Hi everyone! My name is Robert, and I am 23 years old. I have been working at the ELI for 3 years. I am a lab assistant and I love it! I love working at the ELI because of the great atmosphere and everyone’s light heartedness.

When I came to the ELI, I was studying to become a teacher, but I am currently an accounting major. I decided to change my major when I realized that the benefits would be much more rewarding as an accountant.

I spend my weekends outdoors doing things, from the likes of fishing to nature exploring. I have lived in Miami almost all of my life and plan on living in a different state after my education is completed. One of my future goals is to complete my masters in accounting.

Upcoming Events

The ELI students had a great time at the Halloween party last week. To view some of the best costumes turn to page 4. Also, to vote for the best costume, go to our Facebook page (https://www.facebook.com/FIUELI) and click like on the pictures that have the best costumes.

Here are the upcoming events:

- Bowling: Thursday, November 7th, at Strike in Dolphin Mall
- Soccer Game Friday, November 8th, at FIU’s Soccer Field
- Thanksgiving Potluck, Thursday, November 21st, in GC.

If you have any questions about the activities, contact Camila Castaneda, Activities Coordinator.
During the summer term, I had the great pleasure of having Cristina in Writing 4. She struggled and studied a great deal to enhance her writing capabilities. The following is her thoughts on culture and how even though we all come from different parts of the world, we all need to remember that kindness goes a long way.

It’s so interesting to study the difference between cultures. I think it’s amazing when we compare the many aspects of different countries. There is only one world, many countries, and a lot of cultures. Each person has his or her own way of being. How they think and what they believe are shown in their customs: behaviors, dances and writings. For each difference between cultures, we sometimes laugh or get surprised. It’s funny! We can think about cultures around the world: occidental and oriental, country to country or more specific such as indigenous, for example. In all of these cases, the differences are rich and very interesting. Let’s take three aspects: a woman’s beauty, social behavior and general customs.

Sometimes the meaning of beauty seems to be the same, but it definitely isn’t. I was really surprised when I read that in Mauritania, Africa, the pattern of beauty is obesity. For them, a fat woman is a signal of status. It shows that she is rich because her husband is rich. The most surprising aspect is that young girls, in fact children who are six years old, are sent to places out of town to get fatter because it guarantees marriage. In contrast, American women are worried about not being fat. For Mauritanians, it may seem strange when they see a picture of a Brazilian woman or an American girl. Everybody is looking for a thin shape and a “perfect” body, and to reach it, women spend a lot of time working out and keeping a balanced diet. There is another much known aspect of a woman’s beauty: foot binding. In Japan, women use small shoes since they are children. Their feet don’t grow and, of course, become warped. For them, women with smaller feet have more status in society. Conversely, the size of women’s feet is not a questionable subject in American countries.

Another aspect is social behavior. In some Arabic countries it’s polite if the guest burps. It’s a sign that he liked the food. The Arabic host expects this kind of behavior. On the other hand, in Western countries, it’s one of the worst ways of behaving. It’s very impolite. Likewise, Arabic men are accustomed to kissing another man like Russians do with friends. In America, people kiss only close friends. Especially in Brazil, a man doesn’t kiss another man. In addition, another unusual behavior for American people is the Kenyan custom of spitting on people. For them, it’s a kind of greeting. When a child is born, they baptize the baby with the old tribe men’s spits. On the other hand, the baptism of a baby in Brazil, for example, is a moment when people pray and sprinkle pure water.

The final aspect is general customs. There are not only a variety of differences but also interesting customs. One of them is the clothes people wear when they are in mourning. Usually, people in Western countries wear black clothes. Unlike Americans, Chinese use yellow or black and white as other Eastern countries wear white clothes, which are more indicative for these moments. Have you ever noticed differences in handwriting? In Arabic countries, they write from right to left. However, Westerners write from left to right. In Asia, they have a pin yin character to form the word. Conversely, in Eastern countries people have letters to write a word. For Americans, an Asian character is like a design. Although the occidental calendar is solar, the oriental calendar is lunar.

I would love to stay here writing for a long time. It’s such an interesting and rich subject. People who intend to live in another country or are seasoned travelers must not only know the differences between cultures, but also respect and accept these differences. There is not a wrong or a correct way but only different ways. And I’m sure that all countries and people have the word “respect” in their dictionaries. Even if this word doesn’t exist, it’s always good to be friendly.
ELI Academics: Reading Plus 4.0

During the summer term, students at the ELI had a chance to start using Reading Plus 4.0 during the second half of the semester. This term, students started using it from the very beginning of the term, and they love it! Reading Plus is a tool to help students improve their reading proficiency, efficiency, and capacity.

The ELI is always striving to bring new and innovative methods and tools to prepare its students for the university. The idea of incorporating this program was brought forth by one of the faculty members, Mary Horosco. So far, it’s been a hit! Students are engaged in the program and are reading more than ever.

Jialing Shen in Reading 2 had read over 3000 words! In Reading 3, it’s a tie. Dong Bo and Adriana Ojedo both have read over 3000 words. The students in Reading 4 have been busy as well. The following students have read more than 4000 words just last week alone: Bibiana Insignares, Paula Mesa, Cesar Albahaca, and Alejandro Rebolledo. In Reading 5, Liu Peng, Frantz Alcidas, and Claudia Afiuni are the top readers. Last but not least, in Reading 6, Cristina Borges is the leading reader of her class.

Congratulations to all our students for improving their reading rates. Keep up the good work!

TED App for Smartphones by Laura Lamour

We’ve all heard of TED Talks and have seen some of their interesting conferences. Now TED Talks is available as an app on iPhones, iPads, and iPod touches. The best part is that it’s free! It presents talks from fascinating people all over the world. You can find more than 1,400 TED Talk Videos, and more are added each week. What’s even cooler about this app is that you don’t have to be online to browse through its library. Download the videos of your choice and watch them offline. You can do so at any time. Over 90 languages are available if you want to watch TED Talks with subtitles. This app updates almost every day with new talks. Check it out and tell me what you think about it!
The ELI newsletter is a bi-weekly publication of the English Language Institute that updates students on upcoming events and important dates. It invites students to participate in its publication process. It also includes news, trivia, quotes and reading suggestions. You may e-mail any suggestion to Laura Lamour at: llamo001@fiu.edu. The ELI newsletter is produced by ELI instructor Laura Lamour.