



The Worldwide Olympian

San Diego Mesa College

Summer 2018

Congratulations to 2018 VAMP WINNER!

SAN DIEGO
MESA COLLEGE



Summer/Fall Dates
to Remember:

SUMMER

Summer Registration
by Appointment is
May 8 to May 18th

SUMMER

Open Registration
for Summer Classes
Starts on May 21st

FALL

Fall 2018 Registration
by Appointment is
July 17th to
August 4th

FALL

Open Registration
for Fall Classes
Starts on August 6th

See Page 5 for
More Details on
Classes being offered during our
Summer 2018
Semester!

During the Spring 2018 semester, Mesa College's English department held its annual VAMP showcase that featured a collection of stories from students who wrote about "a story about what we inherit." We are so proud that one of our ESOL students' entries was chosen! Zainab Faraj, who was enrolled in ESOL 30, 31, and 32 in Spring 2018, worked with writing professors and performance coaches to craft her story and performance about her experiences in Iraq as a child. We know that all of our ESOL students have amazing stories to share, so if you are interested in learning more about VAMP and other live performance showcases, you can go to the website

www.sosayweallonline.com to get more information.

Additionally, we are thrilled to announce that Zainab's project has been chosen to be included in an upcoming anthology titled *None of the Above!*



Vamp Winner Zainab Faraj

(a collection of VAMP stories) assembled by the *So Say We All* editors that represent the voices of immigrants and second-generation Americans.

Keep reading for a brief interview with Zainab about her VAMP experience.

How did it feel when you found out that you were chosen for VAMP?

It was so exciting. So exciting. I was so happy. I thought that it meant I did a really good job and maybe other people will like it. My story, which I know is a tragedy story, but it was really im-

portant for me to understand that other person would want to hear it. To write this story, it was such a good feeling because I am an English-language learner and even though I go to ESOL class, this was a chance to write for other person and I was scared that they wouldn't understand me, but they chose me! It gave me hope that I did good job in the past and have been studying for two years and now I can write a story and participate in the competition with other students and I won! It was really good.

(continued on page 2)

Zainab Faraj, Spring 2018 VAMP Winner Interview

(Interview continued from Page 1)

How did you find out about VAMP?

My professor told us about the VAMP completion and when I heard about the topic (what we inherit) it really interested me. That night driving home, this idea of what we inherit was in my mind. It made me think of the hard times, the memory of sometimes feeling humiliated by people, it made our nation feel bad (embarrassed by) illegal chemical weapon attacks. Remembering the feeling of living in a camp, living a very difficult life. It was a really good topic because it really made me think of all the things we inherit from our past. It made me want to reflect. I have a powerful story that I want to share with everyone and maybe someone don't care about it, the media didn't cover it, especially in the United States. There are many people that don't know anything about this chemical weapons attack. I mean, it's a really big thing. One day, 5,000 people die in a big tragedy because of what they inherited, their language, their religion, different culture. I think it is important for people to hear this story because the United States is a big country and sometimes they can act against government who use violence against their people.

When you think back to this experience, what are you going to think of?

The month I participated in VAMP, I felt a lot of emotion going back to the past. Sometimes you feel pity, sometimes you feel sad, sometimes you feel it's my responsibility to take action and to speak out against those totalitarian governments. So it was really valuable to participate and valuable to tell my tragic story and have a

chance to know all the great professors in VAMP that (coached) helped me.

What kind of advice did the VAMP coaches give you?

They gave really good advice. Some was how to fix the writing. Moving this part around to here and there. It was really good. We got advice to help give our speech, on what parts to keep or remove, and we had a coach that was a grammar specialist, and writing and pronunciation. Marie (Alfonsi) was really great and helped me so much. She is awesome professor.

How will this experience help you with your future classes?

So before (VAMP) I felt nervous in class when I have to give presentation, even though it was a small class, in front of your friends, I still felt nervous. But now, I don't feel as nervous because I speak in front of a large amount of people and professors and feel very confidence. I got to practice a lot, which especially is important for ESOL students and it was good for my learning.

