarities and differences between Korea and Venezuela

There are too many countries in the world. Every single each countries have their own cultures. Both of countries, south Korea and Venezuela have many similarities and differences. First of all, They are in different locations. South Korea is in Asia and Venezuela is in south America. Secondly, both two countries have different method of greeting. People in south Korea shake their hands and people in Venezuela kiss their cheek. Finally, both of two countries use different languages. South Korea uses Korean and Venezuela was Spanish. In conclusion, both of two countries have many differences and both of they are good countries.



한글



Similarities and differences between Korea and Kuwait

Kuwait and Korea have lots of differences. But they also have things in common. Both of countries are located in Asia. In addition, both of two countries are famous with eating rice. In Korea, they eat rice with many side dishes like Kimchi and also Kuwait, they eat rice with meat or chicken and they machboos. In Kuwait, greeting



is shaking hands and kissing cheek, however in south Korea, greeting is shaking hands. In summary, Both of countries have lots of things in common.

Comparing between Kuwait and Venezuela

Every country in the world have their own culture, Kuwait is all the way far from Venezuela. Venezuela people say greeting by shaking hands and kissing cheeks as well as Kuwait. For food in Kuwait almost everything contains rice their traditional food is called machboos which is rice with meat or chicken . also in Venezuela they eat pabellon which is a traditional food that is similar to machboos . Venezuela is located in south America unlike Kuwait which is located on the other side of the world in the middle east. In Kuwait famous people are mostly actors and they are famous with comedian movies . different than venezuela famous people are mostly baseball and singers. Although every country in the world have their own culture they all have things in common.

Gyeongmin (Aaron) Kwon**RW41**

Do you like to learn English? If your language is not English, it will be difficult to learn English. In Korea, English is one of the most important subjects. However, I really didn't like to learn English. It was really hard for me. I went to English Academy a lot but my English grade didn't improve. I experienced frustration and even almost gave up English. However, since I went to on an exchange program in the Philippines for a month 1 year ago, the other person could understand the meaning if what I wanted to say. I wanted to communicate using English, so I started memorizing vocabulary. Although it was difficult to make an English sentence, if I knew a lot of English words, the other person could understand the meaning if what I wanted to say. If you want to improve your English, talk a lot in English with your American friends, LA, CP and ELI friends. You will study English yourself to communicate with them in English, If you are not interested in learning English by yourself, your English skill will not improve. Getting a girlfriend or boyfriend can also be a good way. (If you can...) Nevertheless the most important thing is your will. If you are here to learn English, try to speak English. Efforts never betray. Do your best.

Sohyeon Lee**RW41**

Making A Special Pumpkin

One of the best CIP activities is Pumpkin Painting at the Bat Houses. It was my first time painting



Photo by Sohyeon Lee

a small pumpkin. I chose the cute pumpkin and drew an animated movie character named Gromit on the pumpkin. Other friends' pumpkin drawings were so cute and nice. I

could see drawings of national flags, fruits, Halloween, and cute pattern shapes. We took pictures with the pumpkin painting we made and talked together. It was also really fun socializing with ELI friends, new semester friends and LAs. After sunset, we moved in front of bat houses and waited the bats coming out. Finally, a lot of bats flew out and it was so amazing. I will never forget this day because I have never seen so many bats.

Doeun Kwon (Donnie)

RW 40

Today I'm going to talk about my new experience. It a rock climbing! I have never done climbing before. It seemed easy at first but it was much harder than I thought. I always failed every time I tried. I cannot hold the rock for long time because my hand so hurts. I think it's because of the friction between the stone and my hand. My hands were red and I had some calluses. But! It was totally worth it. When I somehow succeeded, I felt more refreshed and rewarded and this feeling gives me more motivation. and I tried climbing on a loop too and I thought this was more fits for me. I tried it twice, the second one was better than the first one. I did it faster and stably than the first try. It was a good work out even though it was sweaty. And right after that, only my hands hurt, but the next day, I had muscle pain in my arms and especially my back, and it became more painful.. but my arms is harder than the first and it mean I worked out well and maybe it is a good symptom. Anyway after climbing for the first time, I wanted to do more and do better. I think rock climbing is the best exercise for arms and back!



Paola Mora Rosario

RW41

The Delicious Ice Cream

If you want to try a delicious ice cream, I can tell you where you can find it. Since I arrived in Gainesville, I wanted to try a flavorful ice cream. One day, I went to the movies in Celebration Point with my friends. After the movie finished, we started walk around the area, and there was an ice cream shop named Kilwins, so we got in to buy some ice creams. At first moment that we got in, the smell was so good, it wasn't only ice cream. Also, there was candies, chocolates and fudge such as brittles, caramel apples, clusters, taffy, truffles, and chocolate-covered pretzels, Oreos, and Rice Krispies. Meanwhile, I decided to try a Cookies and Cream icea cream, and it was so delicious. For sure, this is my favorite ice cream even though it is a little bit expensive, it is worth it, so I recommend you to go to Celeration Point and try the best ice cream that you have ever tasted before.

Nacarid Crawford, Yi Jung (Linda) Pai

TAIWAN AND VENEZUELA THINGS SIMILARLY

Venezuela and Taiwan are totally different Countries but have some similar things. Both Taiwan and Venezuela are legal drink alcohol at 18 years old, and driver's license either. The weather in Venezuela is also the same hot as Taiwan. In Venezuela the language is not English. Likewise, the language in Taiwan is not English. (Venezuela-Spanish, Taiwan-Chinese). The Mother's Day in Venezuela is second Sunday of May in every year, similarly to Taiwan. In Venezuela, the family is very important, we try to stay together as much time as we can be possibly, so does Taiwan. In addition, Venezuela people love to eat rice every day, the same in Taiwan. Therefore, Venezuela and Taiwan are alike interesting Countries with equal passions.

Jinyeong (Becky) Park

RW41

Micanopy Fall Festival

I went to the Micanopy Fall Festival for a weekend activity. I thought Micanopy is far from Gainesville, but it was just 20 minutes by car. It was pretty close and I had a lot of fun there. At first, we met at the Norman Parking Garage and took LA's car. I took Joey's car with Kohei, Gyubin and Minju. When we arrived at the Festival, it was so crowded. It was a little bit hard to find a parking spot. We got out of the car and walked in, and we could see a lot of booths and people from the entrance. It was hot, so we bought lemonade first and started looking around the booth. The booth was selling various items such as clothes, crafts, jewelry and Christmas decorations. We ate Arepas and Kebabs there, it was so delicious. In my opinion Arepa was similar to Korean traditional pancakes. After looking at all the booths, we drank Coke Float. It was a drink with ice cream on top of cola, and it was amazing and really sweet. Every house had a lot of Halloween decorations and it was a festival full of decorations. It was an autumn festival in summer, but it was really fun.

