

# *Hybrid Culture*

*A Bridge to Language*



**INTERVIEWS**

**STORIES**

**REPORTS**

Fall 2018/Winter 2019

Vol. 2 Issue 1

East Los Angeles College

# HYBRIDCULTURE

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also learn about the Student Health Center and Financial Aid. In this issue, Professor Vernita Burrell shares her experience at a workshop in the Modern Languages Lab.

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### ABOUT OUR NEW TITLE



Readers may have noticed that the ESL Magazine has a new name: **Hybrid Culture**.

During Fall 2018, members of the ESL Club participated in a contest to rename the ESL Magazine and to select

a more meaningful title. More than 50 students participated in the contest. The finalists were selected by Professors Sara Behseta and Allison Bruins, while the winning title was chosen by the first-ever student editors of the ESL Magazine.

The winning title, **Hybrid Culture**, was created by student, **Sandy Liang**. According to Ms. Liang, her title was inspired by the idea of each student's culture joining with American culture.

On behalf of the newly named Hybrid Culture staff, Ms. Liang was awarded a gift card to Starbucks for her creativity.

### EDITORIAL STAFF

#### Student Editorial Team

Zijun Feng Yola Hernandez Ilian Jimenez  
Danyi Liang Ana Lopez Li Li  
Meijia Wang Carolina Zheng

#### Professor Advisory & Contributors

Sara Behseta Sharon Allerson  
Vernita Burrell Allison Bruins  
Yangok Chu Jenell Rae  
Maria Betancourt



ABOUT THE PHOTO: Professor Sara Behseta, Instructional Assistant Yangok Chu, and ESL Magazine Student Editors during editors meeting. Photo by Professor Allison Bruins

## LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

Dear Readers,

We are glad to introduce the Fall 2018/Winter 2019 E.S.L. magazine. You will enjoy some amazing interviews, reports, and stories from the ESL program to the Modern Languages Lab at East Los Angeles College.

We want to say thank you to all that participated and want to encourage all the students to participate, all the opinions are very welcome. We also want to give a special thanks to Sandy Liang and the ESL Club for brainstorming new magazine titles. Because of them, we are pleased to present Hybrid Culture: A Bridge to Language.

Sincerely,

The Editorial Staff of the ESL Magazine

### Want to be featured in Hybrid Culture?

Contact Us:

Sara Behseta  
behsets@elac.edu

Jenell Rae  
raej@elac.edu

Allison Bruins  
bruinsam@elac.edu

Maria Betancourt  
betancme@elac.edu

# STUDENT WRITING

## Eaton Canyon

Melissa Shen

E.S.L. 6A

I had never been hiking before. I was so happy that I had a chance to go hiking with the ESL Club members. We all gathered in front of the ELAC campus and were ready to go. We arrived after forty minutes drive and parked the car. After all the people were there, we started to hike. We kept walking and chatting with each other. I felt a little bit dizzy because I didn't have breakfast and I already heard the sound of my breath getting heavier. I should have done more exercise whenever I have time. We passed lots of wood and stepped on the rocks. Suddenly, we saw two people who were wearing uniforms that looked like military dress. When we walked close by, and I found out there were two or three officers and we also had chance to take pictures with the two of them. We said our goodbye and kept moving forward. I was wondering why there was no water on the stream. I got told that it was because we have been through a drought. I did not know how much time had passed, but we finally got to the point of where the waterfall was located. Unfortunately, we did not feel as excited as we should, because the waterfall looked like an open faucet for someone who is willing to take a shower. I wish that we could have some rain during Summer so that it will be a different scene. We stayed awhile to take some pictures and left the place. Eaton Canyon, I will be back soon.



**ABOUT THE PHOTOS:** ABOVE: ESL Club students hiking in Eaton Canyon. Photo provided by Professor Allison Bruins BELOW: Stock image of monkeys. Courtesy of Pixabay Images

## "Brains": A Short Story Summary and Response

Georgina De Araujo

ESL 4B

Gina is a PhD student. She works in a Center for Science and Business Development in New York. Gina discovered a drug can make monkeys intelligent. A monkey named Max is a great value of Gina's research because he has great development of intelligence.

Mr. Theodore Dimitri is the president of the center that Gina works at. He asked to see Gina and her research. Gina tried to explain and persuaded Mr. Dimitri about how much Max developed. Mr. Dimitri knows how smart Gina is. However, he does not like the idea of making monkeys smart, and he asked her if this can work for humans. She said that is possible.



Faced with this information, Mr. Dimitri began to persuade Gina how dangerous her research could be. He told her the people could think that she will take the drug for advantages, like athletes use drug for better performances so it is not honest. She has spent a lot of time doing this research. Mr. Dimitri told her, "I must ask you to stop what you are doing." Gina felt very disappointed but Mr. Dimitri offered Gina the PhD and a job. Gina accepted it. Mr. Dimitri thought that this drug is not good for business because smart people ask too much questions and do not buy things. Then he sent her to the biological science center, and ordered another worker to kill Max.

In my opinion, Mr. Dimitri is very ambitious. He only thinks about making money. He is like many businessmen and the government to have control. He does not have compassion. Why kill Max? He could give Max to Gina or send him to an animal sanctuary.

I am not against if doing research with animals because humans raise and kill the animals for consumption. However, I will feel so happy if a day we do not need to use animals for research. Instead, we can use robots or simulations in computer for research.

# CULTURE SHOCK

## Life in Los Angeles

Min Pan

E.S.L. 6A

I have lived in Los Angeles for three months already. In this period of time, I tried to stay out of my comfort zone. Sometimes the outcomes of staying out of my comfort zone were inspiring, and sometimes the outcomes made me upset. Regardless of the outcomes, the process of trying new things made it a colorful and meaningful three months. I would like to talk about two things that are my fountains of happiness in my life in Los Angeles.