How does this experience help your future goals?

I'm going to medical field (nursing). I choose nursing because from my past, I saw many kids who needed help and good health. Education is really important, but if you don't have good health, you can't learn. To be a nurse, especially a child's nurse is my goal. I really like this.

What advice would you give future students about participating in VAMP?



Vamp Winner Zainab Faraj

Writing the story is easy. An ESOL student has a good story when they immigrated to the United States. Many students come from war countries and they didn't have a good life in their country. But using your past, you can recollect a memory from your life and think about the past. Know what happened to you and what your goal is for future. I think you can write are really nice story. I think it is a great experience. Even if your story doesn't chose, don't give up. Keep participating next year or next semester. Mesa College VAMP is every year, so keep trying! I think every new action in your life will be a challenge. But it is a really good challenge. You keep working and getting challenged and it will improve you. A good challenge will improve your life and your language.

Zainab Faraj is an ESOL student at Mesa College. Please turn to page 3 to read her VAMP essay, "Saddam Hussein's Gift."

Saddam Hussein's Gift, by Zainab Faraj

Zainab Faraj is an ESOL 30 student at Mesa College. Her story will be included in a collection of VAMP essays about immigrants and second-generation Americans. The editors said that they found Zainab's story to be "Raw, thought-provoking, and overall a great fit." Keep reading to hear more about her powerful story about experiencing a tragic attack in Iraq as a child.

It was really early to wake up especially in the morning of a new year. I moved to turn off the alarm. When I opened my eyes to turn off the button, I saw many messages on my phone. Today is your birthday, happy birthday. Today is Sarah's birthday. Today is Muhammad's Birthday, Today is Kalthom's birthday, Today is Amjed's birthday, I paused for a while and I said happy families' birthday. All of my sibling have the same birthday maybe my mom was so smart to organize this, to make a birthday party for all of us in the same day. Easy right? However, the reason she did this is because we did not have any birthday certificates and it was hard for my mom to remember every day and every month for our birthday, because we are 5 kids. So I never had a birthday party. For me, it is not important because when I close my eyes and think about the past, there's really bad history in my life. I cannot remember any birthday party or any sound of laughing from my mom or playing with kids. But I CAN remember something like the apple smell, war helicopters, and the sound of the storm fire.

Unlike most children I couldn't imagine playing with my friend in a green Park, It was so hard for me because what I remember is a dark basement space where we hid from the helicopters. On March 16th, 1988 our small town Halabja was ready to welcome the new season. We celebrate our new year on the first day of spring, and for us, the first month of spring has many meanings, the meaning of rebirth of the nurture, the rebirth of a new life. At the start of spring in our city, you could see the tulips, rose in a red color everywhere so our city was a symbol of red. Just seven days before New Year my mother saw a really beautiful red dress and gave it to me. I put it under my pillow. The red color is my favorite color. Red color had many meanings for me, the color of love, the color of a pretty spring flower coming during the spring, and gave a symbol for our small town.

That night I had a dream in my sleep. I saw myself with red clothes and dancing with those red roses, and I was sliding on the rainbow, my red dress was matching with the red color of the rainbow, and I was so happy in my dream but then my mom woke me up shouting "hurry up! we have to go to the basement.

The war helicopter is coming I just woke up and grabbed my red dress, and escaped to the basement, I always remember when we ran to the basement my big sister brought her school bag, because she loved her book, she was a smart one in her class and she always worried about her homework. I remember how, one day I just spilled a little bit tea on her book, so that it made Saddam Hussein's picture wet. The first page of every book has a picture of Saddam Hussein the president of Iraq, and every student had to save the picture, she cried because she was afraid to be sent to jail or maybe that they would kill her. If you ask me during that time, when I was 5, about my dream for the future, I had a strange wish to be a judge. I thought if I could be a judge, I could send our President, to jail. Was this a big dream for a 5-year-old girl? I don't know. I don't think for Kurdish people it was a big dream. Kurdish, people had chemical weapons attack them. Anyway, after an hour in the basement, we smelled apple! But, it was not the season for Apples - why could we smell this? I felt the smell of apple getting so heavy on my chest it was hard to breathe. My mother took my hand and made me follow her outside. I left my shoes but still, I hugged my red dress.