Carlos Rodriguez

RW41 Fall 2023

My Favorite Hobby in Gainesville

My hobby is playing soccer, I have been playing soccer since I was 4 years old; consequently, I play very good. When I arrived to Gainesville, I didn't know where I can play. However, 1 month later, I found a field and in that field people play soccer every Monday, Wednesday and Friday. That field is called "Maguire Field". I go with my ELI friends Andres, Gabriel, Baraa and Claudia to play from 6 pm to 9 pm. Although, sometimes we play more time. Also, in Maguire Field, I have met new friends and they are from several countries like Venezuela, Brazil, Argentina, Korea, etc. Basically, if you wanna meet new friends and you know play soccer, it's the best place to you.

Park, Seungyeon

RW 20

My Good Experience at Disney World

I had an excellent experience at Disney World. I went to Disney world last month with my friend. Disney World is located in Orlando. My friends and I took the bus. Disney world is bigger amusement park than Disneyland. It is also a place that many people want to visit at least once. I like Disney World because I like the characters of Disney, and it gives me great pleasure. The most memorable experience was watching Disney firework. It was the most beautiful and magical fireball I've never seen in my life. Disney World made the best memories for me. If I come to Florida again, I will go to Disney World again.

Diana Carolina Barragán Caicedo

RW 60

The New Era Of Bilingual Education And The Advantages In The United States

Have you ever thought how speaking a second language can boost your professional and personal goals? The new era and the implementation of bilingual education have been opening doors and opportunities to our children to succeed in many aspects such as academic, cultural, and professional goals. Nowadays, the English language is the most studied language in the world; according to the British Council, approximately 1.5 billion people around the world are learning English, but what about other languages, like Spanish? "With 41 million Spanish native speakers and 12 million bilinguals, the United States is already the second-largest Spanish-speaking country in the world" (Quartz, 2015). With this in mind, bilingualism is an extraordinarily important quality that parents, schools, and universities must be promoting.

Bilingual education is defined by Merriam-Webster dictionary as: in an English-language school system in which students with little fluency in English are taught in both their native language and English (2023). In other words, this system of education is characterized by schools that implement the two languages in their classes, their native language and English. Other

opinions are that bilingual education is not an effective or appropriate model of education in the United States. Some people feel that the language of instruction in all levels of public education should be in English. Admittedly, there are some misconceptions about bilingual education, some people might say that bilingual education can confuse children, some others argue that they have smaller vocabulary in both languages, or maybe that they are going to mix phrases with words of both languages, or present language delays. These beliefs about bilingual education make sense, but statistically there are a host of advantages that bilingual education can achieve, including cognitive skills, late onset of certain diseases such as dementia, and alzheimers, cultural advantages, job opportunities, neuroplasticity and much more.

According to the researchers from Yale University, bilingual education has much to contribute to the developing brain; there are some minor disadvantages in bilingualism, instead, bilingual education has a lot of enrichment, developing cultural and cognitive skills and a host of advantages. (Kristina R. Olson, 2014). For example, researchers studied the concept of neuroplasticity: how our brains change across our lives, and this condition allows patients with brain injuries to partially recover, or at least develop a greater capacity in another one of their senses. Other findings suggest that bilinguals have a later onset (about 4 years on average) of Dementia and Alzheimer's disease. Furthermore, executive control and memory benefits have also been found, applicable to many scenarios outside the context, opening doors in social and experiential opportunities.

Equally as important, Voice of America in 2019, reported an increase in dual language immersion programs, researchers have shown that English learners do best in dual language programs. There are other methods to achieve bilingual education in most states. For instance, the students are mostly taught in their native language but also receive English training, but dual-language immersion programs offer classes in two languages (English and another language). Rand corporation in 2019 shows an increasing trend in popularity of dual immersion programs in the US, with an estimated between 1,000 and 2,000 in 2017. States are looking to expand their bilingual education by economically supporting colleges and universities for the next generation of English Language Learners educators for developing programs with the accurate knowledge and skills necessary to teach English.

In other concerns, parents of bilingual children have a lot of questions about the pros and cons of bilingual education. Will it be confusing? Will there be language delays? Nevertheless, there is not any scientific evidence that shows these programs are confusing or affect language development. For example, some people argue that bilingual children mix words from two languages. It is true that they can use both languages in some informal scenarios, but that is called code mixing, and that behavior is completely normal. Rather than being a sign of confusion, it shows the ability to modulate their language according to the situation, they can perfectly discriminate between languages depending on the need. Professors (Phd) of MacGill University said that “Bilingual education is only one way to promote successful early development... it is a window to the world... myths and misunderstandings are common, but facts are hard to come by.” (Byers & Lew-Williams, 2014).

Some people think that bilingual students slow down a child's ability to learn English, but that is not the case; as we see, two studies from Stanford University evaluated 9,000 ELLs enrolled in English-immersion programs, 4,000 were attending bilingual programs, 3,000 were attending transitional bilingual programs, and 2,000 enrolled dual-language programs that also include native English speakers. Researchers found that students who were enrolled in bilingual programs since elementary school were proficient in English compared with similar students who had been in all-English programs. (Maxwell, 2014). In particular, researchers from Washington State University found that bilingualism is associated with cognitive benefits such as increased control over attention, improved working memory, multitasking and better abstract and symbolic representation skills. These qualities let students achieve good public test scores, and finally better outcomes to go to the best public and private universities.

Thus, bilingual education has been proven to increase rates in laboral opportunities because the industry is looking for the characteristics of a bilingual person. A lack of proficiency in one's home language is associated with annual income losses between \$2.100 and \$3.300, according to the University of Phoenix Research Institute (2014), It is worth mentioning that the economic advantages are a wide spectrum of benefits for bilingual people; for example, bilingualism helps individuals obtain certain occupations, higher status jobs, such as doctors, lawyers, and executives, even with similar levels of education. Also for bilingual people who don't

have a high level of education there is an advantage over monolinguals in other kinds of opportunities, for example manual jobs and skill services, such as police officers, medical assistants, and receptionists.