One of my sources of happiness in this period is a club I joined. I spent a gloomy time in the past two years. During that period, I became an introvert who could not open my heart to anyone, except my old friends. I thought I had lost the ability to build intimate relationships until I met some sweet people in this club. Those people like to talk about their hobbies and care about my feelings gently. As a Korean member said: "These guys are amazing. No matter if you're clever, no matter if you're a 'perfect' person, they make you feel you are worth being loved by others." Also, we had a trip to Sequoia National park a couple of weeks ago. This trip made the relationships between me and those cute people get closer and make me more open-hearted.

"Sociology class" also is one of my fountains of pleasure in the last few months. When I was in high school, I read a book named "Insight" written by a famous journalist of China. This book talks about some impressive experience during her career that had important effects on shaping her personality. This book has had the most influence on me so far. It has had a big impact on shaping my way of thinking the social issue more critical and objective and also taught me how to inspect my deepest thoughts. Moreover, the most important impact was that it increased my interest on social issues. Since I read the book, I started paying a lot of attention on social news, and I was eager to communicate with friends about social issues. But at that period, friends around me all didn't care about social issues and almost no one was interested in talking about social issues with me. So I always felt lonely even if a lot of people around me physically. But things have changed since I got sociology classes. I was full of curiosity in this class. The context of it is something I was really interested in. I'm enjoying the process of studying this subject. For instance, I have been following the sexual assault issue of China for two years, so I chose "Rape culture in China" as my presentation topic for my sociology class. When I made the slides of it, I felt so happy, and I was wondering: " Oh, god, I finally put my interest in my study field." at that moment. Additionally, I met some people who are curious about the same social issues as me.

I used to stay home alone instead of socializing with a group of people, but I am trying to join the club for improving my social skill and relearning to build intimate relationships now. Sociology class is very challenging for me as an ESL 6A student, so I have been practicing my English listening skills by listening to English broadcast when I'm cooking and also keep spending much time on reading the textbook of sociology class. During the process of trying these new things, I feel I own a substantial life. Furthermore, these things inspire me to explore the world deeper and wider.

**“I FEEL I OWN A  
SUBSTANTIAL LIFE.”**

# CULTURE SHOCK

## Don't Get Stuck

Thuy Le

E.S.L. 6A

I was born in Vietnam. I was already too happy with my life at the age of 30. Relationships were great in a marriage, my family, friendship, or my co-workers.

I never thought I would have left my family and moved to a foreign country to live, but it happened anyway. I immigrated to the United States in 2014. I quickly lost interest in everything. I lost so much energy, my mood, and my enthusiasm. At this moment, the only thing I wanted to do was sleep and keep silent. The main reason is that I did not speak a word of English. Plus, my negative thought that it's not easy to start over again at 30. I first noticed how depression steals time from me just after I received a flyer which is the information about East Los Angeles College. Everything changed when I came to this school. For more reasons that I realized that it is never too late to start something new. The past is just the fondest memories, and it's over. As Bob Goddard said, "Just remember - when you think all is lost, the future remains." I understand that I should not get stuck in the past, and it will make my life more exciting in the future.

## Culture Shock

Hoang Quang

E.S.L. 6A

The first "culture shock" that I experienced when I had just landed at LAX (Los Angeles International Airport) is the language. People who were at the airport spoke English not nearly as slow as I could understand even though I had learned English in my home country. Fortunately, there was a Vietnamese staff who helped me to complete all immigration procedures. I was amazed by the traffic and many skyscrapers in the U.S. Besides, the fashion styles in this country are more diverse and modern than my home country's fashion styles. People can wear any clothes to go to school. The matter which I like most in the U.S is that children in the U.S have more attention and priority. Somehow or other, American children always have grants from the government to go to school and get enough conditions for development.



### ABOUT THE PHOTO

Photo by Arun Kuchibhotla on Unsplash

## Terrible Experience in U.S.A.

Suki Chen

E.S.L. 6A

It was August of 2012, and I had just arrived America one month before and was working in the speaker store in LA downtown. Overall, it was a terrible experience and almost made me disappointed to stay here. I thought I was lucky that I could find a job without any academic certificate. Before I got my driver license, I had to take a bus to work. My coworker in the speaker store always helped me how to sell the speaker and taught me about life here, such as which bus I could take, where I could learn English, how I could open accounts for gas and electric power. Addition, the most important thing was that he introduced me how to buy a car, also brought me to the car store many time to see what kind car would fit me. He said that new immigrants didn't have enough credit to apply loan, so he offered me to use his name to make a car loan. I had just graduated from university in China. I didn't have social experience so I completely believed my coworker when he said he just wanted to help me. I foolishly thought God had sent me a person to help me in my new life in America. Besides, I didn't know much about American life. I gave him money for the down payment to buy my car. At the end, he used a lot different excuses to deceive me and didn't bring me a car. I finally realized that was a swindle. He quit the job and disappeared. That was my horrible experience at the beginning of my life in America. It will stay with me.

# STUDENT WRITING

## True Friendship

Ramon Delgado

ESL 3A

Friendship is a state of mind that compels one individual to be generous with others without expecting to get anything in return. A true friend creates a safety net for other people who feel they are safe around that person. This applies to both animals and people as well. For example, a friend who calls someone on a regular basis to find out about his health is doing an act of kindness that is appreciated. Just recently, I found that a friend of mine posted in his Facebook account a sour comment about people he knows who do not call or message him to say at least "Hi". I thought he was in pain because his "friends" silence indicated they did not have any concerns about his life. He realized he was actually alone, and decided to raise his voice and speak up about it, which I think will eventually pay off. I wish he starts getting more calls from now on. Interestingly, he hasn't called me either, for I think he should rethink what true friendship is, and start being generous himself by calling people and wish them well.

True friendship does not necessarily have to be embedded in a long term relationship. It can also occur with a sudden act of kindness, which can signal the start of a long friendship. Two years ago, my new neighbors moved in. I introduced myself to them and offered to be of service if they ever needed me. We were perfect strangers for one year. One day everything changed. One of the family members, a young man in his 20s, lost his life in a car accident. I felt at a loss as if I had lost a member of my own family. I did not think twice, and went to my neighbor's house to offer my condolences and a donation to help with funeral expenses. This approach created a magic connection between my family and the neighbors. Even though we don't socialize much yet, I can feel they trust me a lot, and I also feel that they would help me if I ever needed something. As of now, I know that there is a bridge between them and my family, and that whenever we do something for each other, we will not expect anything in return, which defines the nature of true friendship.