The scene was filled with the sound of a mother's crying, and babies crying. My mother was pregnant and she carried My 2 year-old brother with one hand and with the other hand, she pushed me behind herself, and we fled. I cannot forget the view of, THE CITY when we fled. It was filled with many people, kids-, man and women all dead, and I saw dead bodies of cats dogs and birds. No living creature survived in the city. Everything died. My big brother went with my father to get my grandparents out of the city. But they never came back. A week later, we found our dad in the hospital, but my brother and my grandparents with my uncle they all died.

I will never forget the old man who Shouted" save yourself this is a chemical weapon, Saddam Hussein has sent us New Year's gift!" It was a horrific scene on the way out of the city; some children lost their mothers, and some children were crying on top of their mothers who had died on the way trying to escape. I saw one baby breast feeding milk on her dead mother. We walked and ran for about 5 kilometers away from the city. My feet were bloody and my mom was just pushing me and I felt. I didn't have any energy to go on. Then I fell down on the ground with my red clothes, and My mom just sat for a while and then she wrapped my foot with my red dress. Then, she started to push me again, she told

me if we were to stay here that Saddam Hussein's Army would come and kill us. We went to the mountains, Yes Mountains were friends to the Kurdish people when they wanted to hide from Saddam Hussein so We fled to the mountains.

By the Time we reached them it was late around 3pm my mother had no more energy, She fell on the ground, The weather was very cold and my mom tried to make a fire but the wood was so wet. my mom looked in my sister's school bag. She looked at my sister, who had carried her precious bag all the way, and told her " we have to use your book to make a fire" but my sister just moved her head and said No, no, no. When my mother opened her books the first thing she used to make the fire was Saddam Hussein's picture. I will never forget my mother's eyes when she used that picture to make the fire; her eyes were full of hate. I saw the same look in my mom's eyes when Saddam Hussein was executed.

Many bad things happened to the Kurdish people simply because we speak a different language and we have a different culture. We were sure that Saddam Hussein's died, But we are not sure about the future of our kids. When I was 5 years old I asked my mom why our president attacked us with chemicals, My mom answered that she did not know why. She took a deep breath that was filled with sadness then she talked softly and said " because we are Kurd, he wants to kill us. It was incomprehensible to me just in one day 5,000 people died. 30 years after what happened to us my hand is still going to shake and I'm not sure I can write anymore. But I know my pencil can do it, one, two, three or 5,000 pencils to write 5,000 stories, the story of pomegranate tree that never wore red blossom just like me I never wore my red dress, the story of my big brother who never graduated from school or my uncle who never married his fiancé, or my grandmother who never made me a necklace of red Tulip. That day was a strike against red color in the earth.

After 30 years my kids still ask me the same question, "why did your big brother die? Why did your grandparents died? But for me it's not easy to tell them the story of a Dying people the story of dying Kurd, the story of genocide, Instead, I will tell them the story of the hope the story of the faith, I will tell them how we are strong and how we destroyed our enemies dream, and how we built our city again, And how the red birds sing a song for renewing our city, and how my daughter can now wear a red dress.

Home Is Where the Noodle Soup Is, by Yu Guo

This story was written by Yu Guo, an ESOL 45 student at Mesa College during Spring 2018.

It is hard to understand how much I love noodle soup. When I am hungry, the first food I think about is noodle soup. When I come home from a long day, I eagerly want to eat a hot bowl of noodle soup. When I have an upset stomach, only noodle soup will help. When traveling and I am tired from the day of sightseeing and long car rides, I want noodle soup the most. I will make my husband drive past all the restaurants he likes until we find a restaurant that serves Asian style noodle soup. Noodle soup is my security blanket. It's my warm pajamas. It's my comfort food.