As another result of bilingual education experts suggest that individuals who received bilingual education have better skills in intergroup relationships, identity, and self esteem. Studies from Canada and the United States demonstrate that bilingual education can have those positive effects. Bilingualism is closely related to psychological development, specifically related with self-related constructs. As a result bilingual education gives the opportunity to develop different self-structures in their different languages, and also, the possibility of interrelating with other cultures and acquiring the bicultural identity. ([Chen](#) & [Padilla](#), 2019). With this in mind, it is important to highlight the importance of being bilingual in the new era for being successful.

To conclude, recognizing the host of advantages that bilingual education represents to our population, we can be totally convinced that parents can be proud and sure to start from the beginning teaching their children in two languages at the same time. Myths and misunderstandings are common, but studies, professors, and evidence shows that these myths are debunked. With this in mind, as stated in the main statement, to be bilingual is an extraordinarily important quality that parents, schools, and universities must promote.

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Maha Alhathal

RW 40

There are many benefits of studying English in the United States. First benefit is the United States is one of the leaders in teaching English, and English is the most popular and official language. As a result, students will get high quality learning experience by studying English in the United States. Additionally, there are many different cultures in the United States. As a result the student can experience and learn a lot about American culture.

Rakan Aljuaid**RW 20****My experience at ELI**

The ELI makes me happy. When I arrived at ELI for the first time in Summer C, everyone welcomed me warmly, and everyone teachers and students helped me, especially because I did not speak English. I felt like I was with my family. To be honest, all the teachers and students advised me to attend all student activities, but I was not able to attend the activities due to my lack of time. Another beautiful thing about ELI is that you find diverse cultures and fresh students, and what is special is that the goal for everyone is the same. My experience with it was very wonderful, and if I could go back in time, I would

have had the same experience over and over again. I always feel happy at ELI, so I want to stay here as long as possible.

Danney Pamplona**RW 41 Fall 2023****Dragonfly Sushi an Unbelievable Experience**

If you are a sushi fan, let me tell you something. I have never in my life experienced such amazing food and service as I did at our very own Local Sushi hotspot, Dragonfly, located at 201 SE 2nd Ave., #104 in Gainesville, 32601, and it has to be one of the most amazing places I've ever eaten.

The wait staff, the service, the attention to detail, the ambiance, and the overall vibe at Dragonfly are exceptional. And then there is the food—OMG. I always start with the sautéed edamame with fish flakes, a dish that never fails to impress. Then comes the sushi. Dragonfly offers a variety of rolls, but my absolute favorite is the Mango Tango. Its flavor-packed topping and tangy mango sauce create a culinary masterpiece. There are other fantastic rolls like the Smoky Dragon, The Boss, and Slamming Salmon, but honestly, you can't go wrong with any sushi they serve.

During one of our visits, my husband and I were treated to a special experience by my LA, Danielle. She recommended a delightful assortment of sashimi and then surprised us with a dessert of fried cheesecake, accompanied by vanilla ice cream, sliced strawberries, and whipped cream. I never imagined a more perfect dessert; it was, by far, my most memorable dining experience.

We have frequented Dragonfly with both family and friends, and everyone loves it, even our friend Lia, who is from South Korea. Dragonfly has something for everyone. So, if you are looking for your next favorite restaurant, give Dragonfly a try. You might just fall in love with everything it stands for, just like I did.

Yamilia Morffe Tillan

RW60

Bilingual Education: Fostering an Inclusive Society

“Try again, you can do it,” a teacher says to a pupil, while she cries, feeling sad and lonely. Mia is a little six-year-old girl who moved to a foreign country, and is facing the worst moment in her life because of the lack of English, making it hard to understand what is happening around. This is one of the immigration’s issues and it is not just Mia’s story. Many students are living moments like that, and they need to achieve the learning of a second language while adapting to a new country. Can bilingual education help them to make it possible?

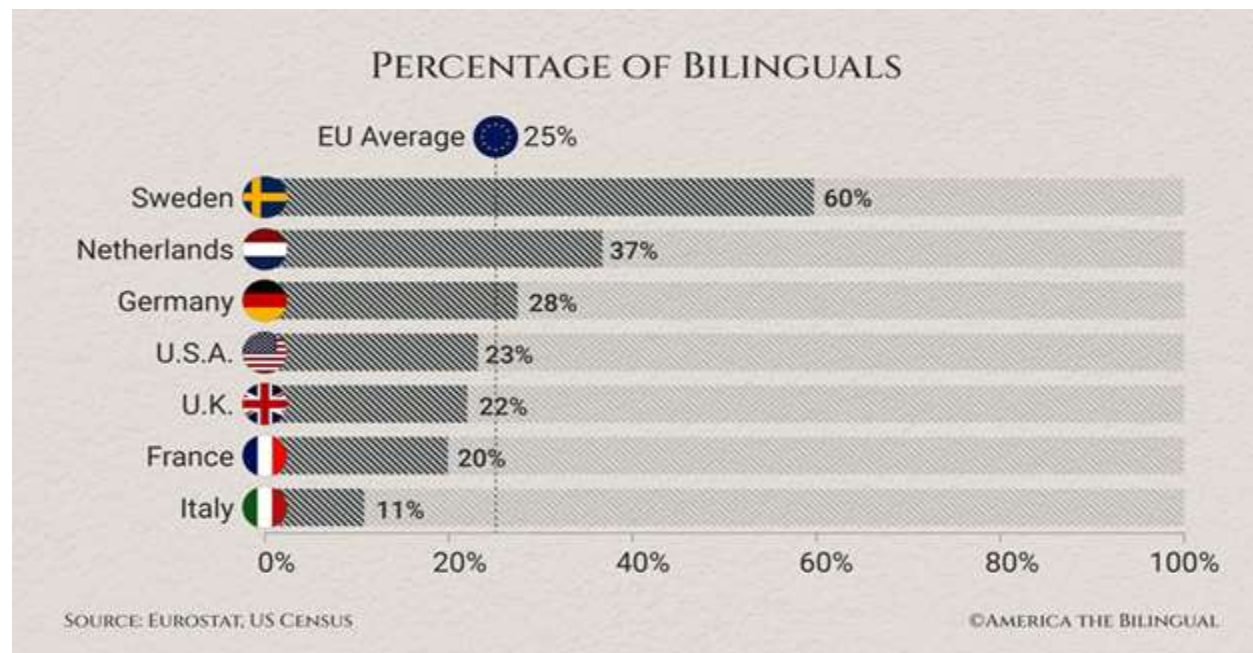
Bilingual education has long been a topic of debate in the U.S. For almost 40 years, Dr. Ellen Bialystok, from York University, and her team have studied bilingualism, finding evidence on both sides of this argument, but the advantages are superior, and showed that, “bilinguals have, on average, stronger executive control,” (Guirgis & Olson, 2014). This enhanced executive control makes some bilinguals' abilities stronger. According to published studies, (as cited in Golderberg & Wagner, 2015) nearly six meta-analyses can strongly support that instruction in a mother language improves English skills in students and two Stanford University researchers found evidence proving that students in bilingual programs from elementary to high school achieve higher proficiency in English when compared with others who had not been in them. While some argue that the language of instruction in public education should be exclusively English, **bilingual education stands as an effective and appropriate model of education in the U.S.** It promotes inclusivity, cultural competence, and cognitive development, making it a valuable asset to the nation.