### ABOUT THE PHOTO

Friends helping each other successfully climb a mountain. Photo courtesy of Pixabay

# MEMORIES

## My First Halloween in the United States

Xuejun Zhang

E.S.L. 5A

I have been in the United States for 2 and a half years. Halloween is a very interesting traditional American holiday for me. I remember when I first came to the United States not long ago, I just became aware of Halloween. At that time, I saw every family decorate their own yard in a very Halloween atmosphere and it was beautiful. Whether you go to the street or go shopping, you can feel the Halloween atmosphere everywhere. I remember that night, a group of children in all kinds of costumes knocked on the door. When I opened the door and asked me for candy, I was a little surprised, because my country doesn't have Halloween. I didn't prepare candy, but my family was prepared. Every year in the United States, I think Halloween is a very interesting holiday.



## Time is Gold

Trong Le

E.S.L. 5A

When I was a child, I wanted a watch. I asked my parents if I could have one and they said, "No, you are too young. You will break it or lose it." One day, I visited my grandfather and he saw me looking at his watch. The next time I visited him, he surprised me and gave me a beautiful watch! I put it on and he smiled at me and asked, "What time is it?" I answered, "It's eleven twenty." I remember that I didn't sleep that night because I was so happy. One year later, he passed away. I miss him very much. Now whenever I look at my watch or someone asks, "What time is it?," I remember his smiling face. He taught me that time is gold. He will always be in my heart.

## New Life in New Country

Man Lu

E.S.L. 5A

After moving to United States, I applied for school and began to pursue my dream to be a social worker. But my parents want me to study medicine to be a nurse. Growing up in Vietnam, a traditional country, I know it is important to listen to the older generation. They always expect us to follow the way they think. However, I have my choice for my future. I quickly caught up everything and became independent. I am going to school full time and working part time on the weekend. I cannot imagine that I have no more free time to do what I want. Every day is a long day with homework and working on clients at a nail salon. I am exhausted but it seems like a normal thing that so many people must go through. I had some minor stress but I think studying is the best way to live a new life in a new country. It reminds me to try my best to do everything and think in a positive way. Thankfully my parents are always there for backup when I need it.



### ABOUT THE PHOTOS

TOP RIGHT: A picture of Professor Maria Betancourt's dog, Princess, dressed in a Halloween costume for Halloween. Photo provided by Professor Maria Betancourt MIDDLE LEFT: Picture of a man wearing a watch. Photo by rawpixel on Unsplash

# INSPIRATION

## If I Were an Immigrant

Carolina Zheng

E.S.L. 6A

*If I were an immigrant in a packed caravan at the border in Mexico, I would keep silent, waiting for the final determination made by the United States government. The specific details are as follows.*

*I would tell all of immigrants to keep silent first, comply with the law, not do something like stealing, robbing, extortion that violates the law. Even though we are not in our county, we still should obey the law, become law-abiding citizens.*

*I would organize all immigrants into three groups separately, one would be the children's group, one for men, another for women. I would set up billboard there asking for volunteer jobs. I would teach all children a little bit of math, science, and English. Every morning I would ask them to exercise in an orderly way at the place where we stay, after that, sitting together quietly.*

*Do not rush to eat when we have meal. If there were nothing to eat for us although we are starving and we are still keep quite without doing bad things. If we cannot tolerate feeling hungry, I would help them to do meditation like the coach in Thailand [who helped his soccer team stay alive for 10 days in a cave]. Do not climb on the top of the wall, do not cross the border illegally, do not get angry, otherwise we will face tear gas again, or get tougher punishment.*

*The whole world will see us that we are good citizens which we can definitely serve Americans after coming into the U.S. We are looking forward to one day when the American government will approve all of immigrants coming into the United States because the immigration law about applying for asylum was enacted a long time ago.*



I came up with these ideas based on real story from one of my friends who came from Vietnam as a stowaway in 1975. I deeply understood that the ideal is beautiful, while the reality is brutal. However, I must do the best I can as an immigrant.

### ABOUT THE PHOTO

This art installation, designed by French artist JR, was on display at the American/Mexican border near the city of Tecate. Photo courtesy of Google Images

# LIFE EXPERIENCES

## The Experience of an Immigrant, Anonymous Student at ELAC

Interviewed by Ana Lopez

Editorial Staff

### When did you decide to immigrate?

It was 1982.

### What was the reason?

I was almost 18 when I left Vietnam. I would have gone into the army, so I sneaked out. My dream was to learn and improve myself. Before I left, I didn't have those chances. But here you can learn whatever you like, set a goal and reach it.

### Why did you choose the U.S.?

My brother was in the U.S. and when I was in a refugee camp, he was my sponsor.

### How was your journey into United States?

First, I went to Malaysia, which took 12 days and I didn't eat for 8 days. I was so skinny and hungry. The food went bad. It was moldy, the water was rusty. We needed to boil the water. I was with friends, but traveling alone. As a refugee, I had to cook, cut wood. I stayed on an island for 3 months, then moved to a camp in a city. Then I went to the Philippines for 6 months. I was cleaning toilets, sweeping the road. The food was better than the Malaysia camp. We would share 1 chicken among 4 families. Everybody got a piece.

### How was your first year in here?

I've been here for more than 30 years. My first year was hard. At first, I only spoke a little English. I had an accent, and even now I still have it.

### What was your first job?

I worked in a factory. I earned \$15 for 8 hours. I was so slow, but it was better than nothing. I lived with my brother at that time. I had some government support for one and a half years. I went to Adult School. Later I worked as a cook at a hamburger place in Pasadena. I got \$3.25 per hour. No vacation or holidays. No sick leave. If you're sick, you don't get paid. I learned a lot from my boss, how to cut [prepare food] with a knife. He spoke really good English. After that, I applied for Job Corps and moved to Utah. I worked as a mechanic starting in 1986.

