DEAN ALMA MCGEE RETIRES

What? No! This was the most common reaction when Alma McGee announced her retirement. She is so youthful and has such energy that we just couldn’t believe this to be true. But then realizing her extensive contributions to our program over the past 38 years, we realized she has more than earned this right to move on.

In 1975, Alma began her service to our district by tutoring English and Math in the EOPS program at City College when she was a student at San Diego State. When she asked for more hours, she was given the name of Autumn Keltner and sent to an office on El Cajon Blvd where she was interviewed by Dr. Robert Coleman and Leann Howard. Alma said she was surprised they did not ask her a lot of questions, but

INSIDE THIS ISSUE
Program Completion ....................... 6
PCA Class ............................... 7
VESL Graduation ......................... 9
Transitions .................................. 10
EL Civics Echoes ......................... 18
Workshop Feedback ...................... 20
Student Stories ........................... 21
Turn to Technology Corner ............ 23
Inner Dialogue ........................... 24

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST
• Personal Tributes to Alma
• Valedictorian
• ESL Website
• EL Civics Website
• ESL Training Videos
• Past Issues of ESL Dialogue

JOTTINGS
Transitions – This is the hot topic now and nowhere more evident, I think, than in our continuing education program, especially ESL. On a daily basis, we hear about the amazing successes that our students achieve. Chris Stone, our Transition to College instructor, just found out that her previous student, Dan Vo, who enrolled in the name of Autumn Keltner and sent to an office on El Cajon Blvd where she was interviewed by Dr. Robert Coleman and Leann Howard. Alma said she was surprised they did not ask her a lot of questions, but

GRETCHEN BITTERLIN
Mesa College two years ago, is going to be the valedictorian for the 2014 graduation at Mesa College. It doesn’t get any better than this. Dan Vo also works part time for us as an instructional assistant. We are so proud of her and all our students who move to the next step on the pathways they have chosen – whether it be

Unsung Hero Award Winner: Mechelle Perrott

Read us on your tablet or smart phone. (but not while you’re driving.)
not surprising to me, since Alma always presents herself in such a professional manner. They immediately assigned her to work as an aide for Jean All. Alma also volunteered in an ESL class at Brooklyn Elementary where her mother was attending classes.

After Alma graduated from San Diego State in 1978, she was hired to teach a Citizenship class at Sacred Heart where they were looking for a bilingual instructor, but of course no materials were provided, so Alma developed her own materials. From this assignment Alma moved to take over an evening class at Central Elementary and eventually went to the Mid City Campus on 54th St. to teach four evenings a week.

After 10 years as an adjunct instructor, Alma got a 100% ESL contract in 1989 and went to ECC to teach ESL and serve as the ESL Instructional leader. Sensing her administrative potential, she was recruited to be an Interim Associate Dean of ECC from 1990 to 1991. Between 1991 and 2000, Alma returned to her ESL faculty position and served as the ESL Instructional Leader for the Cesar Chavez Campus and later the Mid City Campus. During this time, she also served as the Academic Senate Vice President, Academic Senate State delegate, and Co-Grievance Chair for our union, the San Diego Adult Educators. In 2000, Alma became the Associate Dean of the Mid City Campus and was promoted to be the Dean of the campus in 2005.

In 2007, with the reorganization of CE from a campus based administrative structure to a program based one, Alma became the first Dean of our ESL Program. And a wonderful Dean she has been because
ALMA MCGEE RETIRES CONTINUED

On a personal note, I will most of all remember Alma’s grace, generosity, and deep caring for all those she has supervised. In the midst of making tough decisions and standing firm on certain issues, Alma has always listened to the personal sides of an issue and done her best to accommodate faculty and students. The true test of an administrator is their behavior in a crisis. I will also always remember Alma’s calm competence in dealing with the few crises that we have had. How lucky we have been to work under Alma’s leadership for the past seven years. Despite her retirement, Alma will always be a member of our ESL family and an icon in the history of our program.

Barbara Raifsnider
Centre City/Chavez
ESL Assistant
Program Chair

TRIBUTES TO ALMA

What can I say about working with Alma? She has taught me a lot about the qualities of a leader. She listens with patience. She is organized and on top of her work. She always has the perfect solution for every problem. After hearing her solutions, I often ask myself, “Why didn’t I think of that?” She is firm and direct but cares very deeply for everyone under her guidance. She doesn’t seem to hold on to “stuff” and helps me let go of my “stuff.” I always enjoy visiting her in her office where we often discuss a love of similar books, movies and other arts. I will miss those visits. Alma is a dear soul, and I’d like to think that I can count her as my friend and not just my boss.

To see more photos from Alma’s Retirement party, click here.

Special thanks to Chris Stone for capturing the event so well.
TRIBUTE TO
ALMA MCGEE

ALMA
How can you describe such an iconic leader and person? Perhaps these four words inspired by her name can shed some light.

