

The IEP TIMES

Bringing the World to Eastern Mennonite University

April 26, 2007

Harrisonburg, VA 22802

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

April 26: Spring Semester Final Celebration

May 7: Summer Session Begins

May 11: Mini-Golf at Mulligan's Golf Center

May 19: Canoeing on the Shenandoah River

Speaking Our Minds

(Excerpts from persuasive essays written in the High Intermediate Writing and Grammar Class)

In the United States, when people turn 16 years old, they are able to get a driver's license. On the other hand, in Japan people are not allowed to drive a car until age 18. I think that the driving age does not have to be raised in the U.S., because being able to drive a car and go out will give teenagers a lot of opportunities to know the real society. They will be able to work part-time after school and may need to drive to the job where they can learn to be responsible, to use money, to be on time, and to deal with people of different ages.

Yana, Japan
High Intermediate Level

The best thing about mandatory military service is that we become men. During two years we experienced lots of things, for example, pain, patience, yearning, valuable things. When I finished my duty, I did not realize that I had become a man. I was braver than before. My mind became strong.

Gi hun, Korea
High Intermediate Level

Dear immigrant, you have to learn English to call the U.S. a home. Learn English and people will call you the immigrant, but not the alien. Go to school; there are very good schools with ESL classes. You can study in the morning or evening. All you have to do is find 3 or 4 hours each week for your better future. Don't be lazy and you will see the good results soon. Learning English at the beginning is hard, painstaking work, but you have to build this base for your life in the U.S.

Badir, Uzbekistan
High Intermediate Level

Smoking does not have any advantages. Actually, as you know the disadvantages of smoking, you should quit smoking for yourself and your family. If you want help to quit, you can try participating in a program to quit smoking or you can try taking a medicine. However, the most important thing is you should make a resolution about quitting by yourself!

Yojin, Korea
High Intermediate Level

What We Do When We're Not Studying

Last night, April 4, from 6 pm-8 pm, I and my family, some IEP students, staff, teachers, and doctors and professors met to listen to poetry being read at JMU's "Poetry for Peace." The poems that were read included poetry from *Reading the Throne* by Christi Kramer, an IEP teacher. Professor Kakahama Askary, James Madison University philosophy and religion professor, read poetry from Iraq, Poetry for Peace. This event was very interesting. In a traditional Kurdish dress, Christi was beautiful.

Faiza, Yemen
Lower Intermediate Level

The "Ti-Jean and His Brothers Transports the Audience to the Caribbean with a Musical Tale" play at EMU was very interesting for me. There were people playing animals and animals breaking out in dance. It was a very musical show. It was a departure to a place that is different and new for me. The theater department held two workshops on drumming and dancing to better learn African and Caribbean music styles. The stage was covered with sand and rice. There was an old car that was involved in the play. The story on the surface was very simple. Two siblings from an impoverished family were challenged by the devil. If they could make him feel a human emotion, he would reward them by ensuring that never go hungry. But if they lost, he would put them in the trunk of a car. This was a very poetic, story-telling play. There were many characters in the play. The mother with her three children, the butterfly-man, the frog, the bird, the devil and two demons, there were also three kids playing the drums. The night we went,

there were about 50 to 65 people who attended the show. It was a good show; I really enjoyed it.

Fredys, El Salvador
Advanced Level

Today I met Kara, who is my conversation partner. First, we went to the Thursday Noon Music. Her Friend, Eojin, played the piano and sang a song. Eojin accompanied the violin concerto on the piano. It was good. Then she sang to a piano accompaniment. The music was the “Sun and Moon” from the Miss Saigon. Eojin was an alto, and Donovan was a baritone. Donovan’s voice really seemed to be as strong as the sun and Eojin’s voice was deep and beautiful as the moon. The sun and the moon never lived together, but they loved each other. Eojin was really like Donovan’s girlfriend; their performances were so legitimate. After that, I listened to the music of Jonathan, who was an excellent pianist. Today he played the OPolichinelo that was written by Villa Lobos. Jonathan played exceptional music in his superb technique. I like Villa Lobos’ guitar music, and I have gone to concerts to listen to his music before. The guitarist played his music in Japan, but I didn’t know he wrote the piano music too. Today I listened to his music that had various formations like different worlds. I enjoyed it very much. After the concert, we were walking on the campus, and Kara took my pictures for her study. It was cold, but I was interested because she was like a real photographer.