One of the main strengths of bilingual education is its ability to connect diverse student populations, making it valuable for inclusivity. In a nation that is as culturally rich as it is varied, an inclusive environment for students from different language backgrounds is essential. The resources for this purpose are available, “The United States has great linguistic resources we are not only failing to use...; [m]ore than 11 million of the country's 50 million public school students speak at least one of 400 different languages other than English at home” (Goldenberg & Wagner, 2015). It is clear that diversity is present in the U.S. and bilingual programs are needed to allow ELLs to maintain their native language and identity while learning English, providing all students with equal access to educational opportunities. Bilingual classrooms bring students together from different backgrounds, fostering a sense of inclusion and respect. This environment also promotes tolerance and empathy, so students with strong language skills can engage better with society. Then, they can participate fully in the same professional opportunities as their English-speaking peers.

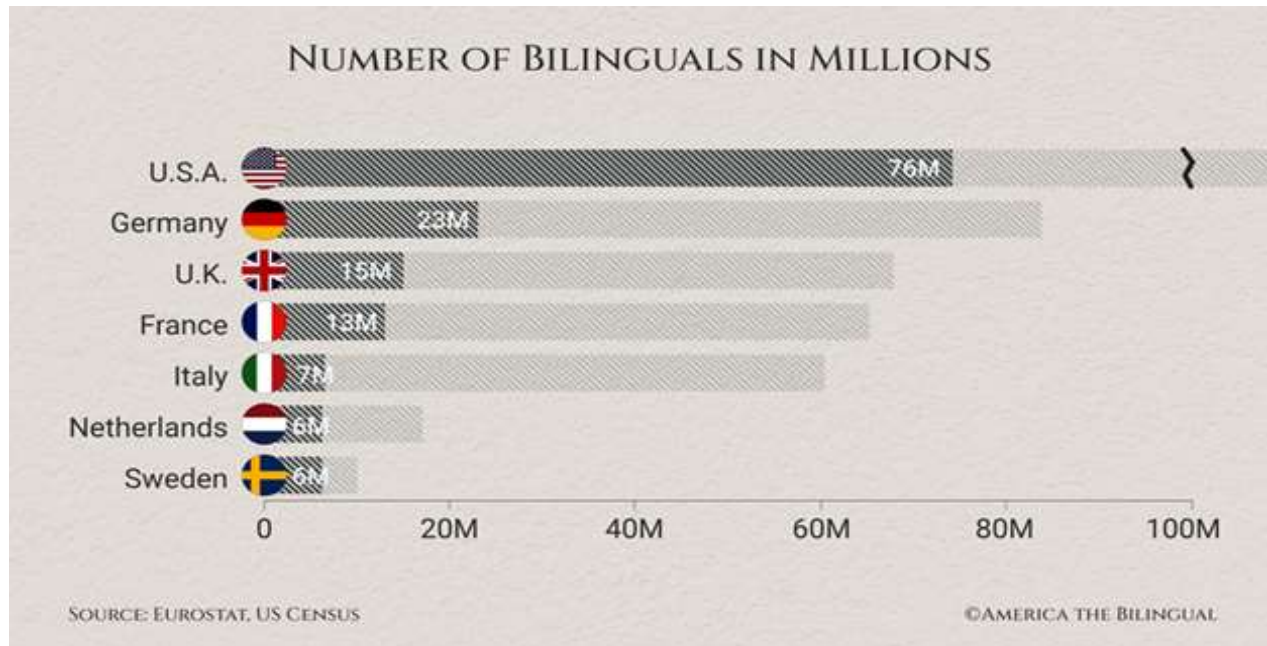
In an increasingly interconnected world, being bilingual is an asset for cultural competence. It prepares students to communicate with other language-speakers and understand different cultures. By speaking more than one language, students can become

competitive, being provided with a valuable skill that might enhance their future job opportunities, and engage stronger with a global society. Bilingualism offers opportunities for a better communication, “Bilinguals can make friends in more than one language meaning more opportunities to meet new people...{b}eing able to communicate with people from other cultures is a huge social advantage and can open up so many more doors in life.” (EOLE BILINGUAL de Berkeley, 2013). Learning a second language at an early age allows children knowledge of multiple languages in the future. This is a prominent benefit for traveling and speaking with members of the family who still live in the country of an immigrant child’s origin, keeping them in connection with their culture and history, (Akhtar & Menjivar, 2012 as cited in Heinlin & Lew-Williams, 2013) Restricting education to English only may rob students of significant skills for the demand of the global economy, in which communication with individuals from different backgrounds is essential. Culture is manifested in several forms; as more skilled individuals are to speak in another language, more information can be transmitted and more knowledge can be acquired. Understanding who others are makes individuals culturally competitive and better qualified for a globalized world.

It may probably be thought that the U.S has a small bilingual population and should not be concerned about this issue. Instead, some statistics have shown that a surprising 23% of the country’s population is bilingual.



This percentage might still seem small due to it being under the average, and lower in comparison with other developed countries. However, it represents 76 million people, and this number has been growing up during the last few years.



The infographic has been taken from the article: “The Surprising Truth About American Bilingualism: What the data tells us?” (Leveen, n.d.)

In other words, bilingualism is a prominent issue in the U.S. and bilingual education in all American states should not be relegated anymore. The statistics are very clear, “With a population of about 331 million, the US is much larger than the largest EU country, which is Germany”; “Whether you are working overseas in development, health care, or education, in diplomacy or in the military, your success depends on your ability to work well with colleagues in that country and to be persuasive. You must build relationships.” (Leveen, n.d.). Being bilingual is undoubtedly a great advantage for cultural competence.