A is for Actively supporting faculty, staff, and students;

L is for Listening to each and everyone one of us as individuals;

M is for Managing our ESL department and Mid City Campus so well;

A is for Authenticity in all she did, genuinely with grace and truth.

Cindy Wislofsky
ESL Technology Resource Instructor

did you miss the APC version of La Alma Bamba?

Check out the “Not ready for prime time but more than ready for sabbatical players” rehearse.

Click here for the video

JOTTINGS CONTINUED

to get into job training, get a job, get into college, become a citizen of the U.S. or achieve another personal goal. Besides teaching all the language skills, (listening, speaking, reading, and writing), to help our students reach their goals, perhaps one of the most important objectives is building self confidence. Although self confidence isn’t easily taught, it is the personal quality that students often credit when they describe what helped them achieve their goals. So many ESL students praise their teachers for helping them build the self confidence they needed to take the next step. So what can we do to build self-confidence?

We need to create a warm welcoming environment where students can always feel comfortable and free to take risks in applying their language skills. This means creating as much time for student to student interaction as possible, and reducing the amount of “teacher talk.”

We need to provide constant positive feedback to our students.

We need to create real life learning scenarios in our classrooms which mimic real life tasks, such as making a simple phone call, performing in a job interview or making an oral presentation.

Awarding course and program completion certificates is another way to build self-confidence since it provides validation of the completion of outcomes for the level they are enrolled in. Students feel so good when they get a good score on a test and then a certificate at the end of the year.

To illustrate how important self confidence is in transitioning our students, please read this paragraph written by one of our transition to college ESL students after a field trip to City College:

“Visiting City College was a very pleasant experience. Walking around and entering the buildings were something special. Thinking that I could ever go there made my heart beat faster. Visiting a class and being part of the class with college students made me feel at home. Gradually, the idea of attending college was taking shape. After hearing all the information and the help offered to be successful in school, I felt confident. My
I was surprised at how the teachers at Mid-City were so friendly and willing to help.”  Dan Vo

DAN LINH VO: VALEDICTORIAN BY STEVE GWYNNE

Are some people born to be teachers? That question comes to mind when writing about Dan Linh Vo. It wasn’t long ago, I reviewed her resume and application for an Instructional Assistant position. I remembered her as being a reserved, respectful, smiling student in my afternoon advanced ESL class at Mid-City and that she had been a teacher in her country. This person merited an interview, I thought. Needless to say, she fit into our team perfectly.

Now, in just four short years in the U.S., Dan will be the class Valedictorian at Mesa College. She graduates with an Associate’s Degree in Accounting. She credits her teachers from Mid-City: Marla Goldfine for helping her with writing and Chris Stone and the Transition to College class for giving her the confidence and skills to be successful in college.

I remember that interview beginning with a question for me: “Do you remember me?”

Long story short, the students and I consider ourselves fortunate to have Dan as an Instructional Assistant. Her accounting and teaching skills are a great blend for that position. Not only that, the whiteboard displaying our evening ESL classes has never looked so professional as it does with Dan’s precise script.

Yes, I do remember Dan, and along with her teachers, take great pride in her well-deserved accomplishments. No one outworked her, I am sure. My advice: Go for your dreams, Ms. Vo. You were born for it!
Tribute to Alma

It has truly been a privilege for me to work as the Assistant Program Chair for Mid-City’s ESL Program under Dean Alma McGee’s strong and supportive leadership. Alma’s long and impressive history with our district has given her a broad perspective and knowledge not only about the ESL Program, but all of Continuing Education, and yet she is one of the most humble and gracious people I have ever known. Alma epitomizes grace, dignity and discretion, even under the most difficult of circumstances. In addition, Alma has been a great advocate for our students, always showing them kindness, compassion and concern. Over the years, Alma has attended many of my VESL class graduations, during which time she has offered the students encouragement and support in addition to shedding more than a few tears when listening to their heartfelt graduation speeches. As the APC who worked in the office right next to Alma’s, I have had the opportunity to get to know Alma as a person with great insight, integrity and a caring heart. I will miss Alma’s presence at CE tremendously, but wish her a very happy and fulfilling retirement!