### What about your family?

My father had passed away when I was 11 years old. My mom was still alive when I left my country. My mother and my oldest sister came after I did. My sister had to learn English [before emigrating], but my mother was able to come directly. My oldest brother is living in Hong Kong.

### What about the martial arts?

I started learning when I was 9 years old. My idol was Bruce Lee. After I saw his movie [The Big Boss, Enter the Dragon,...] he inspired me. I saw his movies back in Vietnam when I was a small kid and getting bullied. That's how I got started. My parents didn't like this. They thought I was a troublemaker and didn't want to let me learn it. But after learning martial arts, I was more quiet and patient. I learned how to defend myself. I only fought in tournaments. I learned hand-to-hand combat. In Vietnam, I saw people get hurt by getting kicked. In the U.S., everything is safe. I had to train myself. It's like learning English: I learn every day to become better. It depends on how many hours you practice. Nothing guarantees the black belt. To me, the belt is nothing. It's important to train hard and train every day.

### What are your thoughts about the ESL class?

I am so happy to be back in school, but it's not easy. I hope to speak a little better and my grammar is a little better. I keep trying and learning every day. I think I may be the oldest student, so I can keep learning from my classmates too. My goal is to get my A.A. or A.S. degree. Just recently I passed my high school equivalency test. It took me two years. I surprised myself!

### Do you feel like you have accomplished your dreams coming to these country?

Yes, I did. I feel happy. I will keep training, keep learning, keep working on my English.



# STUDENT WRITING

## Art Experience

Paweena Kaenta

E.S.L. 8

New experiences give us a different perspective about a challenge which we always avoid. This is what happened to me last semester. I took a drawing class. It was a basic class for students with no experience drawing pictures and no experience with complementary colors. In addition, this was my first drawing class and my innate drawing talent was unknown. I did not know if I could draw until I took this class. The class taught me to draw my surroundings, objects and photographs.

At the beginning, the class required purchase of thin and thick paper, charcoal, ink, brushes and a variety of paints, but I did not buy them because I was considering dropping the class. At that time, I thought everybody should have a foundation of drawing and that was why I waited until we started drawing. I wanted to evaluate my skill and compare my potential with other students in the class. If I couldn't draw, I would just drop the class. I did not want to waste my money on supplies. However, I saw other students who sat down beside me. Both of them had the same skill as me. I did not want to compare myself with other students, but I had to decide if I was to proceed in the class. To my pleasure, I found my skills were equivalent and decided to buy all of the equipment on Amazon.

Basically, I learned my hand control was good. When you draw something, your hand has to move fluently to make a line on the paper. If your hand moves smoothly then your lines will automatically be good and have proper shape. If your hand is not stable, your shapes will be bad and your drawing will be bad. How well did I draw for the first time, you may ask? I could draw but it was not a picture that I expected to be exactly the same as the original one. My drawing was not great but it looked similar to the original and this was OK.

It was not easy to understand my teacher in class because I had trouble with my listening skill. I am an ESL student and my listening comprehension is below average. This was a big problem because I had homework for every class. I had to remember what the professor said which was difficult because I could not understand his words. Most of the time, I could not follow the professor when she explained in the class and it made me slower than other students. If I had to ask other students, I might annoy them. Consequently, I went back home confused



### ABOUT THE PHOTO

An artist drawing pictures of a woman at different angles. *Photo courtesy of Google Images*

by the professor almost every time. Luckily, when we had a drawing assignment, I did pretty well each time. I tried to do my best in drawing because I knew I was not good at taking quizzes.

Half the semester passed by and my skill improved by the day. Adding details and depth to a picture was difficult for most students who were still not able to draw. We were drawing the inside and outside of buildings. I chose the angle in front of the E1 and E3 buildings. I had one more week to finish my assignment; then all assignments would be put on the classroom wall. Approximately twenty-five drawings were turned in, yet I still had not finished mine because I had more details to add. I wanted to put my picture with others. After the evaluation from the teacher, thirty percent of the class' pictures were exemplary.

The next class, I was expecting to get my picture back, but I did not receive my picture. I asked my teacher and my friends, and I found out my picture was displayed in the hall of the Art building. I was surprised when I found out my picture was chosen among five other pictures. I surprised my teacher, my classmates, and myself. Seeing myself grow from the beginning to the end of the semester in drawing class shows me that I still have potential and talent to grow in other areas of my life. I will remember this experience in the future when I am afraid to try new things.

# INTERVIEWS & HELPFUL INFO

## Language Learning Is An Adventure

Yuchen Chen

ESL Tutor at the Modern Languages Lab

A couple of years ago I was traveling around Spain with three of my best friends in a summer program. One day after touring Barcelona, I forgot the time I was supposed to meet up with my friends. I missed the bus and wasn't able to get in touch with my friends because my phone's battery had run out. I found myself all alone, trying my best to use every single Spanish word I knew to borrow a phone in the streets of Barcelona. I was so exhausted at the end of the day, but the experience showed me how far I could push myself out of my comfort zone.



I was fortunate enough to have attended a high school in China that offers Spanish classes as one of the elective classes. It was a valuable opportunity for students like me who wanted to improve their language skills. Besides, being a huge fan of FC Barcelona, I had always wanted to learn Spanish, so I enrolled in the elective class immediately.

For nearly three years, I put a lot of effort in studying the grammar in my Spanish class, hoping to get my Spanish Diploma level B1, an internationally recognized European language certification exam for young learners. I would summarize the crucial grammars point after every class and compare the different conjugations to see through their differences and similarities. I would also visit professors during office hours to learn topics beyond the textbook. However, when I took the Spanish Diploma level B1 test, I failed because of my low grade in listening and speaking tests. During the speaking test, the interviewers spoke so fast that I couldn't understand all the questions. Even when I was able to answer the questions, I spoke nervously and hesitantly.