Research suggests that bilingualism can lead to better cognitive development. In the instance, it seems that preschoolers acquire better skills to understand their surrounding when interacting with those from other groups (Bialystok & Senman, 2004; Goetz, 2023; Kovacs, 2009 as cited in Heinlin & Lew-Williams, 2013); “bilinguals appear to perform a little bit better than monolinguals on tasks that involve switching between activities and inhibiting previously learned

responses (Bialystok, Craik & Luk, 2012 as cited in Heinlin & Lew-Williams, 2013). Even in infants, bilingualism has memory advantages; “for example, generalizing information from one event to a later event (Brito & Barr, 2012 as cited in Heinlin & Lew-Williams, 2013). Acknowledging and understanding two languages has significant effects in the brain, as an example, researchers from Washington State University have revealed that “increased control over attention, improved working memory, greater awareness of the structure and form of language, and better abstract and symbolic representations skills” are some cognitive benefits of bilingualism (as cited in Goldenberg & Wagner, 2015).

At this point, it is proven that bilingualism impacts individuals positively no matter how old they are. The U.S. has a long history of immigration, and many families continue to speak their mother languages at home. Furthermore, bilingual education acknowledges and respects the linguistic diversity of the country while continuing to ensure students are proficient in English. “data from Spanish-speaking students in Texas’s Rio Grande Valley, found that bilingual education can help promote bilingualism without significantly sacrificing English proficiency,” (as cited in Goldenberg & Wagner, 2015). Therefore, some myths about bilingual education keep being an obstacle nowadays.

Those on the other side of the issue may say that bilingual education can delay the ELLs integration into American society. Nevertheless, my point still stands because studies have demonstrated that well-designed programs might contribute to the English language-learning and provide a strong foundation in the future student’s curriculum. In 2010, the U.S. had nearly 1,000 bilingual programs in public schools, said Gregg Roberts, the director of dual-language studies at American Councils Research Center. Other states, such as California, Texas, North Carolina and New York had more than 200 of those programs, while Washington, Minnesota, New Mexico and Florida each had between 100 and 200 programs, (Galvan, A. 2022). Also the support from parents can motivate ELLs, finding a balance that contributes to developing their proficiency in both, native and foreign languages, which facilitates the quick insertion in other programs. How can knowledge prevent the integration of individuals into a society? **More language-skilled students do not delay their approach to American culture, but give them a**

tool to manage their journey. The lack of bilingual education in the country delays the comprehensive and inclusive development that is required for competitive professionals.

For all these reasons, bilingual education is an effective and appropriate model of education in the U.S. It promotes inclusivity, cultural competence, and cognitive development. By giving equal opportunities to ELLs and addressing the barriers, they can insert themselves in society. The establishment of adequate policies in schools should be encouraged in all states of the country. Diversity promotes empathy and open minds, while expanding cultural competence, cognitive development, and elevates self-esteem in individuals. Inclusivity is basic for the sustainable cities that we all are called to build. It is time to stand, without distinctions, as a whole nation for a better and prosperous future.

If more and more countries teach a second language in their schools, and English is spoken around the world: Why has bilingual education not been established in all U.S. schools? Myths about bilingualism should be broken.

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Joevan Lebron and Carlos Delfin

Two beautiful Countries: Puerto Rico and Venezuela

Puerto Rico and Venezuela have a lot of similarities and differences. First of all, in both countries are home to very kind, hardworking and intelligent people. Both cuisines are great and loaded with a lot of Latin flavors.

Puerto Rico and



Venezuela share same language, but they have different accents. Puerto Rico is a small island in the Caribbean where almost 3.5 million people live. On the other hand, almost 30 million people live in Venezuela. The currency of

Puerto Rico is the US dollar and in Venezuela it is the Bolívars. They are two excellent countries who have many differences and similarities.



Diana Carolina Barragán Caicedo

RW 61

The Big Positive Impact Of Immigration Movement In The United States

Immigration is an important sociocultural and economic controversial topic nowadays. Some people might be alarmed at the current levels of immigration into the United States. Most of them argue that there needs to be strict limits on who is allowed to come to the United States, and at the same time people against immigration movement think that there must be barriers for obtaining legal residency and work permits. But the truth is that immigrants play an important role in many fields of the economy in the United States, without immigrants, the United States workforce would decline from 173.2 million in 2015 to 156.6 million in 2035, in other words the workforce is expected to grow to 183.2 million if immigration levels remain steady, according to the Council on Foreign Relations (Felter et al., 2023).

First, there are some important statistics. Immigrants comprise almost 14% (44 million people) of the United States total population, and their U.S born children make up about 28% of United States inhabitants (Council of Foreign Relations, 2020). Immigrants play an important role in the U.S economy. Large portions of the workforce in the U.S are constituted by immigrants in many fields, such as textile manufacturing, agriculture, and accommodation. In 2014, according to the Pew Research Center immigrants comprised 17% of the U.S workforce, 36% in U.S textile manufacturing, 33% in agriculture, and 32% in accommodation. This evidence allows us to conclude that immigrants are an important part of the economic growth in the United States; without immigrants the US workforce would decline in striking proportions (Felter et al., 2023)

Immigrants are an important source of higher-educated workers. In 2018 according to the Migration Policy Institute, 17% of college-educated U.S adults were born abroad; 32% of all immigrants had a bachelor's degree or higher levels of education and 47% in the last 5 years attended college. Conversely, the number of immigrants with higher levels of education in the United States has grown rapidly since 1990, with an increased percentage of 87%, and in the U.S population has also grown but at a slower rate with a percentage of 33%. With this in mind,

college-educated immigrants are more likely to have advanced degrees than their U.S born peers, 29% of the total immigrant population held professional, master's or doctoral degrees. For this reason, it is important that the government promote international education and give the opportunity to the immigrant population to stand out for their high skills (Olsen & Batalova, 2022)