By Corinne Layton
ESL Assistant Program Chair

ESL Fall Semester 2013-14 Course Completions

A record number of ESL teachers (46) prepared their students for course and program completion during the fall semester, 2013-14. The following numbers will be reported to the State to demonstrate our program’s success in moving students through our program. In order to receive a certificate of completion, students must be regular attenders, achieve at least an 80% average on their unit tests, achieve the state required CASAS score for their level and pass oral and writing assessments.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ESL Course</th>
<th>Number of certificates earned</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beginning low 2</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beginning high 3</td>
<td>129 (Beginning ESL Program completion)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Intermediate low 4</td>
<td>42</td>
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<tr>
<td>Intermediate high 5</td>
<td>145 (Intermediate ESL Program completion)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Advanced low 6</td>
<td>31</td>
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<tr>
<td>Advanced high 7</td>
<td>61 (Advanced ESL Program completion)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Citizenship</td>
<td>17</td>
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<tr>
<td>VESL</td>
<td>38</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>546</strong></td>
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In the fall 2013 VESL Personal Care Assistant class, there were 42 students on the class roster on September 3. On January 23, 2014, 36 of those 42 students remained in the class and graduated. These 36 students made a commitment to study in this class four days a week for the entire semester. They fulfilled the exit requirements and earned a certificate.

Students in this class came from all over the county: City Heights, Mountain View, El Cajon, Oceanside, Point Loma and La Jolla.

Some students took a bus and trolley to get here, others walked and some were even brave enough to drive and find a parking place nearby.

Students have taken classes in many Continuing Education sites, including: ECC, Mid City, West City, Centre City, and CE Mesa and some students are taking classes concurrently, such as computer, grammar, conversation, pronunciation classes and GED. Donna would like to thank the amazing support she gets from other ESL instructors and counselors.

Many students are working and studying.

- 4 students were employed as caregivers while they were taking this class.
- 2 students were working at a day care center.
- At least 10 people were working as cashiers or food service workers or in a service industry.
- Two students (Kesnel Fatilus and Elizabeth Marodama) worked all night and came to school in the morning.

Where are students going in the spring 2014 semester? (short term goals)

- 5 students are going to the CNA class at Centre City. (Almaz Dagnachew, Jonghee Woo, Magda Mikulska, Kesnel Fatilus, Eyicelt Perez)
- 1 student is going to City College to take English 40.
- 2 students are going to a CNA class at another school.
- 7 students are going to the advanced level 7 class at CC, MC and ECC.
- 2 students are going to GED, at Centre City and ECC
- 10 students are going to ESL Level 6 here and at other sites
- 1 student is going to ESL Level 5; 1 student is going to Level 4.
- Most students are going to look for a job as a caregiver.

There were 15 countries represented in the class.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brazil</th>
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<td>China</td>
<td>Mexico</td>
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<td>Congo</td>
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<td>Cuba</td>
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<td>Haiti</td>
<td>Sudan</td>
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<td>Iran</td>
<td>Vietnam</td>
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<td></td>
<td>United States</td>
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</table>
The VESL Personal Care Assistant fall 2013 class was an amazing group. They really became a family, a community so if someone didn't show up to class, everyone wondered why and was concerned. This class, with students from 15 different countries, was an extremely tight knit group, and I hope that they continue communicating with me and with each other on our VESL PCA private Facebook group.

CASAS results

Out of 39 students, 36 took both the pre and post listening and reading tests. Nearly 2 out of 3 students improved (made gains). The remaining 20% retained their skills.

This is good news for our ESL 231 funding.

These 3 students were in Patty Stottlemyer and my VESL Personal Care Assistant class in the spring 2013 semester. They took the CNA class in fall 2013. They all became Certified Nursing Assistants on Jan. 30, 2014. From left to right as you are looking at the picture: Happy Ivbijaro, Dijana Peric, and Touria Chakir
In January 2014 we celebrated the graduation of Phuc Lam and Mahgol Saadza-deh in Corinne Layton and Lynn Graver’s morning VESL class. Both graduates delivered beautifully written speeches about their background, experience in the VESL Class and future goals. Phuc, who completed the VESL for Family Home Daycare Program, described how the program taught her about children’s physical, emotional, intellectual and social development and gave her the knowledge needed to operate a family home daycare business. This semester Phuc is attending the ESL Transition to College Class at Mid-City Campus in order to prepare for college where she hopes to study Child Development. Mahgol completed the VESL for Retail/Cashier Program which helped her develop her communication skills and secure employment in a local supermarket. In addition to working, Mahgol is currently studying in the ESL Transition to College Class at CE Mesa. Her future goal is to study health science at the university and eventually become a neurologist. Both Phuc and Mahgol are highly motivated students who will undoubtedly reach their career goals. We wish them the best as they continue on their educational pathways.
I used the Transition to College Objective #14 in my class this semester. I started with the supplemental material that helps students analyze their interests and skills, and a student (Michael) expressed a desire to be an airline flight attendant. We checked out the career information online, and when searching for opportunities in the airline industry, we found an American Airlines’ online ad, seeking flight attendants who speak Chinese.

Michael is from China and decided to apply for the job. After filling out the application, completing a personality/character check, and passing a video interview, he was invited to Dallas for a face-to-face interview and group task. We discussed interview techniques and etiquette.

