

The IEP TIMES

Bringing the World to Eastern Mennonite University

April 27, 2006

Harrisonburg, VA 22802

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

April 21-24 & 25: IEP Testing

April 27: Final Celebration

May 8: Summer Session Begins

Talent Show

Today, March 27, is going to be a great time. Everybody is wondering what I am going to do or what they are going to do for the talent show, but we know that each IEP student has skills and talents to show us their own culture. They have been preparing something special for this day. You know, when you do something that you love to do, it is more fun.

Anyway, here are our actors. Susana, Raul and Alma sang two songs: The first one was a typical song from Mexico, "Cielito Lindo," which means nice sky, and the second song was Mexico's hymn. Although they were a little nervous, it is natural. Another brave person was Mari from Japan. She sang Japanese music which she called "Shimauta," that means island song. She has a soft voice and was very good. Daniel from Bolivia showed us his skills with his hands. We were interested in how he made a knot on a rope disappear; it was magic. He was talking about how people break their relationship with God through sin. David from Congo showed us his typical clothes and led a game with some mixed-up words. Laela and Ali showed us pictures of the interesting mosques in Iran which are really important and respected places for Iranians. We were quite interested in them. Yunis showed us a rug with a Kurdish dance scene, and he played a popular Kurdish musical instrument, the tambur, for us. Finally, Gina, Kim, Kay and Jenny from Korea presented a children's song called "Allchingi" about tadpoles becoming frogs.

We enjoyed the time. We danced a Kurdish dance and a Salvadorian dance even though we didn't know how to do them. Anyway, it was not an obstacle for having fun. We really did do whatever we wanted for the talent show

Ximena, Colombia
Advanced Level

Baby Shower

At IEP a baby shower was celebrated for our teacher Anali Kratz Mathies. It was a wonderful baby shower, and all the students and teachers brought presents for the baby. Anali's husband came to the shower and was so excited. During the shower we sang "Old MacDonald Had a Farm," and Sandy played the guitar. Also, Maria Esther passed around some samples of baby food to all present to guess what kind of flavor each one of those samples had. That was a lot of fun. There were many different activities. Anali was so happy when she received a quilt for her baby made by IEP students and our teacher Christi Kramer.

While she was opening the presents, some students were taking pictures of the presents that she received. At the end of the celebration, Anali thanked each student. Then she cut and shared a delicious cake provided by Susana. On the beautiful cake there was a message that said, "What a blessing. It's a boy!"

Susana, Mexico
Intermediate Level

Wedding Shower

We had a wedding shower for Sandy Longenecker, one of our teachers, and her fiancé, Tim Cox, today, April 17, 2006. It was a really great time for the couple who are going to be bride and groom in May and for all of us in IEP. We enjoyed some games and gave them some presents that they opened in front of us. This time was full of hope and excitement.

I think marriage is the most important turning point in our lives because that means that we start a new life with someone we really love in a new place. This is a time when expectation and anxiety are in our minds before marriage. We are sure Sandy and Tim are going to be happy always like at this moment, and love and respect each other. Don't forget: "Hug three times a day. Respect, trust and express love."

I was very happy I could share my excitement with Sandy for her wedding and also thank all the teachers for giving me a chance to know about American culture, especially a wedding shower. I had never experienced this before in the U.S.

YeonJung, Korea
Advanced Level

Favorite Holidays or Memories

My favorite holidays are December 24 and 31 because when I was girl, I lived in El Salvador and those days my family and I went to visit another family, and they made a big party for themselves, and for the kids they bought many presents and clothes.

My family always gave everything the kids wanted on those days. Now I live in the U.S. and my favorite day here is Thanksgiving Day because on this day I usually never work. That is why it is my favorite day, because every other holiday I work.

Lourdes, El Salvador
Low Intermediate Level

When I was in my country, El Salvador, my two favorite holidays were Christmas and New Years. I always felt happy and sad because I was not with my mom. In my country December 24 is when the people celebrate Christmas, when Jesus Christ was born, and for that reason they are happy and prepare a lot of food and they drink soda too.

New Year's also is a big day for all people in the world, but for me it is special because I will learn new things and discover new things, and old memories will remain buried in the old year.

Vanessa, El Salvador
Low Intermediate Level

Spring is coming. These days, the weather is very clean and a golden-bell tree has already bloomed. But still the wind is cold in the spring. Spring makes me throb.