On the other hand, Republicans, who are people supporting the republican government, are encouraging others to make a final decision to stop the immigration movement, they are calling for a return to Trump's hardline policies. According to the Reuters February Survey in 2021, 50% of all Americans said that they did not want to accept more refugees. Furthermore, Republicans are becoming more opposed to programs that benefit immigrants, and they are planning to increase the security measures in the border with Mexico. It is true that there is a huge increase in the number of illegal immigrants. Nevertheless, the point still stands because if the government supports the immigration movement, instead of prohibiting and stopping immigration completely, then the workforce and the high-educated workers will continue to increase. Positively, according to the Reuters February Survey in 2021, 61% of American adults support a path to citizenship for illegal immigrants. The number of Americans who do not want more fencing along the Mexican border has more than doubled over the past six years (Kahn & Morgan, 2021). In short, an October 2020 poll showed that 63% of the U.S population approve the policies to help immigrant population to obtain work permits. At the very end, Trump and the republicans vilify the migrants as criminals and potential terrorists, but this did not sway the elections, handing the Democrats the control, and proving that immigrants instead of being harmful for American Society, are beneficial in many aspects (Kahn & Morgan, 2021). To conclude, it is almost impossible to feel that immigration could harm the United States society, oppositely, it is an important factor for the economic growth. Furthermore, immigrants are increasing the number of high-education levels and are keeping the workforce stable. It seems more like a false perception of many U.S citizens that are vilifying the immigrants as criminals and potential terrorists. Despite this bad reputation, the truth is that without immigrants the U.S economy could be negatively impacted on a great scale. The value that immigrants can give to the United States is significant enough to start promoting and facilitating the pathway for accepting immigrants as part of the U.S society.

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Soyoung Park**RW 40****The Spooky Halloween Story**

This story happened on Friday 13. When the sun went down, Sara and Jeny decided to go to the burned house because they heard that there were some ghosts. They wanted to take a video and upload it to YouTube for fame. When they went inside, they heard footsteps and a woman's scream. They heard the sound every five minutes and someone yelled saying "help me!" They thought she was threatened by a ghost, so they ran to the place to help her. When they approached her, she looked like dead. They tried to call 911, but the dead woman opened her eyes all of sudden. She grasped Sara's arm and dragged her in the house. The dead woman mumbled "my life needs to change." Jeny went back to her house and told the story to her mom. However, her mom said "Jeny, Sara died last year. Who are you talking about now?"

Hyunjum Ham, Leonardo Grisolia Davila, Hazaa Alhazaa

Differences and similarities between Kuwait and Venezuela

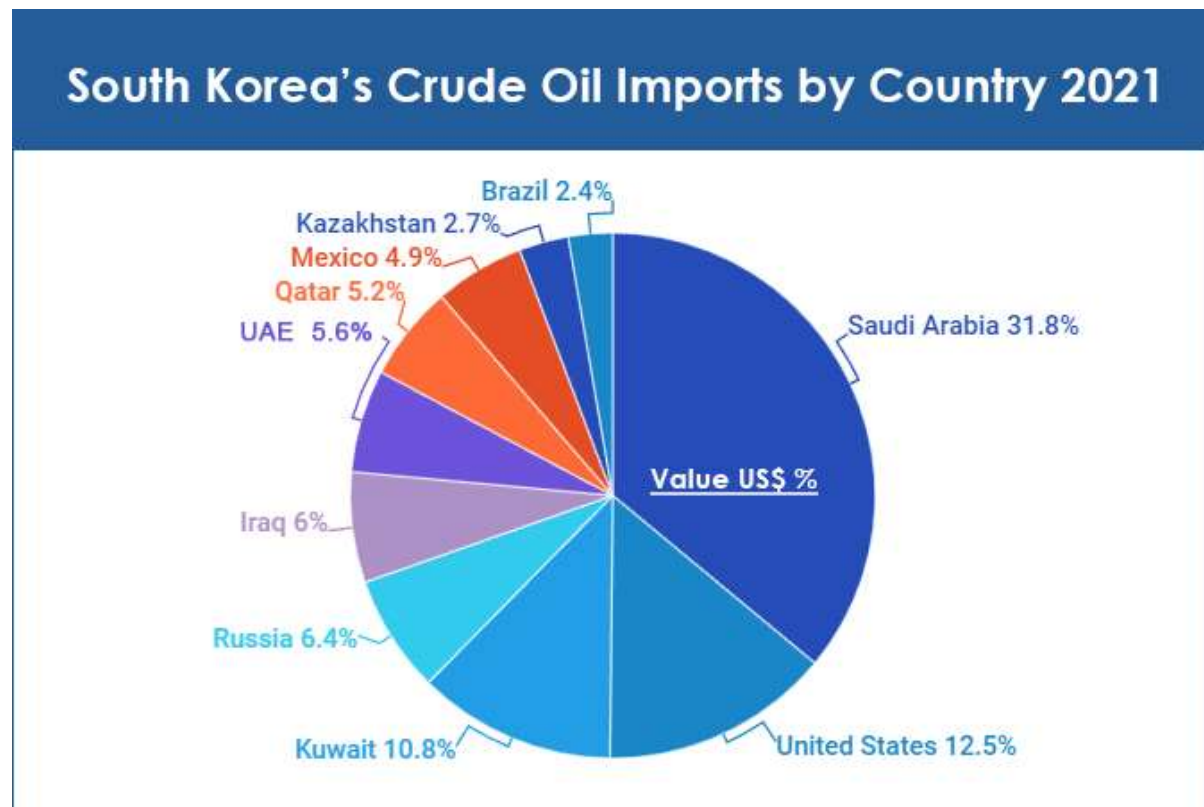
Kuwait's traditional foods is shawarma, is bred and chicken or beef sometimes, and in Venezuela the traditional food is Arepa is a little be similar to Shawarma. However, one of South Korean traditional foods is kimchi, which is spicy and salty. Most Korean foods are more spicy or salty compared to the two countries. Another similarity between Kuwait and Venezuela is that both countries have petroleum reserve. Venezuela and Kuwait are both major oils producing nations with economies reliant on petroleum exports, despite their geographical separation. Both have faced economics fluctuation due to oil price volatility and have smaller populations relative to their significant oil reserve.

Venezuela	Kuwait
	

Kuwait and Venezuela are known for having signification oil reserve. They possess some of the worlds largest proven oil reserve, with Kuwait holding vast quantities of crude oil, and Venezuela having one of the world's largest oil reserves.



However, In South Korea, there are no crude oil. So, many companies and Governments of Korea usually import the resource by other countries like Saudi, Kuwait, or America...