In order to prepare myself better for the exam, I tried to turn to a Spanish tutor to get more practice. However, it was hard and costly to find a Spanish tutor in China. When I sought support from my parents, they refused because they did not want me to spend too much time on an elective class. It seemed that there was nothing I could do for the test and I felt very depressed and helpless at that time. To my surprise, one day my Spanish teacher announced that there would be a scholarship offering a free travel opportunity to Spain. I literally jumped for joy upon hearing the good news. After I learned that applying for the scholarship required a video about a Spanish city, Cuenca, I gathered three of my friends in my Spanish class and started working on the video immediately. We were thrilled about taking on the project and the opportunity to travel around Spain.

My friends and I decided to show the cultural similarity between Spanish and Chinese culture to make the video stand out. Having brainstormed together, we chose football and ceramics, two elements that can be found in both Chinese and Spanish culture. In the video, while playing football, we introduced the origin of football in ancient China and talked about the national enthusiasm towards football in Spain. Also, we also showed the making of ceramics together in the video and pointed out that the ceramic production was both crucial for the development of Spanish and China in history. After we submitted the video, we were on the edge of our seat and checked our emails every day. Three months after, we were finally informed we were awarded the scholarship. We were so happy to know that our hard work and unremitting efforts were not in vain.

In summer 2015, the exciting trip to Spain finally took place. Having to use Spanish on a daily basis was an entirely new experience for me. In Cuenca, I stayed with a host family, which meant I had to use Spanish to tell the family what I wanted to eat for dinner and where I wanted to go on the weekends. It was not easy at first, and I had to learn a lot of new vocabulary words and expressions which helped me express my thoughts more clearly. In Barcelona, while appreciating the beauty of Spanish culture in the Prado National Museum, I used my cell phone to snap a few pictures, which resulted in it being confiscated. I had to apologize to the museum staff and luckily was able to get my phone back. These successful experiences in Spain made me became more confident about my Spanish skills as it was clear that my oral and listening skills were improving dramatically.

The unforgettable experience in Spain made me understand the best way to learn a new language is to keep oneself out of the comfort zone. Focusing only on grammar is not the best way to master a language. Although grammar is the critical foundation of any language, our ability to communicate and think clearly is even more crucial. Three months after I returned to China from Spain, I took the B1 test again and successfully passed it. Listening and speaking Spanish was no longer a challenge for me. I believe that if we have a positive attitude, a willingness to work hard, and the courage to put ourselves in the environment that pushes us to use the language, mastering a new language can be within everybody's reach.

*Congratulations, Yuchen, on winning the CATESOL 2018 student essay award!*

# INTERVIEWS & HELPFUL INFO

## The Student Health Center at East Los Angeles College

Anokhi Patel

E.S.L. 6A

Knowing that resources and support services exist for student's well-being is extremely important. Today, we had a special guest speaker in our English class named Cecilia Cruz. She explained how we can use the Student Health Center located in F5 on the third floor. A student must pay the mandatory health fee each semester, which is \$11. The students can pay health fees online or at the fiscal office in G1. After that they have to get current health fee sticker on the student ID at the same place. Paying the fee and having a sticker are two main requirements to receive the services at the health center. There are some free services available including family planning, blood pressure screening, tuberculosis screening, first aid care, women's health, etc. They also have mental wellness services which include individual therapy sessions and group sessions. They provide some low cost services like Hepatitis B vaccination, Varicella vaccination, pregnancy test, sugar test, etc. Cecilia Cruz emphasized that it is better to take an appointment for some services in order to avoid waiting in line. It is useful to get familiar with following services at ELAC like The Women's and Men's Support Center. If anyone is facing domestic violence, stalking, sexual assault or in an unhealthy relationship they should contact the support center. There are Lactation Rooms and approximately 15 Gender Neutral Restrooms available on campus. The most important thing is the Emergency Alert. We can sign up for that at [www.elac.edu](http://www.elac.edu). And in case of emergency, contact the Sheriff at 323-265-8000.



### ABOUT THE PHOTO

A woman getting her vaccinations (meant to be humorous). Photo courtesy of Pixabay

## A Helping Hand: Understanding Financial Aid

Carolina Zheng

E.S.L. 6A

Student financial aid is to provide financial assistance to students who, without such aid, may be unable to attend college. Financial aid is available from various sources such as federal and state governments, institutional, and community organizations, as well as individual donors. Financial aid can be awarded in the form of grants, waivers, loans, work-study, scholarship, or combination of these. About CCPG(California College Promise Grant), Grants, Scholarship are Free Gift Aid that do not need to pay back.

One of type of financial aids is Grants that include Pell Grant, SEOG, Cal Grant A, Cal Grant B, Cal Grant C, Student Success Completion Grant, Chaff Grant, Current and foster youth. Fee Waiver, Outside scholarships, International Scholarship, ELAC Foundation are another type of Grand. Applying those Grants are not only for residents, but some programs also for international students.

To be considered for financial aid, students must meet certain requirements including no criminal record, not owe overpayment, be enrolled as a regular student, demonstrate financial needs, as well as get a good GPA etc. If you need more information that you can go to website, such as [www.fasweb.com](http://www.fasweb.com), [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com), [www.scholarships.com](http://www.scholarships.com), [www.studentscholarshipsearch.com](http://www.studentscholarshipsearch.com), [www.finaid.org](http://www.finaid.org). Many students only understand about Financial Aid, do not know additional grand like Cal Grand. In order to take advantage of all opportunities available you need as entitlement awards to support your educational expenses that you can apply for financial aid online at [fafsa.gov](http://fafsa.gov) or at [caldreamact.org](http://caldreamact.org). Processing is fastest and most accurate when completing your application online.