After that day, Kara mailed me about Eojin’s song. It was a love song between an American soldier and Vietnamese woman during Vietnam War. I thought they had really different destinies as the sun and the moon. I want to watch this musical someday.

Kazuko, Japan
Lower Intermediate Level

Two Thumbs Up!

(Film Reviews from the students in American Cultures through Film class)



I want to talk about the movie “The Joy Luck Club.” I like part of this movie, because it tells some of the truth of the Chinese-American culture but, in my opinion, this movie shows just parts of the Chinese-American’s life. It used a lot of stereotypes. For example, all the Chinese men were not good. All the women were treated badly by their husbands. This is a stereotype that is not always true. It showed some of

China’s history, but it was confusing because it went back and forth in time.

Kai, China
Lower Intermediate Level

“Come See the Paradise” is an American history movie. It is a movie about Japanese-American culture. We can see how the first generation of Japanese who have immigrated to the United States have been able to integrate into American society. They have their own businesses and homes. They have educated their children with only American culture and most of them don’t know how to speak Japanese.

This is the story of Jack McGurn, an Irish Immigrant, and Lily Kawamura, a Japanese-American. Jack falls in love with Lily. There is a mixture of two cultures through marriage, even though Lily’s father disagrees with the wedding. When the war breaks out with Japan, the American authorities decide that the Japanese immigrants must live in camps like war prisoners. At that moment, the Japanese-Americans become enemies as if they are a danger to American society.

A large problem raised in this movie is the question of identity. The American Army needs more soldiers so they ask Japanese-Americans to go to war, but can they go to kill people of their own nation? Or, if they grew up and aren’t Japanese citizens, they belong to the US so they must defend their country. How can they juggle these two cultural identities? What choice can they make, and how? Jack has the same problem, because he is married to a Japanese-American woman and he is American.

The movie is very interesting because it raises a lot of questions and asks us to think about actual problems: war, identity and making choices.

Rachel, France
Advanced Level

I really enjoyed American Culture this semester. This class was really deep with cultures. Because the US is an immigrant country, it has become a multi-cultural country. I was hurt when I saw the movie AMISTAD about slavery. When the Europeans came in the US, they took Native American land and started farms. Because of that, they needed some workers on those farms and plantations. Spanish, Dutch, etc., went to Africa to find workers, then sold them to America. It was like the market. They exchanged brave people by giving cheap junk like guns to the king. During their trip, the Spanish didn’t treat the Africans like humans or animals, but like things. African people suffered a lot. Some died of

starvation, some were crushed. Hundreds of men, women and children were locked together like things. The cargo hold was crowded with the African people and the smell of many bodies together. The slaves prayed for death. When they were sick, they were just thrown overboard. But, in this film, there was one brave man named Cinque who led others to rise up against their captors aboard the slave ship, Amistad. He wanted them to be free and to go back to their country. When they arrived in the US, the government put the Africans in jail because of some abolitionists who were fighting for freedom. The Supreme Court Chamber wanted to know their origin: were they born in Africa? It was a long process, however! They had to be in jail and go through unfair trials. Abolitionists, Theodore Joadson and Roger S. Baldwin, fought a lot for the slaves' freedom. John Quincy Adams, who was the president of the United States, fought to liberate the slave. He said, "all men are equal... inalienable rights... life, liberty and so on and so forth." Finally the Supreme Court chambers gave them freedom and the gentleman carried the Africans back to their homes.

For me, slavery is a bad thing; the worst is the treatment. But, Europeans just used them the way African kings were using them. In that time in Africa, many kings were fighting each other and the winners took each other like slaves. Those slaves used to work on the winners farms. We have one adage that says: if someone wants to steal or do something bad, he always does it with someone who comes from the country like a guide. If the Spanish did what they did, it was because they found the opportunity. I really recommend this movie. I'm really sure you will enjoy it.

