Student Spotlight: Experiences at the ELI

Studying at the ELI is an amazing experience. My first day at the ELI wasn’t as easy as I thought. When I came, I realized that most of the people were young. The first day, I went late to class because I didn’t expect to get so much traffic on the highway. It was terrible! On the other hand, when I was at the bookstore, I met some girls. They were very friendly with me, and also they invited me to join them for lunch. I felt very happy because I wasn’t going to be alone. As days passed, I started to feel more comfortable going to class. Everybody was friendly and teachers were incredible. They worried about me all the time. I believe that here, at the ELI, they teach English, but I also feel that they care that we all go through the same experience in life. It wasn’t easy being alone, far away from my family, and those experiences made me more responsible. I met a lot of people from different countries and cultures. The relationship was so strong that we became a big family.

Cristel Sanchez

As I am finishing this cycle of being an international student, I can say that I had an enriching experience in which I learned more than anything the different cultures that surround me throughout my studies at FIU. Sometimes we take for granted what we learn from others and we think the behavior or ways of people who are different from us is strange. During this time, I had the opportunity to spend time surrounded by other cultures, and I now understand why we think, act, believe and dream differently. Once we understand that we can’t all be the same, we can be more courteous to each other and be happier as members of this planet.

My experience at FIU has been an international experience that not only taught me a language, but also allowed me to grow to respect and understand others and to embrace people’s differences.

Andrea Lalinde
Hello! My name is Sophia Remartini and my journey at the ELI started in November of 2012. I was on vacation in Miami, and I decided to come to FIU to ask for information about the English course. That’s how I found the ELI. On that day, I was convinced that I wanted to study here. For that reason, I went to my country and filled out all the necessary papers to come here. My first day of class, I was very nervous, but people here were so nice and made me feel so comfortable in a matter of hours that I forgot about being nervous. Now, I am very happy here, and I am sure I made a good decision. Everything is helping me to be a better person: the professors are excellent, the education is very good. I’ve improved my English a lot, and my classmates from all over the world have taught me a lot about different countries and cultures. Another thing I really like is the fact that we are all far from home, but we feel very good here!

Hi everyone! My name is Sheyla, and I came to the United States in January to study English at the ELI at Florida International University. My first impression of the ELI is that it is an excellent place to study. First, I think that the university campus is incredible. Throughout the campus we can see nice gardens and fountains, which make me feel more enthusiastic and energetic. Second, the ELI allows us to use computers, so we can use them to study or surf the Internet, which is very important these days. Last but not least, I found incredible professors who are qualified, outgoing, and always concerned about their students. Something that makes this institute very unique is that the number of students is limited, so you can make better connections with the other students and learn more about other cultures.

My name is Maria Carolina but my friends call me Carolina. Being at ELI has been very rewarding for me. Moving to a new place is not easy, but here you can find nice people who can help you to feel comfortable. The new educational experience with the teachers has been interesting as well. I have learned to adapt to new circumstances and overcome new challenges. Studying a language in another country has not been easy. There have been many times when I have doubted my abilities, but living here has made me focus on working hard and improving my language learning skills. I have also learned to appreciate my own language and culture. By studying English, I have realized just how passionate languages are. Languages open the door to new life changing experiences.
“Only as high as I reach can I grow, only as far as I seek can I go, only as deep as I look can I see, only as much as I dream can I be.” ~ Karen Raven

Ever since I was a little girl, I would dream of the day when all of my wishes and desires would come true. Every day, I have worked towards that goal. I am determined not to let any obstacle stand in my way. Such determination has brought me to this moment of here and now, twenty-four years of age with a Masters in TESOL Education, a Bachelor’s in Linguistics and my first few steps on the path to a long professional career.

It is only by the blessed Grace of God that I am here where I am now. He has instilled in me a fire of determination that has yet to fade. I have never been the kind of person who has settled for mediocrity. And why should I? I have always asked myself, and I have never come up with a good answer. I believe that one’s power lies in the mind and the belief in oneself. Material possessions come and go, but knowledge is forever.

I have spent the past 24 years of my life trying to gain as much of an understanding of this world as I can. I love learning about literature, world history, music, art, science, math, philosophy and theology. I have a constant appetite for more knowledge about the world around me and the creatures that inhabit this planet.

I enjoy meeting people from different cultures, trying new cuisine, and exploring new lands. Anyone who knows me knows that I need to travel just as much as I need to breathe. I suppose it is the Libra in me. I find happiness and peace in nature and the arts. I am moved by the mournful romance of an opera, the grace of a ballerina, the mystery of a painting, the whisper of the wind on a cool summer night, the rain singing me a lullaby, and the sun rising to greet me in the morning. If life has taught me anything, it is that to be alive is beautiful. Never take anything for granted. Be grateful for all that you have even if it is as simple as being able to walk or see.

In life, everyone is dealt a hand of cards. Yes, you may think that your cards are not as good as the person’s sitting next to you. However, what you fail to realize is that no matter what, they are your cards—your gifts, your dreams, your talents—and no one out of the 7 billion people on this planet will ever have the same life experiences as you. You can always improve your life and make it into what you want it to be. You just have to be willing to take the necessary steps in the direction of your dreams.

Nothing is impossible. I am the author of my own story, and I plan to write a story worth telling. I invite you to do the same.
My Space: Loreta Campagnolo Speaks on her Experience at FIU

In the time that I have been here in Miami, I have been studying in a wonderful Institute (ELI). Within the seven months that I have been there, the ELI has provided me with a lot of amazing experiences such as learning a new language, making a lot of friends and good times with friends at the ELI activities.

When I was about to take the level test, I was nervous because I didn’t know in what level I was going to be in. I started in level two in each class. On my first day of class, I realized that I was in the right level to start my new learning journey. Right now, I am in the fourth level, and it is amazing how much I have learned throughout level two, three and this one. Therefore, I am very grateful to have this extraordinary opportunity to be learning this beautiful language.

One of the best things about this institute is that it has a lot of foreign people. It has students from Kuwait, China, Japan, South Arabia, Colombia, and, of course, Venezuela. I hang out with a lot of them, not only Venezuelan people, but also my foreign friends. However, most of the people that I hang out with are from Venezuela. I love being with them because they make me laugh most of the time, and we help each other with our assignments. Moreover, I like the fact that we keep in touch even though most of them have gone to other places. For example, in my first term I met one guy who became a close friend of mine. He had to leave for personal problems, but we still talk very often.

Every term, the ELI organizes a lot of different activities for us. We have had activities such as parties, soccer games, welcome breakfasts, karaoke nights, and trips to the zoo among other activities. In each one of these incredible activities I have had good moments, but for me, one of the best activities that I had the opportunity to go to was bowling night. It was very funny because I played a lot and shared with my friends and people from other countries.

In sum, during these seven months that I have attended the ELI, it has made me live new and fabulous experiences that I will never forget. Since I have been here, I have felt appreciation for my teachers and classmates. Being here has made me not only learn English, but also learn about the cultures of the foreign people that study at the ELI. For me, the ELI at FIU is the best institute for every person to learn English. I’m thankful for this new learning journey.