I fell in love with noodle soup as a child. Almost every day, I ate my mother's cooking at home, and her specialty was noodle soup. Noodle soup was often part of my family meal at home. This isn't too surprising because noodles are a central part of cuisine in China. Besides, a lot of cultural meaning is associated with noodles. On a birthday, a family will cook noodle soup for the birthday person with long, thin noodles to bless a long life. Usually a boiled egg, green vegetables and mushrooms are placed on the noodles to represent a healthy and full life. When a traveler comes back from the trip, they are often welcomed home with noodle soup. People believe that the steaming bowl of noodle soup full of vegetables and meats will help the traveler recover from fatigue and have a good rest.

As one of the most common meals in China, noodles are easily bought in every supermarket, but my mother only made noodles by herself. She took great pride in her noodles being better than anything you could buy at the market. My mother always made them from scratch. She cooked a variety of noodles with different shapes – long noodles are like strips of silk yarn curled in a bowl, short noodles are chewy and thick as chopsticks. Every time I eat Japanese Udon noodles, I think of my mother's short noodles.

I remember watching my mother make noodle soup in the kitchen when I was a young child. She started with transforming flour, egg, and water into the raw dough. She first added a raw egg into the flour.

The golden round egg yolk always looked bright and happy in the middle of the shiny white flour. I would start to get excited as the process began. She stirred the flour and egg together in one direction with chopsticks. I asked her, "Why do you add egg into the flour?" "To make the dough smoother" she answered me while stirring. "How do they become dough?" I questioned again. "Be patient! You will see how they become dough."

As she slowly added water, my mother kneaded the dough with her right hand and was tightly gripping the bowl with her left hand. After a minute, the ingredients turned into lots of small flour pieces and my mother added more water in it. She straightened her back, took a deep breath, and kneaded the dough once more. The kitchen echoed with the sound of the stainless steel bowl against the countertop as she forcibly kneaded the dough. I can always remember the exact sound. "Let me touch the dough", I begged, but my mother ignored my requests.

After she created the dough, I watched as she used a rolling pin to flatten the dough into a wide circle. I always wanted to use the rolling pin to help her, but my mother always said, "This is not one of your toys!" Using two hands, she skillfully cut the dough into strips that looked like noodles. She picked up all of the strips of dough into her two hands and stretched her arms out wide to pull the noodles thin and long. She sent the stretched threads sailing into the waiting pot of boiling water with a practiced flick of her hand. Unable to contain my anticipation, I always jumped up and down with joy and anticipation of the final product. "When will they be done?", I would ask. "Get away from the stove" she would usually respond me.

When my mother put the cooked noodles into bowls I would quickly grab some with my chopsticks and put them into my mouth. My mother always smiled and said, "Wait! There is no sauce. I haven't finished yet." She put green onion and garlic into a wok with hot oil and stir fried them lightly with soy sauce and other condiments. It was as if she were playing a kitchen symphony when watching her flexible wrist to hold the spoon and hearing the sound of the spoon against the iron wok. At the same

time, I could smell the familiar fragrance of green onion and garlic spreading in the kitchen. Soon, she added water to the wok and created the soup. When the water boiled, she added the vegetables, salt, and a few drops of sesame oil. Finally, it was time for the soup broth to meet the noodles and she ladled enough broth into each bowl to cover the cooked noodles.

Although the noodles were always cooked the same way, my mother would change the broth every time. Sometimes the broth used seafood, sometimes with beef, and sometimes vegetables. I always knew it was the time to pick up my chopsticks when she added the final topping of meat, vegetables, and egg. After spending an hour watching, hearing and smelling the process of making this bowl of noodles, I would eagerly consume them with my family sitting around the table.

Even after many years, the taste of the noodle soup and the scene of my family sitting at the dinner table are still clear in my mind. I miss the taste and feeling of my mother's noodle soup, especially after being away from it for a long time. I got married and moved to the United States, which leaves me far away from my hometown. I explored the noodle soups at many Asian restaurants to find one which matches the taste in my memory, yet none of them is right. They don't give me the comfortable and safe feeling like my mother's hand-made noodle soup.