Esther, Benin
High Intermediate Level

When I started to study in the IEP house, I didn't know why we had to take American culture as a class. I have almost finished the first semester of ESL and I realize that it is one of the most important kinds of knowledge that everyone, as an international student, must know. At the beginning we felt shy and quiet, but then we started to understand "culture" and it was very interesting. We saw movies about African-American culture, Chinese-American culture, Arab-American culture and many others.

I decided to write a review about Quinceañera. It is time to talk about my own culture. It is about family and how our own culture affects our lives. It is true that we celebrate our fifteenth birthday and it means a lot for the family. In the movie, they show that when the little girl is fifteen, she becomes a

woman. To have a celebration, she must be virgin and pure. They demonstrate what happens when this does not happen. For example, Magdalena wasn't a virgin and was also pregnant so her father kicked her out of the house. At the same time, the movie showed gay culture in the same family. Magdalena's cousin was gay. He was living with his uncle and Magdalena, because his own family did not accept him as gay. In the end, Magdalena's father knew that she was telling the truth about being a virgin; it is something weird that sometimes happens. They forgave each other and they continued being a family. The party happened anyway.

I recommend this movie because it shows us a lot of lessons about the reality of our lives despite our different cultures. I give this movie three stars.

Gretel, Nicaragua
High Intermediate Level

Why are they coming to America? What is the "American Dream" for Immigrants?

The film "Death On A Friendly Border" talked about Mexicans who want to immigrate to the U.S.A., because they are looking for a better life. On TV they see many stereotypes about how Americans live, like everyone is rich, living as high class citizens and shopping every day, or the government is very friendly to people who live in the USA. The movie is called Death on A Friendly Border, because many Latin American people who decide to cross the border, leaving their families behind, die crossing. In Mexico, the farmer doesn't make enough money so he wants to go to America. They don't have a visa and it is impossible for them to get a visa so they decide to go to America illegally.

Julio, Costa Rica
High Intermediate Level

The movie "The Long Walk Home" talks about discrimination, about how white people were segregated from the African American people prior to the Civil Rights Movement. For example, African American did not have the right to go to certain places, like a park. When they rode a bus, they had to sit in the back seats. They were discriminated against because of their ethnic origin; white people discriminated against the black people based on their race. In other words, white people were racist. After Rosa Parks was arrested, the African American's fought against the discrimination. They staged a boycott. They did not take the bus. They organized a carpool to help people get to work. Sometimes, they walked. I think that gave the title to this movie, "The Long Walk Home." It was not easy for them to decide not take a bus, but

they wanted to start the first stage of the civil rights struggle.

Through the movie, we should not make the stereotype that all white people were racist because there was one white woman who helped a lot of the black women. She gave them a ride, even though her husband did not agree with her. Also this white woman gave value and respect to her helper (maid) as a person because, when a policeman ordered her children to get out from park with a black nanny, she asked the policeman to apologize in front of her helper. I think segregation was not fair. This was the beginning of the Civil Rights Movement. They fought with non violent acts.

It is very important to watch this movie, because it helped me to know the history of the last fifty years. Through this movie, I saw two things: LOVE can change everything and it is a good weapon and, hate can destroy everything. As Susan Marcotte said, "Anger helps straighten out a problem like a fan helps straighten out a pile of papers." In the film, white people destroyed some cars and relationships with the African Americans but the power of love has changed history until today.

Toromare, Madagascar
Advanced Level

Why did I choose to review "Finding Forrester"? I thought it was the best movie at IEP. It was very interesting. I'm not kidding. It was really awesome.

I think the movie was set in the 1990s. The hero, Jamal, is a boy from Harlem. He was poor but he has talent. His talent is writing. He didn't want to lose his friends so he didn't always study. One day, they were playing basketball in front of a strange building. His friends said, "A stranger lives upstairs in the building." Jamal and his friends think that someone should go into the building. (It is a dare.) So Jamal went into the building. This was the first time Jamal and Forrester met. In fact, Forrester was a very famous author. Later, Jamal realized this, but Forrester didn't want to show others. As a result, they kept this a secret. They became friends. One day, Jamal's professor didn't believe his writing skills. Jamal was upset. Forrester knew it and he decided to help him. Because of Forrester, Jamal was able to go to school and graduate. I was jealous of their friendship. When Forrester died, he thought about Jamal. Jamal thought about Forrester, too.