Mawaddah Hamza, Angelo Ferlicchia Figuera

Common things in different countries

Saudi Arabia and Venezuela have many similar landscape, transpirations and weather. If we look at Venezuela it has a front sea building. Likewise, Saudi Arabia has a front sea building. both cities have the same efficient



method in transportation by using car for moving from one place to another easily and quickly. Saudi Arabia and Venezuela are alike in two seasons which are summer with high temperature and humidity, also, cold dry winter. At the end, Saudi Arabia and venezoula are similar in several ways dispite they have a lot of diffrents things.

Mawaddah Hamza, Sungmin Park**Common things in different countries**

South Korea and Saudi Arabia are alike in buildings, transportations, and universities. First of all, South Korea has tall buildings, and so is Saudi Arabia. In addition, both of Saudi Arabia and South Korea are similar in using cars, planes, and boats. Also, Saudi Arabia and South Korea are alike in having a lot of universities in each city. In conclusion, South Korea and Saudi Arabia have a few similarities despite they have a lot of differences.

**Sungmin Park, Angelo Ferlicchia Figuera****Different ways in living**

Korea and Venezuela are different in many ways. First, the height of the building where people live is different. Most Korean live in high apartments. However, Venezuelan live in low buildings. Next, the temperature of weather is different. Venezuela is hotter than Korea for longer because Korea has 4 seasons and Venezuela is always summer. Finally, public transportation is different. There are no transportations in Venezuela. They use the car if they want to go somewhere. Korea has transportations. So, there are as many people who use transportation as those who use cars. In sum, we have different ways of living.



Gabriel Maza, Ali alhamad, Jia Sim

Similarities between South Korea and Venezuela



South Korea and Venezuela are similar in many ways. First of all, Both South Korea and Venezuela have presidential systems of government. They each have a president as the head of state and government. Second, South Korea has the island Jeju that is an important tourist place. Likewise, Venezuela has the island Margarita that is an important tourist place. Third, South Korea has unique and popular cuisines like kimchi and bulgogi. Similarly, Venezuela has unique and popular cuisines like arepa and empanada. Finally, Both South Korea and Venezuela are two countries that love the music like K-pop and reggaeton. Both countries are beautiful, and we recommend visiting them.



Similarities between South Korea and Kuwait

South Korea and Kuwait are alike in many ways. First of all, South Korea people usually eat rice. Similarly, Kuwait people usually eat rice. Second, Both South Korea and Kuwait have a connection to the global oil industry. Kuwait is a major oil producer and exporter, while South Korea is a significant importer of oil and has a strong petrochemical industry. Finally, South Korea prioritize education and has developed robust educational systems. Likewise, Kuwait prioritize education and has developed robust educational systems. I love both countries and I don't know where to go.



Similarities between Kuwait and Venezuela

Kuwait and Venezuela have a lot of similarities. First of all, Both Kuwait and Venezuela are major oil-producing nations. Because they count with a biggest oil reserve, and this represent a significant source of revenue. Second, Kuwait has desert climates, and Venezuela does, too. Finally, Kuwait had economic challenges in the past. Similarly, Venezuela has economic challenges now. Both countries are great and face a lot of challenges in their journey.



Estefania Herrera Ocampo, Fahad Almansour

Saudi Arabia and Colombia have different traditions but in some of them are similar like



a food for example the Shawama is like an arepa both are made with chicken, meat, or vegetables whatever

you prefer, and they made with wheat flour. In Saudi they get used to eat for snack dates and Colombians people they used to eat sweets made with fruit like pineapple or guava. So that is very interesting because both countries drink guava with milk for that both are similar. Another similarity is both countries export fruit for another countries. Now let's talk about the traditions in the countryside people how live in the fields the use houses for transportation that is more common in people how work collecting fruit, vegetables or something like that, so and both like travel in motorcycles like Harley Davison and BMW that kind of lifestyle. Another similarity could be some music in despite of they are no equal both play it with a similar instrument like a guitar both they are not the same guitar in Colombi and Oud in Saudi. They were some similarities most like because both are completely different.

Saudi Dates

Guava Sweet



Colombia Guitar

Oud Instrument

Karla Escudero Moreno, Hyojeong (Chloe) Park

Korea and Mexico



Korea and Mexico have many differences. First, both Korea and Mexico have four seasons, but those are so different. For example, Mexico is hotter than Korea in the spring and summer. Also, during the winter snows in Korea. But it

doesn't snow in Mexico. Second, some traditions are celebrating a little bit different. For example, valentine's day in Korea, only the women gave chocolates for men. However, in Mexico both women and men gave some presents for important people in their life. On the other hand, Korea and



Mexico are ways. First, spicy as Many people



alike in many Korean food is as Mexican food. like spicy food in

both countries. For example, Korea has Kimchi and Mexico has Chile relleno. Second, some rules are similar in the Korean and Mexican school. Like we need use uniform in middle and high school during the class. Third, both Mexico and Korea have national days. That they celebrate their



independences from other countries. In case of Mexico, they celebrate their independence from Spain. And in case of Korea, they celebrate their independence

from Japan. In conclusion, they could be in different continents, but they have somethings in common.

Claudia Zolofra Zabala

RW 40

Based on your experiences how do you prefer to study online or in person? I personally prefer to study in person and I think most people would agree. Although classes online and in person are very alike, they are different in many ways, such as the working process, flexibility, and safety.

First of all a the working process in both is very different because when you are studying online, you have to work by your-self. You don't have a teacher behind your back telling you what to do. But working in person allows you to have direct contact with the teacher and other students. In this case they are helpful because they can help you with homework, to study for a test and most importantly we are having fun all the time.

Another difference is flexibility. Online classes are more flexible. On the other hand, in person classes you have more strict rules, like schedules, and uniforms. While you are taking online classes, some schools allow you to change the schedules in a way that's better for everyone. For example, in my country when the pandemic arrived, they gave us the opportunity to choose our schedules because we had problems with electricity. So everyone couldn't take classes at the time table. However in person, you have to follow the schedules that the school gives you.

Lastly but not less importantly we have safety. With online classes we can prevent catching virus or bacterias from other people. That's why we all got locked in during the pandemic. On the contrary, in person is very easy to catch any disease.

Both of these ways have pros and cons, but that doesn't mean that one is better than the other. As we now know some differences are the way that we work on each, how flexible are, and which one is more safe than the other.