He informed me Wednesday after he returned from Dallas that he got the job. The class cheered.

Objective #14: mission accomplished!

Chris Stone

Michael was also a student in both the morning and evening VESL classes. Before leaving for his interview with American Airlines, he earned a certificate from Burlington English for completing the Flight Attendant module in the Mid-City English for Careers class.
Seven Successful Women Tell the Secrets of Their Success: A Literary Puzzle

Created by: Jessica Aizcorbe, Maher Alhaja, Lourdes Brewer, Yuan Yuan Han, Jennifer Huanca Lopez, Solideia de Souza, Krystyna Jasiewicz, Gregorio Juarez, Parvaneh Kamyab, Kahye Kang, Thomas Kohalmi, Keiko Kuwano, Oanh Thi Kim Le, Arezoo Mahmoodi, Ehsan Mahmoodi, Rinki Mamtani, Yoshio Okamoto, Alejandra Ornelas, Yue Qun Pang, Hilda Perez, Zhiquing Qiao, Shayan Rahimi, Felipa Sanchez, Elaheh Sareban, Patricia Von Kruger, Ziqian Wang, Yongxue Zhang

In January last year it was announced in the press that a distinguished Professor of Astrophysics at the University of Northern Carolina was caught, and later accused of and sentenced for, smuggling two kilograms of cocaine. The professor claimed that it was all in good faith and in the name of love, which blossomed when he met on an online dating site a gorgeous model. Unfortunately, what he thought to be a perfect woman turned out to be a scam.

Verbal communication can be deceiving just as it can be revealing. In the online messages, the professor saw what his mind desired. If he had read the words more carefully, he might have been able to see a different reality behind them. And if he had searched the online dating site with a more open mind, he might have been able to find that great women come with all kinds of photos attached.

To take a closer look at what strong, beautiful, and successful women are like behind their pictures, 27 talented ESL student-writers in the ESL 7 class at CE Mesa decided to get in the minds of seven brave women: Angelina Jolie (actress), Coco Chanel (fashion designer), Marie Curie (scientist), Mother Teresa (social work-
er), **OPRAH WINFREY** (talk show host), **P. T. USHA** (athlete), and **SHAKIRA** (singer), and using their research skills and imagination, clothe the women in a verbal disguise. Based on their biographies and authentic material from interviews with the women, the students created seven half-documentary, half-fictional conversational vignettes. Can you match the vignettes with the women? Here, they respond to five questions asked by *WeLearn: Women’s Perspectives* (answers at the end of the text):

```
1. How do you manage to stay focused in this busy world?
2. Are you a perfectionist? Does this hold you back or move you forward?
3. What are you really afraid of?
4. How can you do everything in only 24 hours?
5. What conflicts in your life prevent you from being successful?
```

### Woman 1

**Question 1 (on keeping focus):** I have a busy schedule and I have many people helping me. Getting other people to work with you is the key to getting the work done, and it’s not easy because when they love you, they don’t respect you, and when they respect you, they don’t love you. My team and I have managed to reunite these two contradicting elements: respect and affection.

**Question 2 (on perfectionism):** Yes, I am a perfectionist. It’s not easy to work with me, I recognize that. It’s especially not easy for those people who aren’t as perfectionistic as I am.

**Question 3 (on fears):** I fear fame because fame isolates people from reality. That happens to many artists and I don’t want it to happen to me. But more than that, I am afraid of marriage. I think I’m more afraid of marriage than death.

**Question 4 (on managing time):** In this life, to earn your place, you have to fight for it. I manage my time working very hard and saying no to many things. You can’t achieve anything in life without a small amount of sacrifice.

**Question 5 (on conflicts):** I prefer an ugly truth to a pretty lie. This way of thinking sometimes brings me into conflict. But I am not going to change my beliefs, pretending I am someone else. Everyone knows what’s in my heart because I find it hard to conceal myself. My life is like a glass of water, transparent.

### Woman 2

**Question 1 (on keeping focus):** The most important thing is to know what is important in your life. Love one person and take care of them until you die. Raise the kids, have a good life. Be a good friend. Be completely who you are. Figure out what you personally love and go after it with everything you’ve got, no matter how much it takes.

**Question 2 (on perfectionism):** I think all women go through periods where
we hate this about ourselves, we don’t like that. It’s great to get to a place where you dismiss anything you’re worried about. But I find flaws attractive. I find scars attractive.

**Question 3 (on fears):** I’m afraid of hugging people who aren’t close to me!

**Question 4 (on managing time):** I fit in work around family time. I would never sacrifice any time with my family if I couldn’t manage my schedule. I would always sacrifice work.

**Question 5 (on conflicts):** We should not avoid conflict. Without pain, there would be no suffering. Without suffering, we would never learn from our mistakes. To make it right, pain and suffering are the key to all windows. Without them, there is no way of life.