I want to write my memory from two years ago in the spring. I still remember the date, April 4th. I went to an amusement park named Everland. Everland is the biggest amusement park in Korea. At Everland, in spring, a tulip festival takes place. So I went there. Actually, I went there because of a blind date. My friend introduced me to a guy; he wanted to meet at Everland, so we met there.

My friend tried to make a good situation, but my character is too shy, especially in front of men. Eventually we hung out together. We took many pictures of flowers and a cute doll. After taking pictures, we rode the rides. My friend and the guy really liked to ride the roller coaster, but I didn't like that. That day I rode two or three roller coasters. Inevitably, after that, I was exhausted. When they rode the roller coaster, I sat on the bench and waited for them. I spent the whole day in Everland. Finally, I was too exhausted to talk with the guy. On the way

home I fell asleep on the bus, so the guy and I didn't talk.

When I look back, that time was fun. Everland is a place of good memories. As it is spring these days, Everland will prepare for the festival. I want to go to Everland again.

Hyo-Jin, Korea
Advanced Level

Language Growth

If I want to compare my English now to my English when I first came to the U.S., I will find so many differences. I can remember exactly the time that I couldn't use verbs, adverbs, adjectives, nouns, objects and subjects in my sentences. I wasn't even able to make a question sentence or I didn't know how to use verbs in different times like past, present and future. I didn't know much vocabulary and how I could use "do," "does" and "did" in my sentences. But now I have learned all of these things, and when I compare my English to when I first came to the U.S., it makes my happy because I realize that I have made progress; but when I compare my English to American people, I realize that I have a long way to go to make my English professional.

Ali, Iran
Low Intermediate Level

There are some changes in myself since I began to study English as a second language. It was very difficult when I couldn't understand this language. It made me feel very sad also. Now it is different. I can feel more comfortable when someone speaks to me, and I am able to answer him. My pronunciation is still bad, but in the beginning, it was worse.

Also, when I couldn't understand this language, I was more afraid about American people around me. Now I am more independent, and each time that it is necessary, I try to speak and resolve my problems-- wherever I am and wherever I go. It is so good to be able to understand what the people say.

One of the most important things that I have learned, little by little, is how to read books. It is something that has become very interesting for me. I usually had problems with my mail and with my bills. Now I try to read and understand all of those things.

Finally, since I began to study English, all of these little changes have made a big difference. Starting to learn this language was a really good idea because before this, I had a lot of problems.

Jorge, Mexico
Low Intermediate Level

When I came to Virginia, I could talk little English and my grammar was low. Everything was low. So I started at IEP, and now, I can feel the difference. For example, I can talk more and not always use the same word, or just only say “yes” or “no.” Now I’m in the last four weeks of classes. I need to study more and then study at E.M.U.

Julio, Costa Rica
Low Intermediate Level

Hello, my name is Osman. At this time I am going to write about my English. When I came to this city for the first time I couldn’t speak English. I took English classes in Guatemala, but I never paid attention. When I was there, I thought I would never come to the U.S. But I’m going to talk a little bit about IEP. This place is where I’m learning English now, and I think that I’m learning a little bit because when I started here, I couldn’t speak anything. I remember that I always needed help for everything like when I wanted to go to the doctor, go shopping or fill out an application. Sometimes I needed help to use the phone card when I wanted to call my family. I’m never going to forget one friend because this person told me, “If you want to do anything for yourself, go to school, learn English, and you will know that is your best way in this country.”

Osman, Guatemala
Low Intermediate Level

Immigration

Recently in my advanced writing class, we had a chance to choose one topic that interested us the most. I chose to research and talk about problems that affect immigrants here in America. Since I’m an immigrant myself, I felt familiar with this topic.

I conducted small interviews in a gas station, asking as the main question: What do you think about people who cross the border and are illegally here in America? Three out of five replied that immigrants crossing the border illegally is totally wrong and the immigrants should not be here. Some of them gave me examples of how illegal people are taking Americans’ job spots and healthcare resources. The rest of the people I interviewed said that it was not so bad because we are all human beings, and a human being deserves respect and opportunities. Personally I was delighted by this last answer.

I also became very interested by the new intentions of some of the members of Congress: that power could be given to normal police officers to

become immigration officers, and that they then could stop a person based only on his/her Spanish appearance and ask for his or her legal status. If the person does not have any documents to prove his or her legal presence here in United States, this person could end up in prison. This intention could put our right of freedom and opportunity to have a better life in danger. Since it is a serious crime to enter the country without legal papers, every one of us could be in continual danger.