Youssef Zakhia

RW 60

Beyond Wealth: Multifaceted Pathways to Longevity

Imagine thriving communities in Sardinia, Okinawa, or Loma Linda, where longevity is not an exception but a norm, often not because of extreme wealth but due to a rich life experience. The quest for a long life, the desire to extend the human lifespan, has always been a popular topic, attracting countless theories about how to achieve it. The role of material wealth in this quest is particularly contentious. Some people might say that the accumulation of material wealth is crucial to achieving a longer life due to the access and opportunities it affords. However, this essay argues that longevity is influenced more profoundly by factors such as genetics, lifestyle choices, psychological well-being, and social integration, rather than the accumulation of material wealth.

Science tells us that our genes are a big reason behind how long we might live, and it does not have anything to do with how much money we have. There are some special people called “superagers,” individuals who live robust lives past 80. Researchers highlight the crucial role of genetics in longevity, an area untouched by one's wealth. For example, “superagers,” often have unique gene mutations that significantly slow down aging processes, particularly heart aging (Haridy, 2023). Moreover, scientist have done studies on twins to understand the role of genes in how long we live. These studies found out that longevity is 20-30% genetic, highlighting the inherent nature of lifespan determination (Liota, 2011). So, while many factors can affect our lifespan, our genes are an important piece of the puzzle.

Lifestyle choices, including diet, physical activity, and stress management, are integral to longevity, often transcending the benefits offered by material wealth. The “Blue zones,” are places in the world where individuals commonly live past 100 years. In regions like Ikaria, Greece, and Okinawa, Japan, the secret to such extended lifespans is that diets are predominantly plant-based, with high consumption of fruits, vegetables, and whole grains, coupled with regular physical activity, which is a common denominator among the long-lived (An Italian village celebrates its many centenarians, 2021). Additionally, these lifestyles often involve low stress and

a strong sense of community, factors that have been scientifically proven to contribute to longevity (Kolata, 2007). Conversely, in affluent societies, a higher income does not equate to a longer life; factors such as social inequality and lifestyle diseases significantly reduce lifespan (Life expectancy vs. GDP per capita, 2018).

Those on the other side of the issue may say that having a lot of money can make you live longer. They believe that if you're wealthy, you can get treatments from the best doctors and hospitals. This money can also let you buy fresh, organic foods that are good for your health. And it's true, money can open doors to high-end health clinics and fancy grocery stores with the best produce. Nevertheless, my point still stands because there is a bigger picture. Beyond money, the bonds we form with others, mental health, and a sense of purpose are super important for a long and happy life. Think about it: having friends to laugh with, share memories, and support you during tough times can make life worth living. When we are mentally healthy, we handle stress better, enjoy the little moments, and can bounce back from hardships faster. Having a strong reason to jump out of bed with excitement, whether it is a hobby, a job, or helping others, can give our lives direction. For instance, often live longer, and this is hypothesized to be due to the strong social support and sense of purpose they find within their communities, not their material wealth (Barber, 201 C.E.). This shows that there's more to life than just material wealth.

The evidence clearly supports the notion that while material wealth offers certain conveniences, it is not the critical determinant of longevity. Longevity is a tapestry woven from multiple threads — genetics, lifestyle, mental fortitude, and social connections — and these elements, not wealth, are the cornerstones of a life well-lived. Therefore, individuals and societies alike should reorient priorities from wealth accumulation to the enrichment of these other aspects, fostering environments that support these true pillars of a long, fulfilling life.

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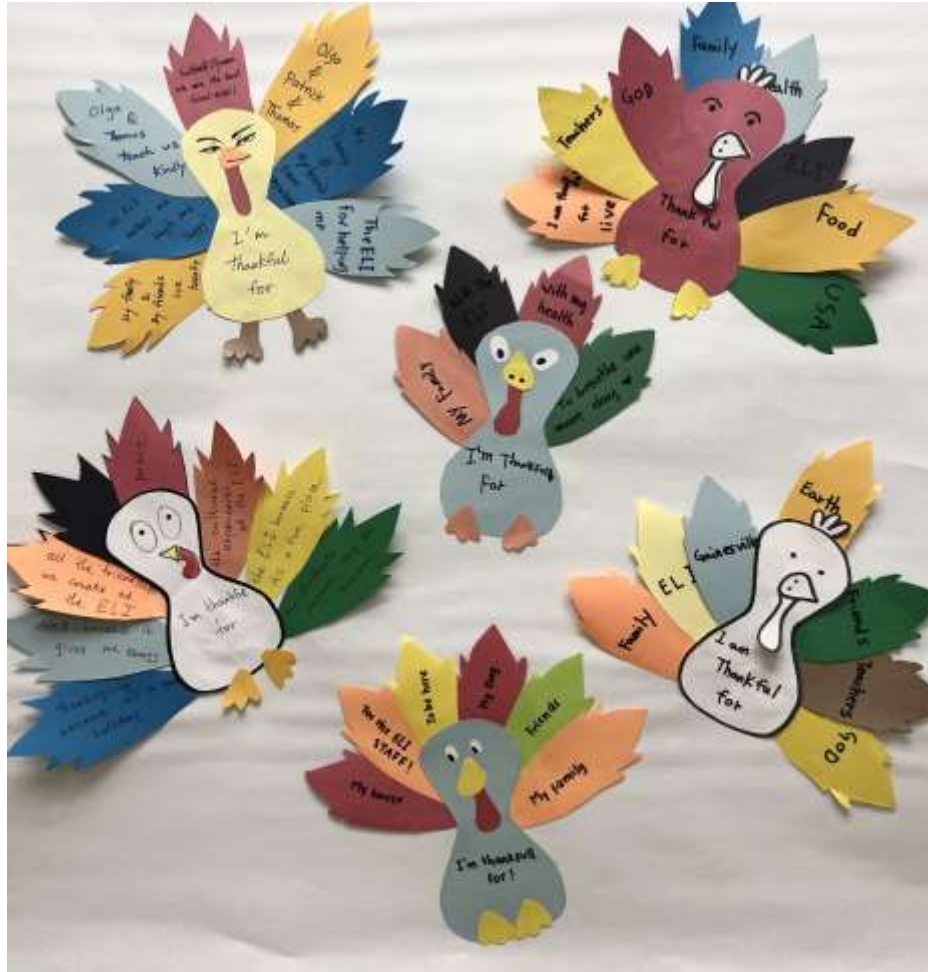
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PO Box 117051

studyenglish@eli.ufl.edu

223 Matherly Hall

<http://www.eli.ufl.edu/>

Gainesville, FL 32611-7051

<http://www.facebook.com/UFLELI>

Phone: (352) 392-2070

<http://www.instagram.com/UFLELI>

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