**Woman 3**

**Question 1 (on keeping focus):** To maintain focus you have to avoid distraction. For example, be less curious about people and more curious about things and ideas. Focus on what is important.

**Question 2 (on perfectionism):** I would say so. You cannot hope to build a better world without improving the individuals every moment. At the same time, we should share our improvements with who we think they are useful for.

**Question 3 (on fears):** Nothing in life is to be feared; it is only to be understood. Whenever we understand more, we may fear less.

**Question 4 (on managing time):** By being organized, sleeping only as much as necessary, and using my time well. Support from other family members is important. I would not have been able to achieve what I have achieved professionally if my father-in-law had not assumed the care of my daughters. Unconventional? Conventions are not always the best ways to go.

**Question 5 (on conflicts):** Reconciling family life with a career. That’s not an easy mission for a woman.

**Woman 4**

**Question 1 (on keeping focus):** Focus on what needs to be done, and on what can be done. Don’t spend time beating on a wall, hoping to transform it into a door.

**Question 2 (on perfectionism):** When it comes to clothes, I am a perfectionist. Dress shabbily and they remember the dress; dress impeccably and they remember the woman.

**Question 3 (on fears):** I’m not. In fact people say I am arrogant. Arrogance is in everything I do. It is in my gestures, the harshness of my voice, in the glow of my gaze, in my sinewy, tormented face. Women always tell men that they are the strong ones. They are the big, the strong, the wonderful. In truth, women are the strong ones. I’m not afraid to say that. I’m never afraid to say what I think. Aloud.
Question 4 (on managing time): Twenty four hours is enough time if you don't waste it on irrelevant things. There is time for work. And time for love. That leaves no other time!

Question 5 (on conflicts): It's probably not just by chance that I'm alone. It would be very hard for a man to live with me, unless he's terribly strong. And if he's stronger than I, I'm the one who can't live with him. ... I'm neither smart nor stupid, but I don't think I'm a run-of-the-mill person. That creates conflict. Does it prevent me from being successful? No. I've been in business without being a business woman, I've loved without being a woman made only for love.

Woman 5

Question 1 (on keeping focus): You must set your goals and follow your bliss. And when you follow your bliss, the rest will come.

Question 2 (on perfectionism): My entire life I strive for excellence and my purpose in life is to be the best in what I do. It's not just me. We live in a society where everything is expected to be perfect, and when we make mistakes, we are being judged by others. That's the world we live in.

Question 3 (on fears): What I know is this: if you do the work that you love, and the work fulfills you, the rest will come. One of life's greatest risks is never daring to risk. I believe that every single event in life happens as an opportunity to choose love over fear. And I am constantly trying to prove to myself that I can live my life fearlessly.

Question 4 (on managing time): Every day you decide how you're going to use your energy. Every day you set your goals and you decide what it's going to take to reach those goals.

Question 5 (on conflicts): I am a woman in progress. I'm just trying like everybody else. I try to take every conflict, every experience, and learn from it. You can take from every experience what it has to offer you, and you cannot be defeated if you just keep taking one breath followed by another.

Woman 6

Question 1 (on keeping focus): You will find focus in silence. You cannot find it in noise and restlessness. See how nature - trees, flowers, grass - grows in silence. See the stars, the moon, and the sun - how they move in silence. Silence touches your soul.

Question 2 (on perfectionism): Only God is a perfectionist. I obey him, follow him, and serve him. The miracle is not that we do this work, but that we are happy to do it. There is always the danger that we do the work for the sake of the work. But only when we do it out of respect, and love, and devotion, we try to do it as beautifully as possible.

Question 3 (on fears): People are afraid of suffering. But I think it is very good when people suffer. That's when they learn to be human. What is really terrible is loneliness, when you are nobody to anybody. That's the worst kind of disease.
**Question 4 (on managing time):** I can do things you cannot, you can do things I cannot; together we can do great things. And a day has much more than 24 hours when we work together.

**Question 5 (on conflicts):** Success always comes with a sacrifice, and to be real, it must cost, must hurt, and must empty us of our selves. Only then can we accomplish great things, on the condition that we believe much more in love than in our weakness.

Woman 7

**Question 1 (on keeping focus):** I firmly believe that mental strength, discipline, and zeal to improve oneself are the key to achieving focus. And the best way not to give in to temptation is not to have an option to.

**Question 2 (on perfectionism):** I am a perfectionist and it doesn’t hold me back. Actually, it challenges me to do better every day and achieve what I have not been able to achieve until now.

**Question 3 (on fears):** I fear human beings because we cannot predict the swings of human nature. People are capable of doing anything. I really fear that.

**Question 4 (on managing time):** I feel something is missing in my life if I am not running, and this feeling translates into my everyday life. That’s how I can get everything done in just 24 hours a day.