I often try to make noodle soup for myself at home, but I can't make the noodles which my mother makes by hand. I only buy dried noodles at the supermarket and put simple sauce on top. They are not fresh like my mother's noodles and I feel like something is missing even with the same ingredients. Next time when I go to visit my home town or my mother comes to visit me, I will make sure to ask her to teach me the recipe. I realize that I love my mother's noodle soup not only because I grew up eating it, but also because it makes me feel the strong bond within my family. As my mother learned from her mother, I will learn how to make noodle soup from my mother so I can pass this family tradition from my old family to my new family.

2018 ESOL SUMMER CLASS SCHEDULE

Class	Days Meeting	Class Time	Room Number
ESOL 30—Writing for Nonnative Speakers of English II (6 Units) CRN#96689	Mon—Thur	11:10am to 2:15pm	EV-07
ESOL 31—Reading for Nonnative Speakers of English II (3 Units) CRN#85657	Mon—Thur	8:00am to 9:25am	EV-06
ESOL 32—Listening and Speaking for Nonnative Speakers of English II (3 Units) CRN#85666	Mon—Thur	9:35am to 11:00am	EV-06
ESOL 40—Reading and Writing for Nonnative Speakers of English III (6 Units) CRN#90438	Mon—Thur	7:55am to 11:00am	EV-07

KEY DATES (ALL SUMMER 2018 SESSIONS)

April 26	Application & Priority Registration Deadline (Students who file an application after the deadline will enroll during "Open Registration".)
May 7	Registration for eligible DSPS; EOPS; CalWORKs; Homeless or Foster Youth*; Active Duty Military & Veterans*
May 8–18	Registration by Appointment
May 21	Open Registration begins
May 25	Bus & Trolley Passes available for purchase
May 26	Parking Permits advanced purchase deadline**
May 28	Memorial Day Holiday*** (Registration will be unavailable)
June 3	Residence Determination date
June 4	Summer parking permits are valid
June 4	Spring 2018 Grades available on e-Grades at: https://studentweb.sdccd.edu/e-grades/
July 4	Independence Day Holiday*** (Registration will be unavailable)
August 20	Summer 2018 Grades available on e-Grades at: https://studentweb.sdccd.edu/e-grades/

Everyone Has Their Own Abilities, by Linh Diep

This story was written by Linh Diep, a Mesa College Student in ESOL 31 during Fall 2017.

Some people do not believe in their abilities. They do not want to do something new, special or different. They are not confident of themselves and just want to be like others. They just want to go in an old path. I used to be a person like that, but for now, I am working on thinking positively and believing in myself.

Honestly, I am an outgoing and open-minded person, but I was scared that I could not do anything well. I was scared that I was going to fail. I was just like: "Okay just do what people do, think what people think, dream what people dream, just follow the crowd and I will be fine." But then I realized that it was not actual life. I could not just live someone's life. I have my own life. I should have my own dreams. I started to believe in myself.

There used to be a period of time that I struggled a lot in choosing my major in college. I was stuck in a bunch of majors and I could not find out anything. I just wished someone would tell me to study something so I did not have to think anymore. But I knew what nobody could define it but myself. I wrote down everything I liked to do since I was born.

When I was a little child, my top first choice for toys was always doll houses and architecture toy models, such as hospital, restaurants or kindergartens. When I read magazines, I always choose magazines that are about houses decoration or buildings. I always like to travel and see the cultural architecture all around the world. I also like drawing too. I felt interested at majoring architecture in college.

However, I have also had some distractions. Some people said architecture would be more stressful than some majors and there were not many colleges that had architecture. I may have to go to a school which is far from San Diego because there is no public school for architecture here. My friends studied the majors that might make more money than my major. Those things actually distracted me a little bit. I asked my mom, "Mom, what will happen if I study the major that do not make a lot of money like my friends?" My mom answered that, "Why do you have to care about it? Nobody can say what will happen in the future. You just need to study what you really enjoy doing it. But don't give up even though it's so hard. You just need to be happy. You don't have to change your

future because of the people out there." I thought about it, analyzed it, and realized.

