As it was once said: “Life is like a box of chocolates, you never know what you are going to get”. For me, I really agree with this statement, and even since I watched the movie “Forrest Gump”, I have always tried to dabble in different flavors. Sometimes, the taste is sweet; and unfortunately, sometimes it is bitter. No matter the shape, size or texture of the piece of chocolate, it is always a pleasurable experience. These pieces of chocolate are just like the stories that go on around me, and they give me power to enjoy life. At present, the World Scholarship Award has been the most amazing experience since coming to Miami. I received a lot of congratulations from classmates and teachers, and the feeling felt like a typical hot sunny Miami day. When I was a child, my mother told me: “whatever you do, try your best to accomplish it; otherwise, you will regret in the future.

I have already made the decision that continuing to get a higher education will be challenging, but the rough road should not impede my steps from achieving it. I only have an average intelligence; I am also weak in the skills of studying, so I force myself to spend more time on offsetting these drawbacks. As I reach my target, I gain more self-confidence to run to the next one. However, when I lose my way, the smiling faces and encouraging words from family, professors and friends push me to keep going.

Due to my low TOEFL score, I had a chance to study at the ELI in order to learn English. Sometimes, a few unforeseen events may become a new opportunity. For me, the ELI has shown its warmth and patience by caring for and guiding me, and it resembles a strong mighty tree in the garden named FIU. Mr. Sanchez is the root of our tree and lays a foundation; he also absorbs nutrition from the outside world and transmits it to the trunk and branches, which have a similar function showcased by our professors. Every day, they prepare plenty of energy to feed our minds and improve our skills. Moreover, we are just the fruits growing on the tree and enjoy our development until we fall from the tree as we are ripe enough. That means a new voyage will start in our lives.

I want to give my best wishes to the ELI tree and hope it to grow taller and stronger. I also appreciate its teaching methods and how it shows a great deal of concern for its students. Some day, these fruits, like us, will also strike root at every corner all over the world and shelter others from rain or wind. It was just what Mr. Sanchez said: “be a better man first.”
The English Language Institute reaches more than 25,000 International Students

Since the English Language Institute (ELI) was founded 35 years ago in 1978 by the College of Arts & Sciences, the institute has reached more than 25,000 international students and professionals from countries across Latin America, Europe, Africa, the Middle East and Asia.

With more than 20 instructors, many of international origin themselves, the ELI offers a variety of programs tailored to individuals who have chosen English as their medium of communication for academic or professional purposes. The institute trains more than 600 students per year, many of whom travel from overseas and stay in the dorms on FIU’s Modesto A. Maidique Campus (MMC) for the duration of the weeks-long programs.

Programs include Intensive English, an academic preparation course designed to help international students make the transition to American academic life, and Intensive Conversation, a non-academic immersion program. Also a TOEFL testing center, the institute offers a TOEFL preparation course and tests more than 1,000 individuals per year. ELI also offers community programs tailored to the needs of professionals who live and work in South Florida. Students also have access to a language lab where they can use software, audio facility and video lab to augment classroom learning.

“English is the language of commerce, technology and the Internet. The world is becoming increasingly global and competitive. Professionals need to have excellent oral and written skills in English if they are to succeed,” said Luis Sanchez, director of the ELI. “The ELI continues to serve people who want to learn the English language for academic and professional matters. We’ve been here for 35 years, but we continue to fulfill our mission with the same enthusiasm and dedication since we first started.”

Franchesca Martinez, a native of Venezuela, came to the U.S. in 2011 at the age of 16. Not knowing a word of English, she wanted to learn the language and understand the culture in order to study international business and follow in her father’s footsteps. She enrolled with ELI and took every course they offer.

“My father represents a power generator company and, for a long time, I have wanted to work for and represent that same company around the world. I know the first step in doing that is to learn English,” Martinez said. “The courses and professors helped me meet my goals of learning to read, write and speak English and I was able to pass the TOEFL exam. I’m lucky because I can study what I love, which is international business.”

Along with language training, the ELI gives students an introduction to American life and culture. As part of the ELI’s mission to promote intercultural understanding, and as a way to augment what the students learn in the classroom, students have the opportunity to attend a variety of lectures, workshops and social events on FIU’s various campuses. They also have the opportunity to go on trips to different attractions in Miami.

“Teaching students from all over the world has been one of the greatest experiences of my life,” Sanchez said. “Everyday, I put myself in the shoes of our students, having had to learn several languages and adapt to a new culture myself. I’ve shared their fears, dreams and experiences. The institute has been growing and growing, and we want to continue to make a difference in the lives of our students.”
Have you ever been to the circus? Have you seen the jugglers throwing several balls in the air, catching them in mid-air, just to throw them again and again in perfect harmony? Now, imagine that the juggler is you, and the balls are no longer balls but your homework, your four-year-old child, your husband and your home. The fact is that I have to balance my life in such a way that I feel like a circus performer.