Honestly, I only partially understand the political and economic reasons the government gives in taking this action against immigrants. What I can understand better are the reasons I had to come here and why I still think America is the “dream land.” I grew up in a torn family with two sisters and one boy. My parents separated when I was nine-years-old and my mother left home and came to United States to take us all forward. Otherwise, my two sisters and I would have died. My father left our hometown and remarried. I am the oldest one so I became the mother of my two sisters and my brother. I had to accept it, tolerate it and bear it with all the problems and responsibilities in front of me.

First of all, I want to specify that I am not complaining. I am grateful to my Lord because I met Him here. Like I was saying, I had really hard times of which I could tell many more details, but let me just say, that America was my only hope to get out of poverty and the desperation my life was in. I can even tell you that I tried to take my own life to alleviate my suffering. Now I feel better living in this country and I do not want to give up. Nor do I want to lose my hopes of graduating as a nurse practitioner and, later on, being a missionary. Honestly I am scared for my and my baby’s future, but I believe in a Superior Being who can help me to attain what I want.

Some of the IEP Times readers might hear some comments about what is going on this particular subject of immigration. I would like to ask them to help me and to help other immigrants by supporting our situation. When somebody asks you what you think, please reply that immigrants are all different, that everyone deserves respect and opportunity.

Azucena, Guatemala
Advanced Level

Multiracial people from many nations live in America. Now approximately 12 million of them are illegal immigrants. According to the newspaper, “56 percent of all illegal immigrants are Mexicans. Another 22 percent come from other countries in Latin America. Asians account for about 13 percent. Six

percent come from Europe and Canada.” Recently Congress has developed heated discussions about how to reform the immigration laws in the U.S. Some of the Senators and other people agree with having new laws; on the other hand, other Senators and lots of people are opposed to them, and still other Senators have offered compromises.

What would U.S. immigration laws reform? Nowadays Congress is trying to deal with the illegal immigration. Under one bill, illegal immigrants who have lived in the U.S. for over five years would be able to apply for U.S. citizenship without having to leave the U.S. first; they would not be committing a crime. Other illegal immigrants who have lived in the U.S. for fewer than five years would have to return to their home countries first; and then if they got legal working permission, they would be able to come here again. This bill includes punishing businesses that hire illegal workers. If civic and religious groups provide help for them, they would be punished, too. Some Senators have made a counterproposal. For example, Senator Hillary Clinton, from the State of New York, is opposed to punishment for civic and religious groups who provide help for illegal workers.

Mass protests began on March 23. One of the newspapers said, “On March 25, huge crowds held rallies across the U.S. In Los Angeles, California, more than 500,000 people marched in the streets. They waved flags from different nations. They wore white shirts as a sign of peace. The Los Angeles protest was one of the largest marches for any cause in recent U.S. history.” Also, “some immigration rights supporters rallied in Arizona, Colorado, North Carolina, Texas, Wisconsin, and elsewhere.” In addition, “about 36,000 students in Los Angeles County and many students in Texas, Nevada, and Arizona walked out of school.”

Many immigrants pointed out that the U.S. is a nation built by immigrants. They usually work at farm jobs, cleaning jobs, building trades, food preparation, etc. Some people and businesses said that they need these immigrants because they are working at hard jobs with low wages--and these immigrants still want to work in the U.S. Also, the Congressmen who are from areas where there are lots of legal Hispanics who vote and Congressmen whose families are immigrants want a helpful bill for those who are illegal. (These Congressmen are thinking about the next elections.)

On the other hand, many people agree with the new proposals in the immigration reform bills. For example, Senator Bill Frist from Tennessee, the majority leader in the Senate, proposed building a high wall on the border of Mexico in order to prevent illegal workers from coming to the U.S. from Mexico. He also proposed that all illegal immigrants must return to

their home countries or be punished. Those who agree consider all the illegal immigrants in the U.S. criminals who should be deported. These people want to be safer and more secure in their lives. Another reason is that they believe that lots of illegal immigrants cause fewer employment opportunities for Americans. Still another reason is that the pension budget in the future would be lower due to lots of illegal immigrants.