GiHun, Korea
High Intermediate Level

We're Such Bookworms!



Charlottes's Web is a fiction book by E.B White, author of Stuart Little, with pictures by Garth Williams. The story is set in a large and old barn. A spider named Charlotte, the pig named Wilbur, and a little girl named Fern are the main characters. The animals are talking animals. When Wilbur was born, Fern's father decided to kill the pig, because he was very small and weak.

Fern fought to save Wilbur's life. After that her father let her take care of the pig like a baby. When Wilbur wasn't a baby any more, they sold Wilbur to Mr. Zuckerman and the pig was taken to the Zuckerman's barn. Fern, the little girl, came almost every day to visit Wilbur. The barn had all kinds of animals: cows, sheep, horses, etc. Wilbur had a best friend named Charlotte. She was the spider. She loved Wilbur and she always was writing words on her web, high in the barn so that people came from everywhere to see the unbelievable event.

This book is funny and sad. I liked it a lot, especially when Fern asked her father, "If I had been very small at birth, would you have killed me?" Absolutely, I recommend this book to everybody.

Blanca, Mexico
High Intermediate Level

In The X-Files, a strong disease is killing prisoners. The characters who are facing this problem are an ecologist, 14 prisoners, a lawyer, the FBI, Dr Bug, and the CDC (Center for Disease Control). This problem started in the forest of Costa Rica. An ecologist found dead volunteers and found something wrong on their bodies, like boils and bugs. He put the bugs into a bottle and sent it away, but somebody received the bottle by mistake. He sent it to the Cumberland jail in Virginia and one of the prisoners received it. He was the first person who got sick and died, because if the bug bit someone, only 36 hours later, the person died. Four prisoners escaped from the jail and the FBI started to investigate, and a doctor started burning the cadavers. A lot of people were involved in the problem and died. Finally, Dr Osborne was sick too and one agent of the FBI. But Dr. died, only the FBI continued finding a cure and looking for the prisoners infected. The last prisoner they found was going to Toronto, but he couldn't escape, because they found him before. He was in a serious condition

of sickness after a traffic accident. The ambulance, police, TV news and a lot of people arrived at that place. Finally, the FBI found the last man before this plague claimed more lives.

Alma, Guatemala
High Intermediate Level

What is the American Dream?

“The American Dream is a subjective term usually implying a successful and satisfying life.”
It is “the widespread aspirations of Americans to live better than their parents did.”

Answers researched and provided by;

Muhanned, Saudi Arabia
High Intermediate Level

Words from the Wise

(Advanced Writing and Grammar students reflect on their own learning experience, offering letters of advice to others who may be considering studying English)

Dear Friend:

Hi, my friend! How are you doing? I am sorry that I could not write you before now, but I have been pretty busy with my English classes. Let me tell you that since I came to the United States, I have been studying English in order to understand American people as well their culture. Besides, it has been a great experience for me, because in school I have met a lot of people from different parts of the world such as Africa, Asia, the Middle East, and Latin America. All of them are excellent people; it has been wonderful for me to get to know them and their cultures through English.

Of course, it has not been easy for me. Learning English has taken me a lot of time to understand. Finally, I think that I have made it. Well at least, I can understand American song lyrics. I remember when I was in Mexico, you and I used to hear English songs and sometimes we invented our own lyrics, because we did not know a lot of English. That was really funny!

Learning English is difficult, but not impossible, *amiga*. If you have the opportunity to learn English or any other new language, please don't waste time. Believe me, it is a window to meet other worlds different from our own. As you know, I have been studying English for 3 years or more. In all this time, I have been trying to improve my English by reading English books. It is an excellent way to learn how words should be written as well as to build new

vocabulary. I like watching TV programs, from which I have learned a lot. This part has been difficult, because in the TV programs people speak faster. However, I enjoy understanding each episode. Another nice way to improve my English is by making friends with people who don't speak my language. It is good, because I can practice my pronunciation as well as have a good time with them.