## The Fastest Way to go Bankrupt in the Finance Market

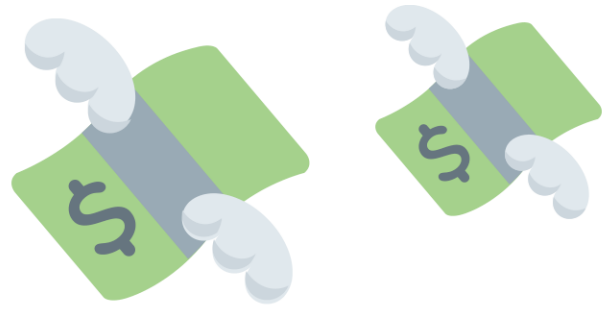
Xincziqwa

E.S.L. 6A

What is the fastest way to make tons of money in finance market? That is a serious billion-dollars question, please tell me about it when you find the answer. However, what is the fastest way to lose all of your money in finance market? I think no one is actually thinking about this, but let's make the zero to one, taking this as a serious topic to discuss about just for fun. After doing some thinking, I conclude following three steps might help you maximum the loss in finance market in shortest time.

First of all, if someone want to lose their money as fast as they can, they should find the worst-performance finance market to swallow the money, which means this one should make the largest percentage losses compare to others(When we talk about finance market, it often refers to Secondary Market, which also called Stock Market in general sense). After comparing, the Chinese Stock Market outperformed their international peers by down 22% this year. Nevertheless, the actual situation is far worse than it shows on the graph because of the special strictures of China MSCI index, you lose 40% of your money this year if you get lucky. So we choose China's stock market to lose our money.

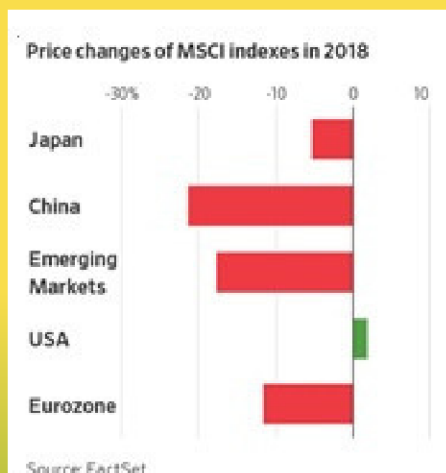
Secondly, the one of the foundation of the actions in finance market are managing risks, so the next things to do is to maximum the risks that you are taking. Since our goal is to lose money in the shortest time, you don't want to lose 1% money per day for half a year still remain 16.4% of your original asset, that's boring, we want to do it in Thanos's way, half of it gone with a snap. So let me introduce you to the "leverage", the greatest instrument ever exist in the finance world. With ten times(or even greater times) leverage, you can use 10 bucks to buy a



share of stock that the price is 100 dollars with the help of the banks that willing to lend you money, and if this particular stock down for 10% which means the price of it change down to 90 dollars, congratulations, you are bankrupt! Additionally, in order to maximum the risk, we can find the one that has the highest fluctuation rate, like the one financial derivative instrument called "options". Options is a highly risky variety, when it comes to the settlement day, it can down to -99.99% from +1200% within an hour in some certain situation(s). If you use high leverage with your money and put it in to options market, theoretically, you are shooting in the explosive magazine.

For the last step, you need to develop the worst habits while you are trading in the finance market in order you avoid any potential chances to make profit. If we avoid every characters that a good trader have and do the opposite, we should be able to loss spectacularly. Controlling the positions, diversifying the trading objects and determining a stop loss line are the three most important things to do for a good traders, so as opposite of those, we should put all of our money in to one specific stock or option and if its price start to go down, just leave it be and enjoy watching the "Game of Thrones".

In a nutshell, in order to go bankrupt in the shortest time in financial market, you should follow these steps: find the worst market, maximum the risks, and do trading with the poor habits. Believe it or not, countless people are repeating these steps while their goals are getting rich overnight.



***"If [stock] price starts to go down, just leave it be and enjoy watching 'Game of Thrones'."***

### ABOUT THE GRAPH

The graph (left) shows the major global stock markets' performance. Photo provided by Xincziqwa

# INTERVIEWS & HELPFUL INFO

## An Interview with Yuchen Chen, ESL Tutor in the Modern Languages Lab

Interviewed by Meijia Wang

Editorial Staff

**Why did you decide to come to United States instead of another English-speaking country?**

He come to the United States because of his family. His father came here first.

**How long have you been learning English here?**

He has been learning English in the United States for 1 year, but he studied English for nine years in China.

**How long did it take you to speak English fluently?**

Only one year. He speaks English, follows TV programs and got help from his professor.

**What were some of the challenges that you have learned English?**

He took the assessment test and got into ESL 6A, then he decided to do the English challenge for ESL 8. Tony, one of ESL tutors in MLL, helped him to prepare for the challenge. He passed the challenge and went directly to English 101.

**What pushed you to become a tutor?**

He thinks becoming an ESL tutor is proof of his English skill for himself.

**What has been the biggest challenge as you became an English tutor?**

He feels comfortable to become a ESL tutor. Maybe he will not speak well as others, but he still can use his knowledge to help students who came to MLL.

**What are the most common issues that you see in learning English?**

The most common errors that students make are subject and verb agreement and sentence structure.



### ABOUT THE PHOTO

Tutor Yuchen Chen.

*Photo provided by Sun Kim*

# INTERVIEWS & HELPFUL INFO

## An Interview with Sam Thai, ESL Tutor in the Modern Languages Lab

**Interviewed by Ana Lopez**

Editorial Staff

**What made you decide to study in the States instead of another English speaking country?**

The majority of Sam's family is here in the U.S. so he had to join them. However, he would love to explore and work in other countries.

**How long have you been learning English in the U.S.?**

Sam has been here for four years learning English, but he began learning English prior to arriving in the U.S. in his native Vietnam.

**How long did it take you to speak English fluently?**

It took Sam only two months to reach his level of fluency. While attending high school here, all he did was practice his English. The hardest part for him was listening because of all the different cultures and accents here in L.A.

**What were some of the challenges you experienced while learning English? What influenced you to become a tutor?**

Sam never took ESL classes at ELAC. When he enrolled in ELAC, he went straight to English 28 with Professor Corey Youngblood. Sam admits, his grammar was terrible, which, in turn, made his essays horrible. He believed he should have gone into an ESL class instead of ENG 28. But Sam went to Professor Youngblood's office hours everyday (this was a summer class), where he worked with his professor on his grammar issues. At home, Sam would learn as much as he could without his professor's help. When Sam moved on to ENG 101, he stayed with Professor Youngblood. Over the course of that semester, his grammar improved dramatically. One day, while Sam was working on an essay outline, Youngblood asked Sam if he'd be interested in becoming an ESL tutor at the Language Lab. At the time, Sam was looking for a job so he applied.

