

The ELI Weekly

Out and About: A New Chapter of My Life

by *Thais Ramos Santana, RW51*

The day I stepped off the plane at Gainesville Regional Airport, the humid Florida air enveloped me, signaling the start of a new chapter. I had always envisioned this moment, yet the reality of leaving behind the familiar now settled heavily upon me.

In Campinas, I was used to the rhythmic sounds of the Brazilian Portuguese language, the rich aromas of feijoada simmering in the kitchen, and the vibrant festivals that punctuated the year. Here, in Gainesville, the dominance of English, the unfamiliar faces, and the slower pace of life made me very aware of my “outsider status”.

The initial weeks were a series of challenges. Navigating the University of Florida campus felt like exploring a vast maze. I’ve heard that students usually take long walks to get where

they need to be, and I certainly couldn’t agree more! Cultural nuances, from casual greetings to social etiquette, were foreign to me. I recall a particular incident at a local cafe – Starbucks - where my thick accent and hesitant speech drew puzzled looks as I attempted to order a simple coffee!

Determined to find my footing, I joined an Intensive English Program at the ELI/UF. One afternoon, I was hanging out with my friends and we began to share more curiosities about our cultures. When it was my turn, I spoke about Brazil's rich traditions, highlighting the exuberance of Carnival, the rhythms of samba, and the significance of our national sport, football. As I shared stories and photos, I noticed my friends' genuine interest, their curiosity bridging the gap between our diverse backgrounds. This small talk not only allowed me to showcase my culture but also adopt a deeper connection with my peers, as we celebrated the beauty of our differences.

This experience has been a turning point. I am beginning to embrace the duality of my identity, finding a balance between honoring my roots and embracing the new culture around me. I have started exploring Gainesville's diverse offerings, and I am even picking up regional expressions/slangs. The once intimidating environment has transformed into a mosaic of opportunities, each day offering a chance to learn and grow.

This experience is not just about discovering a new city, but about rediscovering myself. I am learning to navigate the complex dance of cultures, finding harmony in the blend of old and new. The journey was arduous, but I have been discovering a strength and adaptability within me that I now carry forward, ready to face whatever challenges lie ahead.



CIP Weekday Activities

Monday, February 10th – Coffee Talk – 6:30-9:00pm



Socialize with LAs and ELI friends at the **Panera on Archer Road**! Play games, speak English, and drink a coffee or get dinner at the restaurants nearby. Take bus 1, 12, or 34.

Address: 3443 SW Archer Rd Suite 1A, Gainesville, FL 32608

Tuesday, February 11th – Volleyball – 6:30-9:00pm



Play volleyball and hang out at **Lexington Crossing Apartments Phase 2 Volleyball Courts**! No experience necessary. You can also watch, socialize, or play games on the side if you're not interested in playing volleyball. Take bus 35.

Address: 3700 SW 27th St, Gainesville, FL 32608

Wednesday, February 12th – Soccer – 6:30-9:00pm



Come play soccer at **Flavet Field** on campus! No experience necessary. You can also watch, socialize, or play games on the side if you're not interested in playing soccer.

Address: Woodlawn Dr, Gainesville, FL 32603

Thursday, February 13th – Museum Nights: Arts Across Africa—6:00-8:30pm



Join us this Thursday for Museum Nights at the Harn Museum of Art on campus! The theme is "Arts Across Africa", and features music, dance, and art performances all evening. There will also be a new exhibit on Ghanaian fashion. Explore the museum for free with your ELI friends. Meet in **the Harn lobby area** at 6:00pm. Take bus 20, 21, 28, 33 or 34.

Address: 3259 Hull Road Gainesville, FL 32608

Friday, February 14th – Reitz Game Room/Gator Nights – 6:30-9:00pm



Hang out with friends in the **Reitz Game Room**! You can go bowling, play pool, and play board games. Bring your Gator1 ID for cheaper rates.

Address: 655 Reitz Union Drive, Gainesville, FL 32611

Weekend Event

Saturday, February 15th – Gator Basketball Game Vs. South Carolina – 7:45pm to 11:00pm

Cheer on the Florida Gators at the Basketball game! Wear orange and blue, learn game chants, and watch this exciting and fast-paced sport with ELI friends. You must buy a ticket to attend. Your ticket purchase is the signup. Buy a ticket from Tate in the CIP office Monday through Thursday from 9am to 12:30pm with 20 dollars EXACT cash and your Gator1 ID. Please budget time to wait in line to get your ticket and about 5 to 10 minutes to get your ticket and account set up. This week of sales, tickets can be sold to anyone, including non-ELI friends and family. Tickets are limited so make sure to buy them early before they sell out.



Meet outside Gate 1 of the O'Connell Center on campus. Make sure you have access to your ticket. A screenshot will not work. Do NOT bring any bags, backpacks, or purses! Just bring your wallet, phone, keys, etc. in your pockets. Do not bring any drink or food. You can buy snacks and food at the concession stands. Please remember that there is no alcohol allowed at ELI activities.