**Question 5 (on conflicts):** Nobody can stop your progress but yourself, which means you are your number 1 enemy. The one thing I really want to change is my anger. It’s a conflict within, but only harder to resolve for that reason.

**Answers:**

*Woman 1 – Shakira; Woman 2 – Angelina Jolie; Woman 3 – Marie Curie; Woman 4 – Coco Chanel; Woman 5 – Oprah Winfrey; Woman 6 – Mother Teresa; Woman 7 – P.T. Usha*
Transition to College: Daniela Saban’s Path to Success

It sounds like a simple goal – Transition to College – and yet I recently witnessed how a well-orchestrated plan with many moving parts can support an ESL student to accelerate on a path from noncredit to credit college courses. This plan includes noncredit ESL Transition to College courses at each non-credit campus, counselors who specialize in coaching students through the placement and application process, classified staff who answer a myriad of questions and arrange appointments, credit instructors who volunteer to speak in noncredit classes, a small army of noncredit ESL instructors offering general ESL levels 1-7 as well as specialized ESL such as reading, writing, and computer lab courses, and customized curricula.

Daniela Saban joined my Centre City, ESL 6-7 Transition to College course, in the fall of 2013, eager to study and prepare for college. Although Ms. Saban had a college degree from Brazil, she was tentative about applying to college in San Diego. Through regular attendance in my integrated skills course (listening, speaking, reading, writing, and yes, grammar) and Donna Rosen’s writing class, Ms. Saban gained key writing skills and confidence. Ms. Saban reported that two curricula factors contributed significantly to her understanding of the collegiate experience: (1) regular practice editing and writing essays and (2) the EL Civics #14 materials: Research Educational Resources to Meet a Personal Goal.

Ms. Saban summarized some of the steps that contributed to her new skills. She wrote, “One of the subjects I learned the most in your class was when you taught us how to write a college essay. [Writing] was a big issue for me, … [because] I was used to the structure models of writing from my primary language (Portuguese). I remember that we spent many [ESL 6-7] classes working on this subject, writing a lot and correcting together our classmate’s essays, while reviewing grammar and vocabulary words.”

Designed and written by a team of non-credit ESL instructors, the EL Civics #14 packet also provided excellent instructional material for my ESL Transition to College students. Through a series of readings, charts, and comprehension activities, students are introduced to the ins and outs of the California system of public higher education – community college, state university, and university of California. During the process of this lesson, much terminology (i.e. freshman, units, associate degree), procedures (i.e. placement tests for students) and policies (i.e. how to establish residency, waivers) are demystified.
Armed with this knowledge, Ms. Saban and her classmates wrote outlines, drafts, and ultimately a 4 to 5 paragraph essay describing a personal goal, the steps to achieve the goal, and related educational resources.

Her commitment to writing practice and learning specialized knowledge about the U.S. higher education system buoyed Ms. Saban who scored high enough on the placement test to enroll in ESOL 40 at Mesa College. Ms. Saban elaborates on how her writing skills pushed her beyond her personal goal:

“One activity the [ESOL 40] professor asked us was to write an essay about a gathering place in class. Many students couldn’t finish on time, but I could... I tried to put in practice everything I had learned from your class.

[Later] that day, I was expecting an email from her, saying if I would be able to either attend the class or not. I was in shock when I read the email saying that she had loved my essay and she had showed it to another teacher, and they both had agreed that I should enroll to the next level (English 48 and 49). My essay was attached to my forms as a test for petition for challenge. Now, I’m currently attending these 2 classes. They have been really demanding, but again I will try my best. This is a small, at the same time a huge step towards my goal to study in an American university.

I want to thank you for all your efforts, encouragement, and motivation, which were extremely critical for me to be where I’m now. I hope many other students can be awarded as much as I was by being your student.”

During spring 2014, Daniela Saban continues to attend the noncredit ESL Transition to College class while enrolled in English 48 and 49. Even though she has “a lot of homework” in her credit classes, she finds the noncredit grammar and vocabulary lessons helpful in supporting her academic success.
This has been a year of new adventures. New EL Civics Transition to College curriculum was added along with new curriculum related to nutrition for lower levels. However, the biggest adventure was using EL Civics oral and writing assessments as level completion assessment tools. Kudos to all the instructors for masterfully taking on the challenge! Here are some “echoes” from our year in EL Civics.