Therefore, *amiga*, if you want to learn English or any other language, you have to love it, enjoy it, understand it and, of course, improve your skills in it every day through different exercises that might help your knowledge of your new language grow. So this is my advice to you, dear friend. I hope this letter helps you a little bit.

(In Spanish, “*amiga*” means “friend”.)

With love, your friend,

Toni , Mexico
Advanced Level

Dear Mohammad ☺

If you intend to learn English as a second language, you will find me the first one who will support you in this, because English is the most popular language in the whole world. I'm sure that you will need it in the future, but you will not learn it very quickly or easily. You should first learn the inner workings of the English language; you should understand English grammar and the writing rules, because these are the most important things in learning English. However, if you plan to study English in United States, I think that IEP is the best place to learn English.

Your best friend, ☺

Tameem, Saudi Arabia
Advanced Level

Dear friend,

I am very glad to have the opportunity to write this letter to you. I hope you are fine, surrounded by your family there in Mexico.

I have good news for you. Do you remember when you were here in Harrisonburg and you wanted to look for a place where you could learn English? Well, this is the good news I have for you: a friend of mine told me about IEP at Eastern Mennonite University. For some reason I hadn't found out where it was, but now I am in my second semester. I really like attending English classes, because at the same time as you are learning how to write, read and speak English you have the opportunity to learn about American culture and others different cultures from countries around the world.

Also, the teachers and staff are a group of friendly people who are very happy to assist you and teach you the best way they can. I want to encourage you to think about IEP. In order to sharpen your English skills more, this is the best choice you can make.

Greetings to all your family.
Your friend,

Bacilisa, Mexico
Advanced Level

Dear friend,

I have no greater joy than to hear that you want to learn English. Whoever loves learning loves knowledge. Learning a new language is like being born again because you have to learn a new way of speaking and writing. First, you should think of your goal. Ask yourself, "Why do I learn English?" Geofery Abert said, "The most important thing about a goal is... having one." Therefore, you should organize your time; be ready to do homework. A teacher could not do a miracle without your effort. Success is a journey, not a destination. Sometimes you might want to give up when you are learning grammatical rules or methods of writing. Keep going; never give up. Albert Einstein said, "In the middle of every difficulty comes opportunity." I read an article in my reading class and took a lesson from this book. The author said, "Consider your mistake as information, rather than as something unsuccessful." Keep in mind your goal. If you want to see progress, complete your assignments from your teacher. IEP is like a signpost to guide you in learning English, but you are the one responsible for your success. Take your time to read some books and newspapers, watch T.V. This will help you to improve your English. Theory without practice does not work. Every day, try to use a new word and use it in your own sentences. Also try to find an opportunity to talk with a native speaker. Having a conversation partner is very helpful.

To sum up, the beginning of knowledge is the discovery of something we do not understand. If you can imagine it, you can create it. If you can dream it, you can become it. Get learning English, get understanding.

Toromare, Madagascar
Advanced Level

Ads for IEP

(Designed by students in our Lower Intermediate Writing and Grammar class)

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Hector, Honduras
Lower Intermediate Level

Want to enjoy learning English?

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Aream, South Korea
Lower Intermediate Level

UnBEARably Cute

(Authentic Chinese jokes courtesy of Kai, Lower Intermediate Level)

Joke 1: All the animals come together for the panda's birthday party and ask the panda about his birthday wish. The panda says: "Well, next year I don't want to have black ears, and I want to take a color picture of my self."

Joke 2: "Why are bears always the last ones to wake up in Spring?"
"Because no one is brave enough to wake them up!"

The Final Word

What an honor it has been to have each of you as part of the IEP family. Thank you for giving us the opportunity to be part of your journey. It has been a wonderful semester for both faculty and students!

Maria Esther Showalter, IEP Interim Director

- ▲ Improve your English skills!
- ▲ Enhance your education!
- ▲ Press 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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