President Bush proposed a guest worker program in his reelection year. That would let an illegal immigrant stay in the U.S. for a set period of time. He said, “If you are doing a job that Americans won’t do, you’re welcome here for a period of time to do that job.” But Congress rejected Bush’s program. According to the news, the President is developing a new temporary worker program to match willing foreign workers with willing U.S. employers when no Americans can be found to fill the jobs. Nevertheless, the President would not allow amnesty to illegal immigrants.

Senator John McCain supported Bush with a plan that was introduced in the House of Representatives. “McCain’s plan tries to mitigate that problem by creating a new type of visa for previously undocumented workers who would be allowed to live in the United States legally for three years. Then the workers could apply for the temporary worker visa, which would be the path to a green card, or legal permanent residency. That would amount to a three-year advantage for those who entered legally.”

Certainly making a decision about illegal immigration by Congress is important for all the people in the U.S. I hope the final bill will be fair and keep all people secure for a long time rather than be a bill that simply serves politics.

Jenny, Korea
Intermediate Level

Revolutionary War in My Country

Nowadays in my country we have a Maoist problem which has been going on since 1996. The Maoists and the king are fighting, causing big effects in my country. I am going to talk about three particular types of effects: the effects on people’s lives, physical effects, and economic effects.

The war is a very dangerous situation for the people. Many people have lost their hands and feet, and a lot of Nepali people have died in the war. The war has had terrible effects on the women and children. The children are losing their parents, and the women are losing their husbands and sons. Most of the boys and men have to participate in the war because the Maoists

kidnap them. As a result, in many families there are no young or adult men at home to work. Some young girls also become Maoists, making their family situation weak. That's why the women and children have to work and the children can't go to school. Also, some parents don't want to send their children to school because of the dangerous situation. Indeed, many young girls and boys who need to go to school are, instead, helping the Maoists.

Because of the war, some bridges have been destroyed, and the Maoists have destroyed some government offices, vehicles, and the houses of people who are against them. On the other hand, on the king's side, also, his army has caused the same kinds of physical effects. They have also destroyed people's houses where Maoists have hidden, and many general people have died.

Thus my country is losing many things in the war. The government is spending the whole budget to buy arms and weapons for the war. Therefore, it doesn't have enough money for rebuilding the destroyed bridges and other things. It doesn't have enough money to use in education, either. In this way, my country is losing many things instead of continuing to develop.

I think that the Maoists and the government aren't trying to understand each other's goals. If both of them tried to resolve the country's problems together, that would be good for the country and the people.

Joshoda, Nepal
Intermediate Level

Family

My family is a traditional Japanese family that has a long lineage. My parents made sure I got the best education possible. The significant effects my parents have had on my life help me be more mature than girls in other families.

First of all, I have had so much more experience in my life with housework skills than my friends. Both of my parents are teachers in an elementary school, so I didn't spend time with my parents after school. Some people felt sorry about that, but I've never felt alone or uncomfortable about being by myself. My mom used to ask me to cook dinner and to do the laundry and other housekeeping tasks when she was late. Because of doing those helpful tasks, I know how to cook and how to keep house.

My parents also put me in various extracurricular activities like piano, ballet, art, calligraphy, swimming, etc. However, they've never been strict with me; so if I didn't want to do those activities, I could decide

whether to keep on doing them or not. Taking part in them was a really good way for me to improve myself because those activities became my talents. I really appreciated that.

The third big effect of my parents is that I learned to be considerate. I used to take care of my brother when my parents were busy, so I am not afraid to be with children at all. I was a second mom in my family. Moreover, when my parents tried to talk to me, for example, even if I had done something wrong, they were never hysterical or violent to me. They just called me to sit beside them and talked to me calmly. They've never educated me by force. However, it was scary to me to talk to them.

I think the effects of certain types of parents on their children cause large differences in the children. If the parents take care of their children all the time, their children will not be able to do many things by themselves. If the children do not have both parents, they might not know how to make their own family in their future. If the parents use violence with their children, the children might be violent, too. I think it is very important to have good parents for children to improve themselves and to be independent. I hope I will be a good parent like my parents, and I am sure that I will teach my children everything that I learned from my parents.

Mariko, Japan
Intermediate Level

With the many family issues and unresolved conflicts that happen in committed relationships, many married couples in the U.S.A. are considering divorce, which is known as an easy way to get a break from—to end the relationship with—the other person. What many of these parents do not know or consider when they plan to divorce is that there will be many effects on their children and on themselves as well.