EL Civics Immigrants Rights Speaker a Hit with Students

Mimi Pollack, ESL Intermediate High, Mid City

Jamie Robertson from the IRC came to give a presentation to my evening level 5 class. We had just finished all our lessons and tests for EL Civics #19, so it was a timely presentation. I let the students know before that she was going to come, so we had a good turnout. They also had their questions ready for her. Jamie aptly calls her presentation, "Immigration 101". First, she spoke about the history of the IRC in San Diego and how this organization began in 1975, helping the Vietnamese refugees that were arriving at Camp Pendleton, Today, the IRC helps immigrants from many countries resettle all over the United States. Some of the things they assist with are immigration applications, comprehensive case management, representation at USCIS appointments, and citizenship immigration service. Jamie spoke a little about why refugees come to this country and how the IRC helps them. She also spoke about family-based immigration, and how long it takes depending on the country and immigration status of the person who is applying to bring family members to this country. That was the part of the presentation that seemed to interest my students the most. All in all, it was an informative presentation. I have invited Jamie to come and present to my students every fall for 3 years and the students always seem to appreciate it.

EL Civics #11 Huge Success with Beginning High Students

Nancy Johansen, ESL Beginning High, Mid City:

“I want to share a few praises for EL Civics. Surprise! The #11, Cultural Differences objective was a huge success. Several years ago, I saw a video of some intermediate level students talking about an important day in their country. I quickly rejected the objective and I thought that talking about
Real Life Application of an EL Civics Lesson

(Oanh Thi Kim Le is a student from Vietnam in Magdalena Kwiatkowski’s ESL level 7 Transition-to-College class at CE Mesa.)

This morning, when I came home after the Immigrant Professional Transfer Academic workshop, I felt very grateful for what I have learned in the EL Civics project on Transition to College. I had missed the first day of the workshop, which was about the higher education system in America, but I could still catch up with what the instructor was saying because most of the information about the public system of higher education and the procedures to get into it, such as how to transfer to a university from a community college or how to write a personal statement, had been taught in my ESL 7 class. We learned them when we were preparing for the latest EL Civics exam. And the best was that today I had a chance to share that information with other students who had also missed the first day of the workshop, like me. Some of them even thought that UCSD is a private university. The feeling I had when I was able to share my knowledge with others was wonderful. Before the fall semester, the education system in America was a chaos for me. Now everything seems clearer. Even though I haven’t decided whether I should continue studying or not, the information which I have got is still very useful.

holidays shouldn’t even be an objective for EL Civics. After hearing so many teachers’ positive comments, I finally decided to try it with my high beginning class. My students and I had such a great time with the lessons and practices. Giving students the opportunity to tell others about their countries and cultures definitely stimulated a lot of conversation and interest in writing paragraphs. Students worked hard on their public speaking skills by presenting information about their classmates’ countries in front of the class. My classroom has students from four continents. They are now so much more knowledgeable of each others’ names, countries, and life histories besides having acquired speaking and writing skills.

Besides the valuable experience with the #11, my students carry around materials from previous tests and practice them in their free time. I hear them practicing job interviews in level three, and they report that they are now calling their children’s schools to report absences in level two. All the materials I have used this school year for the EL Civics test preparation have been so useful and well thought out. I wish we had had these materials years ago. So, thank you to you and your staff.”
I was also surprised by the coincidence: we just finished the EL Civics exam and I have already had a chance to share that knowledge. It was like in the first days when I came to class: I was learning many new words each day which I had never heard before, but as soon as I came home, I heard them the same day or the day after. How interesting! Thank you so much for teaching us.

IN CELEBRATION OF THE 100th ANNIVERSARY OF OUR PROGRAM

BY ANN MCCRARY, CE MESA CAMPUS

In my intermediate/advanced ESL conversation class, we were talking about advertising. We discussed the meaning of the word *slogan*, and talked about the slogans of some famous businesses. Then I reminded the students that this year is the 100th anniversary of San Diego Continuing Education. I asked them if they could come up with some possible slogans for Continuing Education. Their suggestions speak volumes about our program. I thought you’d enjoy reading them.

**Slogans for San Diego Continuing Education**

- Create your life.
- Just for your success.
- If you want, you can.
- Never stop learning.
- Persistence for life.
- Come, enjoy, be satisfied.
- My support for my career.
- Don’t give up.
- Better opportunities.
- Create your own way.
- Source for knowledge.
- A comfortable place to learn.
What’s the shortest path to convert a Long Term English Learner (LTEL) into a student who regularly achieves academic success? The short answer is writing, according to Julie Goldman, Ed.D., and Kristen Blake, both coordinators in the WRITE (Writing Reform and Innovation for Teaching Excellence) Institute of the San Diego County Office of Education. Goldman and Blake opened their workshop “Six High-Leverage Writing Practices,” with some eye-opening statistics. More than 75% of employers consider a candidate’s writing skill during hiring. More than $7 billion a year are spent on writing instruction in the U.S. Yes, that’s a “b”. And, as many of us already know, research shows that writing is one of the most critical skills in providing ELs (English Learners) access to broader academic and socio-cultural discourses. Goldman (2013) suggests the following six strategies for high leverage writing practices.