Address: 250 Gale Lemerand Dr, Gainesville, FL 32611 (Gate 1)

Other CIP Reminders

Conversation Partners (CPs)



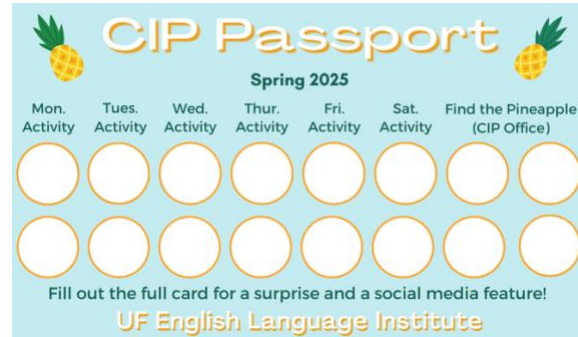
Want to meet with a fluent English speaker and make a new friend? Sign up for a CP! If you choose to sign up, you must meet with your partner for one hour a week. It can take up to two weeks to get a partner from when you sign up. Please [sign up here!](#)

Please email Joey at conversationpartners@eli.ufl.edu for any issues, questions or concerns or visit her in the CIP Office during office hours.

CIP Passports

Don't forget to get your CIP Passport hole punched from the activity leaders at the event (not after). **We don't hole punch passports after the event.** Redeem your completed passport for a small gift, a photo for the ELI Instagram, and your name published in the ELI weekly!

Need a new CIP Passport? Stop by the CIP Office



Find the Pineapple

Remember the CIP Pineapple is hidden in a new place every Monday in the CIP office. Stop by and find it for hole punches!

Notes from the Office

People out: Christine is out of the office on February 10 and 11. Please plan around these dates if you need to talk to Christine.

Student Voices



Every semester, we have amazing student writers, so we take your writing and publish it in an online collection called Student Voices. In past semesters, students have written paragraphs, essays, creative stories, recipes, letters, obituaries, poetry, and more. You can see past editions of Student Voices (<https://eli.ufl.edu/news-publications/>, scroll to the bottom of the page) for inspiration.

We encourage you to submit anything of your work that you wish to see published. It can be from any class or something you have written on your own but ask your teachers for help editing! You can email it to Olga Moody (omood@ufl.edu) or to your teacher. Please include your name and class on your submission. The deadline for submissions is Friday, March 28.

UF Choral Union Concert

Saturday, February 15, 6:00pm, University Auditorium

Join the Gainesville Master Chorale, the UF Chorale Union and three guest community choirs to celebrate the beauty and fun of choral music. The concert is free, and the ELI's very own Tara Mace will be performing!



Joke of the Week

Q: What did the hurricane say before his presentation?

A: Get ready to be blown away!

Photo of the Week: Game Night



Birthdays!

Students:

- Tiago De Lima Martins, 2/14
- Abdulaziz Mohammad, 2/16

Staff:

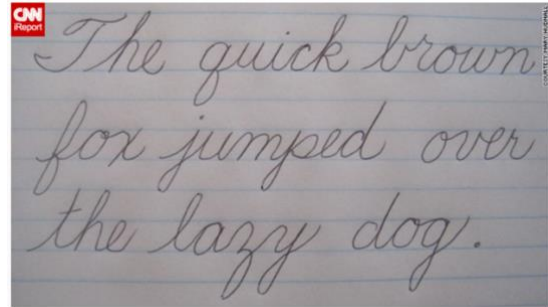
- None this week



Manners & Culture

Q: What is the difference between cursive and print writing?

A: Essentially, cursive writing is handwriting that joins the letters of a word together while print writing separates every letter, similar to typing. Long before computers and typewriters, cursive was really the only form of writing. Then in the 20th century, educators realized they could teach younger students a more simplified writing style, and that was the beginning of print writing. Now with computers and typing so important for communication, cursive writing isn't as important in the US. In fact, only 21 states in the US require students to learn cursive writing. You can read about the cultural debate around cursive writing in this article: [The Great Cursive Writing Debate](#).



Mary Hudnall's perfect script comes from years of teaching handwriting to third graders.

From: Cursive vs. Typing by Rachael Rodriguez, CNN, August 24, 2011.

Grammar

*Q: I get the prepositions confused! Can you explain **study in** vs. **study at**?*

A: It depends on what you are trying to express with the full sentence. If you are answering this question:

Where are you a student?

Then you can say:

- I am studying **at** the University of Florida.
- I am studying **at** the ELI.

If you are answering this question:

What are you studying?

You can say:

- I am majoring **in** engineering.
- I am studying engineering.

You can combine ideas like this:

- I am majoring **in** engineering **at** the University of Florida.

- I am studying engineering **at** the University of Florida

If you are answering this question:

Where are you studying tonight?

You might say:

- I am studying **at** the library.
- I am studying **at** home.
- I am studying **in** my room.

Notes from the Editor



I have the first few submissions, so a huge thank you for those! I need more to fill the semester, so send me yours.

- Write a paragraph about your experiences this semester. You could write about an ELI activity, a Gainesville event, a fabulous local restaurant, or tell us about a place or event in your country that we should visit.
- Send me grammar questions for me to put in the *Weekly*.
- Send me manners and culture questions for me to put in the *Weekly*.
- Send me jokes to put in the *Weekly*.

Send your paragraphs and/or questions to Maya (mshastri@ufl.edu) Use the subject heading: ELI Weekly.



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