Children are educated better when there are two parents in the house. When parents divorce, children tend to get lower grades at school because of a lack of discipline and neglect. They often end their education too early and drop out of school—unlike children with two parent families. This usually happens with the females because they have less financial support from the parents. Thus their parents' divorce has a more severe impact on the girls than on the boys.

Also, children tend to have impulsive and impatient behavior due to the lack of having both parents to care for them; indeed, they become ruthless and aggressive sometimes. Going back and forth to visit the parents also brings a lot of frustration because they don't belong in one place. Most of the time they feel insecure and are afraid of love; having seen what

has happened to their parents, they have a feeling of fear about loving or being committed in a relationship. Indeed, they feel isolated from their parents and the world. They usually feel as if they have been abandoned, and they carry a feeling of blame or guilt with them, thinking that they are the cause of their parents' separation or their parents' lack of love for them.

Children are not only impacted emotionally, but they also become impacted physically. With the lack of their parents' discipline, children start to participate in small gang groups, where they start using drugs, alcohol, and other illegal things.

Finally, divorce not only affects children but parents as well. In many cases, people who are divorced tend to have a stressful life and live their lives in depression. They tend to have a higher mortality rate than people who stay married for a long time. Most of the time, they feel insecure about themselves and the other partner and are afraid to love again, due to the downfall of their previous relationship.

In conclusion, divorce in America is pretty high, and many families do not try to work on trying to resolve their problems. Divorce damages both parents and children, but the children are the ones that are the most likely to suffer when divorce occurs. As a teenager, I believe that we have to know about these effects and take them seriously. Also, when deciding to make such a decision like divorce, we should really think about our children and their lives and future—not only what we feel and think. We have to consider them as well.

David, Congo
Intermediate Level

Current Issues and Foreign Film Series

Taking Current Issues class was a good experience for me because this class had various activities. For example, we read and discussed about hot topics, watched foreign movies and guest speakers came often. In addition we had presentations, which was very difficult for me. Before I came to IEP I had not spoken in class voluntarily. So at first, I wondered if all the students were able to express their opinion easily.

I learned many things in this class, such as, the importance of expressing my opinion in a small group and in front of the class, analyzing movies, and understanding the author's message, and using tools to make my speech more effective.

During this semester I had the opportunity to learn about different problems. I have also been able to have an open mind to different issues. These will be useful in my life and good memories.

Seiko, Japan
Low Intermediate Level

Current Issues class was one of the most interesting and useful classes. Thus, it is hard to choose one topic that was really interesting because every topic was so interesting and impressive to me. This class made me think all the time, and I got a lot of information about many current issues. Sometimes, some of the topics, like surrogate mothers, were hard to understand and for me to express my mind. Some issues like prostitution made me feel sad and sorry. I think that not only general courses like grammar or writing are important, but also Current Issues class is necessary for our common sense, because we need to know what is happening in the world. This class gave me many opportunities, information, and time to think. I really enjoyed this class.

YeonJung, Korea
Advanced Level

Current issue class is one of my favorites classes. I really enjoyed being in this class. All contemporary topics and discussions on a hot topics book are very interesting. After reading the book, the class discussion was very helpful to understand the topic. The most interesting thing in this class was the presentations. It helped me to build my speaking skills, confidence and develop my capacity as a speaker. It taught me to do research, using different resources like internet and books.

Another interesting thing was the Foreign Film Series. Watching the films and discussing them with friends in class and sometimes with EMU students was so helpful to understand the film and write about that. It was also helpful to develop my listening and reading skills. I also liked the discussions on LILAC project with EMU students. Having guest speakers in class gave us opportunities to know about different countries, cultures, and many different situations. That is also helpful to develop our listening skills.

And last, I liked Current Issues class because it helped me for my overall and general knowledge development. It taught me reading, writing, speaking and listening.

Jashoda, Nepal
Intermediate Level

The Final Word

I am grateful to the students and teachers for a wonderful spring semester of lively intercultural learning! This issue of the *IEP Times* not only illustrates your growing language skills, but it also shows how seriously you have studied the issues that we highlighted, namely immigration and the family in social context.

Mike Medley, IEP Director

- ▲ **I**mprove your English skills!
- ▲ **E**nhance your education!
- ▲ **P**ress forward in your career!

Please contact IEP at (540) 432-4059, email iep@emu.edu or see our website at www.emu.edu/iep for more information

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