**What is the biggest challenge of being an ESL tutor?**

For Sam, adapting to the different learning styles and learning rates of the students he helps is his biggest challenge.

**What is the most common issue you have seen as a tutor?**

For the most part, it seems that student comprehension and retention are the biggest issues Sam has witnessed. He notes that students often immediately forget what he has just explained or they don't typically pick up the explanations on the first attempt, so Sam must repeat the same explanation again and again. However, he has no problems with this because he understands that's how we all learn.

**Do you have any recommendations or comments for the ESL students?**

Sam recommends practicing as much as you can outside of tutoring and not to see a tutor only because the instructor requires it. Remember there are over 1,000 ESL students, so if you do not need tutoring, Sam believes it's best to leave the spots available for those students who really do need it. Sam also encourages ESL students to get out of their comfort zones and interact more with students who do not speak the same native language. Sam notes that it is best to interact with students you will be forced to speak English with because English is the only language you share. This is how you learn to speak English, Sam points out. If you interact with only students who speak your native tongue, you will get stuck at the level you are now at, and it will be harder to improve your English.



**ABOUT THE PHOTO**  
Tutor Sam Thai. *Photo provided by Sun Kimt*

# INTERVIEWS & HELPFUL INFO

## An Interview with Mi Giang, ESL Tutor in the Modern Languages Lab

Interviewed by Ilian Jimenez

Editorial Staff

### Why did you decide to come to United States instead of another English-speaking country?

When the war ended, one of my family members left my country and came to the United States. Twenty years after that, my grandparents moved to the U.S. In 2000, they moved. In 2015, my family moved here too. They were immigrants after the Vietnam War.

### How long have you been learning English here? How long did it take you to speak English fluently?

My English is not really fluent yet. I still have to learn a lot. When I first came here, I spoke broken English so it took me 3 years to gain the confidence to speak English.

### What were some of the challenges that you have experienced while learning English?

I still think that some words I cannot pronounce correctly. My listening skill is not perfect. Sometimes, if a native speaker is speaking too fast, I can't catch up with them. The other challenge is writing. I have to focus on grammar, sentence structure. We have to do a lot of academic essays [in ELAC classes] so writing is my other challenge.

### What pushed you to become a tutor?

My ESL professor [Cecilia Chan] recommended me. Before this job, I had a part time job at a restaurant. I didn't think of becoming a tutor. But my professor told me that the language lab was hiring. So I applied and got hired. At first it wasn't easy, but it's not exhausting. It makes me feel happy when I can help a student.



### What has been your biggest challenge since you've become an English tutor?

The biggest problem is when I explain something, it seems like the student cannot understand, so I have to find another way to explain it. The time is limited to 30 minutes. We can't cover everything. I have to explain slowly and carefully. It takes time. If the student has a big problem with the grammar, we tell them to attend a workshop. If the student cannot join the workshop, then I suggest they make another appointment to follow up with their individual grammar problem.

### What are the most common issues that you have seen as a tutor?

Asian students have grammar problems with verb tenses like present, past, present perfect because they don't know when to use it correctly. Students with western language backgrounds like French or Spanish don't have the same problem. They have problems with comma splices and run-ons. The native language is the main reason for the problems.

### Do you have any final comment?

Don't be afraid to speak with friends or a native speaker in English. I barely practiced speaking and listening when I was in Vietnam because we only focused on grammar and vocabulary. To improve writing skill, you really have to spend time thinking about the prompt. After writing, check your essay twice or three times very carefully.

#### ABOUT THE PHOTO

Tutor Mi Giang. Photo provided by Sun Kim

# INTERVIEWS & HELPFUL INFO

## The MLL Can Help

Derick Lee

E.S.L. 6A

The Modern Languages Lab (MLL) gives me the opportunity to better myself in English, a better grade, a better education to lead me into a better future. I came from Vietnam. My first language is Chinese. My parents descended from China, and spoke Vietnamese. I joined E.S.L.6A on August 24 2018. I did not have any confidence to speak or write in English, but as I am taking E.S.L 6A class and with additional help from the staff of The Modern Language Lab (MLL), it is building up my confidence. The MLL not only helps me with E.S.L., but it also offers support in areas like, grammar, essays, as well as workshops. All these are free. In my country, we have to pay for all of these services, so I recommend not to lose this opportunity. Please come and join the MLL that can help us better our future and life.

I join the MLL and take 6A, because I want to better myself and most importantly; I want to earn a degree and to prove to myself I can do it. Also, the higher education we have, the higher salary we will get. According to CNN Don Lemon, "if you graduate from a high school you could make \$28,000 a year; however, a college graduate makes \$51,000 a year". The MLL will help you to reach all these goals, a better grade, a better education, a better future.

If we want to learn how to pronounce a word, the MLL has programs because each workstation is equipped with a microphone and a headset. The program will say a word and we can repeat and record it or we can sign up for some pronunciation workshops. The tutors can also help us to correct our essay assignments and our grammar. They can help us with different E.S.L. problems. I like the private tutoring. I feel like I can learn more because I can provide the tutor what I need help with, and he or she will help me on that subject.

MLL tutors are friendly and respectful. They will not look down on us. If I am shy or afraid of going by myself, I can schedule to bring in a friend. Of course, when we are making an appointment we need to let them know in advance. If students do not like private meeting, they can join a workshop.

There are different workshops offered every week. All we have to do is sign up the workshop that best fits our schedule. Take this opportunity to ask the MLL to help us.

Certainly, If we want to consider our futures, we should determine how the MLL can help us to achieve our goals. I am improving my writing, grammar, and confidence because of the MLL. Come and join the MLL.