You may be asking yourself: how hard can it possibly be to manage all of these different aspects of life and still be able to find a balance and remain grounded. It can’t be that hard, can it? To be frank, it can be very difficult because sometimes all of your energy gets expanded into multiple directions all at once, but I really love what I do, and I would never change this amazing and unforgettable experience that I am currently living.

FIU is a great place to study. It has a beautiful campus, which make everyone feel welcome. Students can enjoy the beauty of the greenery as they walk across campus. The English courses I am currently enrolled in at the English Language Institute are extremely demanding and requires a lot from its students. In addition, the instructors are knowledgeable and devoted to helping their students. As much as I enjoy attending classes, I have to dedicate 4 to 5 additional hours to doing homework everyday. One can definitely call this a love-hate relationship.

Learning English is a tremendous necessity for me and while I am successful at achieving this goal, it is important to note that it does take a toll on the amount of time I am able to spend with my son. In fact, I don’t get to see my son as much as I would like; however, I know that this is a small price to pay in the grand scheme of things.

About my little man, he is only four years old. He and I used to spend every minute of the day together. As of late, I get to see him for only two hours per day, and during these two hours, I bathe him and help him with his homework. Playground hours are restricted to Saturday and Sunday, and I see how this is affecting him. We miss each other so much. The rest of my time is dedicated to doing homework in the hopes of getting good grades on my upcoming exams.

Household chores are down to a minimum. My duties are to make sure the clothes bedding, and towels are freshly washed. Sometimes I wish I were an octopus so that I would be able to accomplish all of the things that need to get done. The good news is I am not alone.

There are a lot of people who are in the same predicament as I am. In fact, the majority of my friends say that they are in the same boat. Jugglers have to keep on trying to balance their lives making sure that all the components are carefully and simultaneously being juggled in a perfected manner, but however easy this act may seem, it is quite difficult and at times seems overwhelming.

In the end, I must say that I love my life, and I thank God for placing me in this incomparable English program. This is and has a wonderful opportunity, one that I will cherish for as long as I live. I think that it is quite feasible for anyone who is driven and determined to achieve goals that he/she sets out for him/herself. Studying requires using more than one’s mind, it also requires one’s heart as well. In the end, all efforts and hard-work will be well worth it. There are many goals that I would like to reach, but the most important of all is to follow the right direction of life and in turn, I will be able to feel peace in my soul.

“The English courses I am currently enrolled in at the English Language Institute are extremely demanding and requires a lot from its students.”
Healthy Beginnings

You have snoozed your alarm for the third time now, and the time is 8:13. There is no way you’re going to make it to class on time. Your teacher has already given you a warning about being late and the fact that it will affect your final grade. Why is it so hard to wake up in the morning? What could make this unbearable experience easier every morning?

If this has happened to you, rest assured that you are not alone. Most if not all college and university students have experienced the horrible experience of getting up in the morning and making it to class on time. It’s understandable that you have a social life and that you have other things to do aside from being a perfect A+ student.

Let’s face it, rushing to take a shower, brushing your teeth and skipping out on breakfast are all an equation for a hectic morning. By the time you get to FIU and are frantically looking for a parking space and none can be found, you can hear your stomach tell you: feed me! Now you are really late and probably won’t have time to go to Starbucks because let’s be real, the lines are always ridiculously long, especially now that you are already running super late.

Perhaps the following tips, can be of some use in aiding you to have a better morning and start off your day on a right note. The way you begin your minute usually determines the course of your day. It’s all about making good choices.

The first piece of advice is to plan ahead. The night before, pack your lunch. This will save you time and money. It’s a no brainer. You can also prepare what you will have for breakfast the next morning. Allot for at least 15 minutes every morning to eat breakfast. Breakfast doesn’t have to be this grand copious meal. Including fueled nutrients such as low-fat protein, whole grains, and fruit will help you to kick start off your day. ‘Breakfast is the most important meal of the day’. Check on the forecast to know of any weather changes or updates as this will help you in determining what attire you want to wear.

Second, you should consider is perhaps changing your sleeping habits. I know, I know. It’s impossible to go to sleep any earlier than 12 o’clock, but did you know that a rested mind works better than one that isn’t. Your mind cannot function well without having had the proper amount of rest. So turn off your television, iPad, computer, cellphone or whatever else is keeping you from going to sleep. Just like a computer needs to be rebooted in order to be at better working capacity, our bodies require the same recharge. Did you know that the recommended numbers of hours of sleep every night is 7 to 9 hours? Maybe that seems unrealistic to you, so start off by setting a time that works best for you. When that time comes, stop what you are doing no matter what it may be and go to bed.

The last piece of advice is for those who really kick start their morning. If your schedule allows it, get to your nearest gym and exercise for at least 30-45 minutes. This will be extremely difficult at first and seem impossible. The rewards of waking up earlier to exercise are endless. You will definitely feel an