“If we could institute only one change to make students more college ready, it should be to increase the amount and quality of writing students are expected to produce.” David Conley

- Teach genre writing as a process. Goldman suggested developing genre and discourse knowledge through a series of steps commonly known as the Process Approach to writing: Introduce the genre (i.e. essay, business letter, email) during pre-writing activities. Unpack the genre by explicitly pointing out elements and parts (i.e. indentation, salutations, audience). Write collaboratively. Organize ideas and write a first draft. Edit and revise. Then publish.
- Build on students’ backgrounds. Goldman supported pedagogy that encourages and supports students to bring their experiences, their culture, their heritage and language into the classroom. In adult education, many of us already use a similar method, the Language Experience Approach, when a student tells his/her story and the class writes collectively on poster paper or a projected document.
- Model writing for and with students. Goldman reported that this is one of the most important stages of writing instruction. The teacher role models writing by thinking out loud while writing- in front of the class. A docu-
COINCIDENCES  BY CAROL JOY GOLDFEIN

“Coincidences are everywhere. And can happen at any time. ...All that is required is that you open your heart.” Dr. Bernie Siegal

I decided to make this a writing topic in my advanced ESL class. Below is the writing assignment and a sample from one of my students.

I Believe in Coincidences
By Hamid Heidari

About 2 years ago, when I was in my country, Iran, I had a good life. I had a great job with a lot of benefits in a government company. I was working in I.T. (Information Technology) Department as a System Administrator and everything was really good until our plant manager changed. The new manager decided to join our department, which was the security unit. The security unit in my country represents the Intelligence Service of Iran. That means I should report everything that was happening on my co-workers' computers to the security unit, like a spy, and it could make a lot of trouble for them. I decided to resist, so I wrote a letter to the manager that he should change his mind or I would resign. He called me to his office and told me that he wouldn’t change his decision and I should resign, so I did. However, I've never forgotten our last dialog:

My manager: “Mr. Heidari, you have three choices: first you can accept my
Many of you are already utilizing Ventures Arcade (www.cambridge.org/venturesarcade) with your students as an online supplement to the Ventures book series.

Did you know there are two other free Arcade programs that Cambridge has on their website? They correlate with ESL text series Interchange and Touchstone. Even if you are not using these texts in your classroom, they are a great resource for our students to practice English outside of the classroom.

All of the Arcade programs are set up in a similar fashion and have comparable activities (listening, vocabulary, reading, and grammar), which makes navigating easier once you are familiar with one Arcade site. There are four ESL levels for both Interchange and Touchstone and here are the links to their Arcade programs:

- www.cambridge.org/interchangearcade
- www.cambridge.org/touchstonearcade

Me: “Sorry, Sir. Even if I have to sweep streets every night to continue my life, I won’t accept your decision.”

I was very sad, but I believed that God would help me, and it happened! It was a small miracle. A week later before they accepted my resignation officially, I won the United States Green Card lottery, and now I’m here and started a new life. A month later, the government changed and my manager lost his management position.
I don’t know if it is because I am just getting older or that there seem to be so many more opportunities, so many resources and information everywhere to feed our interest and our professional development. Who you are is part of that discourse, that discovery, which I have explored outside the realms of ESL, but have found to be equally invaluable for teaching. Boundaries are one of those areas.

Boundaries are both cultural and individual. Physically, what is the space you are comfortable with when talking with another person? Can you drop by to see your family or friends without calling first? At school, we also deal with boundaries. Sometimes teachers say that they can’t get away at break time because the students want to talk. Uncomfortable feelings arise as they try to assert themselves. This is good news! That is the moment of choice - to be with uncomfortable feelings to change the behavior or continue the status quo. No right answer here, just self-reflection to make an informed choice.

Another example of boundaries is around time management. There can seem like a never ending list of things to do, lesson plans, meetings, new workshops, etc. That is the good news about our profession – there is always the possibility of newness and creativity. The boundary is finding the balance. How much time do you put into your job, and how do you make that determination? Your district has decided and/or negotiated what you are financially worth to them. If you are adjunct, there is an hourly pay which has calculated in some lesson planning time. However, you ultimately decide and set your boundary as to how much extra time you are willing to spend.

For me it has waxed and waned over the years. I get bursts of creativity and energy and at times rest on my laurels when major life events affect me physically and/or emotionally. What I am learning about boundaries is that I am the one who has to set them. As I need to make a change, shift boundaries, my process is to feel uncomfortable feelings as they arise from the past, accept them and process them at a later date to help me grow. I try to be curious and compassionate with myself in the process.

There is always something ‘to do’, but when not setting boundaries affects our health…is it worth it? There is an empowerment and sense of freedom in setting our own boundaries and making our own choices. Ultimately students and colleagues benefit from our healthy selves and healthy boundaries as well…
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