***"If we want to consider our futures,  
we should determine how the  
MLL can help us achieve our goals."***

# INTERVIEWS & HELPFUL INFO

## An Interview with Michelle Hernandez-Payan, International Counselor at ELAC

Interviewed by Yola Hernandez

Editorial Staff

### How long have you been helping international students?

I have been a counselor at ELAC for 10 years: 5 years part time, 5 years full time.

### How long have you been working at ELAC?

I have been working here for 19 years.

### What information do International Students need to know?

If students have problems, the counselors will help them. We'll provide the resources or services they need. We're here as a support system for them. They need to check their emails for announcements. The main communication is through emails and the news e-letter.

### What information MUST International Students know?

International students need to have 12 units, be full time, earn passing grades (above 2.0 GPA), they must pay for medical insurance. The main thing is they are here on a visa. They must follow the plan in a limited amount of time (2-3 years). If they're not completing their goal, they must come and see us. We will help them extend their I-20, get travel signatures if they plan to go home during winter or summer vacation.

### What are the common issues / fears for International Students?

The GPA is the most common fear. Students worry about going to go to a UC or a wellknown university. There's extra pressure based on the perception of a well-known university.

### How does the new law (AB705) affect students in ESL?

AB705 is only for ENL (English as a native language) students. Those students will go into English 101 and support courses. For ESL students, they are on the track of ESL 3A, 4A, 5A, 6A and 8. There are support courses for ESL. For example, 5B and 6B is for reading/vocabulary. There will still be an ESL assessment. It's "business as usual." There are no changes in the ESL course sequence.

### What are the plans for the International Students club?

There will be tours of UC campuses. Through the International Student office, there will be transfer workshops, stress management workshops, and fun events such as holiday lunches.

### Based on everything we've discussed, is there anything you'd like to add, recommend or share?

We want our international students to feel welcome. Please come to ask any questions. Please check your email for communication. The office is open Monday-Thursday 8-6, Fridays 8-12. We are here to help you!



# INTERVIEWS & HELPFUL INFO

## Learning from Rosetta Stone

Jordy Ye Cao

E.S.L. 6A

As a part of an assignment called Passport to Fluency from my E.S.L. class, I decided to use Rosetta Stone, which is an educational application created to teach different languages, in order to earn some stamps for the passport. I already had previous knowledge of this virtual resource as a tool to learn languages, so I decided to try this out. The first thing you notice when you open the app is that the design of it is very simple and easy to understand, the tasks that learners have to do range from choosing pictures that match with the meaning of the word given to filling the blank of a sentence with a word. Overall, this app offers completely easy and simple tasks, so the inconvenience comes if those tasks are too simple for the student. As a student in 6A, I would expect more challenging assignments like building grammar structures or learning how to use academic words. I am not saying the app is bad. It is quite good for lower levels, but for higher levels it might not be as useful. However, there is a useful feature: all of the activities on this app must be completed in English. There is no way to translate the words to another language, despite other resources.

## An ESL Workshop at the Modern Language Lab

Professor Vernita Burrell

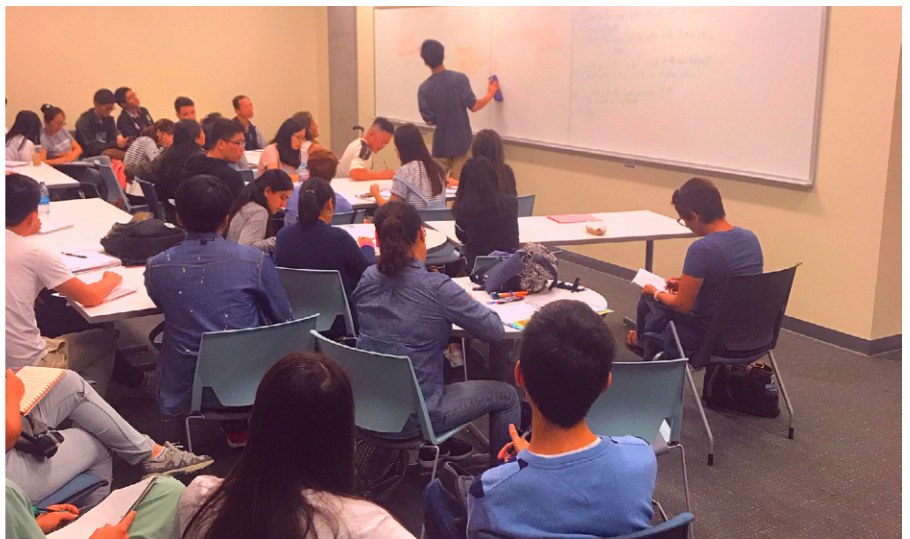
English 101

As an English professor at ELAC, one of our duties in our classrooms is to make sure our students understand the importance of good grammar in essays. Especially for our International students, learning the intricacies of English grammar is imperative for college success. ELAC's ESL department offers grammar workshops run by student tutors throughout each semester on a regular basis, and I had the opportunity to attend a one such workshop, to see what happens.

I attended a workshop on Subject/Verb agreement, a grammatical move in which a subject and its verb in a sentence must agree either in a singular or plural form. This move is a pretty common problem in English composition, and the workshop I attended, expertly led by ESL tutor Tony, went into great detail reviewing rules and concepts of Subject/Verb agreement.

The workshop was full – 22 students were in attendance and Tony kept everyone engaged. Students work on practice handouts in groups, and there were plenty of notes and example of Subject/Verb agreement on the board for the students to refer to. Answers to practice handouts were discussed amongst the students. Tony made sure the students understood concepts and frequently asked the students questions in order for them to talk through any confusions with answers and to facilitate understanding.

As a professor, I would highly recommend students to take these workshops. The care in which these tutors take with the students is nice to see. It's also nice to see that our students are getting good tutoring help, because sometimes professors' time in the composition classroom is so limited that there is little time for intense grammar instruction. Our students are in good hands!



### ABOUT THE PHOTO

Tony, one of the MLL's ESL tutors, reviewing Subject/Verb agreement during one of his workshops in the MLL. *Photo provided by Professor Vernita Burrell*