Finally, I do not care about it anymore, I will study what I like, and I am not like anybody else in this world. Forcing ourselves to be like someone is not a good idea, because everyone all has different values and those values make each person unique. You cannot just waste our whole life to be like someone, that mean you disregard your life and yourself. Be yourself and you can do much better than you thought. Because just yourself can go with you this whole life long, not anyone else, so you do not need to care what people make you do.

For me, believing in ourselves is so important to do something great. No one can tell the future, so everything we need to do is believing in ourselves, trying and expecting that we can do it. I believe that if I have faith, I can do it. I believe that if I want to build a building in architecture, I have to build my faith and my ability first, by working on believing in myself. Trying will not be redundant, like my high school counselor told me when I had struggles with classes, "If you are going to fail, fail trying."

My Journey to the USA, by Nghi Tran

This story was written by Nghi Tran, a Mesa College Student in ESOL 21 during Spring 2018.

Certainly I had a lot of more luckiness than young migrants traveling alone, dangerously to USA from Central America to find their mother and better society. In my country, my wife and I were both teachers. My Mother-in-law brought my family to the USA through the ODP program. The reason of my journey was not an economic reason, but to reunite with my family and to find freedom in life.

I traveled with my wife and our younger daughter to the USA by plane with the transit in Taiwan. Total time was for about sixteen hours. We arrived in the USA on July 20th, 2015 at San Fran-

cisco International Airport, and my sister-in-law picked us up and drove us back to San Jose where the whole family were.

My wife and I lived at my Mother-in-law's house for one year and our younger daughter moved to live with our eldest daughter to go to San Diego Mesa College. My eldest daughter went to the USA over ten years ago. She went to UC San Diego and is currently working in San Diego.

My impressions when I came the USA were the great traffic system, huge commercial malls, excellent medical and educational systems, and the wonderful behaviour among people. I'm really content with my choice, but I can't help having a lot of worries. What will I do to help

my family financially? How can I communicate with people around?

The main key of all these problems is English. There were no ESL classes available in San Jose at that time and we also wanted to live with our daughters instead, so we decided to move to San Diego with our daughters in June 2016 and study English as the second language here.

Right now, we've been in the USA for about over two years, still dependent on our daughter's salary. Our life is being temporarily acceptable, but we have to try our best at our study here because "The future belongs to those who prepare for it today!" That's all my story about my journey to the USA.

My New Life in the USA, by Samira Ouafir

This story was written by Samira Ouafir, a Mesa College Student in ESOL 40 during Spring 2018.

Still, I remember the day I arrived at San Diego Airport, carrying a luggage my mother had given me, that has made me very powerful and feel I am still connected to her. For an immigrant who has decided to move to the USA, there nothing has been challenging than settling in the land of dreams without family, job and not being able to speak English.

The first aspect of my challenge that I had faced, was learning English language which was not easy as my friend told me. English has different alphabetic letters than my native language. Therefore, from early beginning, English was difficult for me to learn. Even though, I had made an effort to learn basic skills for my daily basis use. For example: I had watched cartoons like "Arthur" on KPBS channel, listened to the news and read its transcripts.

In addition, I have been using only English Dictionary that was suggested by a teacher I had met at Balboa Park. Furthermore, I had taken some English classes at adult school like English level 5 and 6 class, level 7 class and GED class. At Continuing Education, I learned grammar and skills to write simple essays. Also, I took some math, history and social study classes.

Now, I am at Mesa College enrolling in ESOL 40 class which is consisting of reading and writing. I am sure with our teacher's support I will be able to pass the class. Which will take me to ESL 101 class if I get an A grade that will help me expand my

education to get my degree in Child Development. But to achieve my goal, it is necessary to learn how to use grammar correctly and to avoid global errors that lead to a different meaning of a sentence. This part of grammar has been my hardest challenge of learning English.

Additional to difficulty in learning the language, being lonely was another aspect that has been a barrier for me to live comfortably in my new country. Being disconnected from my family and unable to speak clear English had made me incapable to be engaged in any conversation with my neighbors, thus, I had suffered anxiety.

Once, I started going to the public parks such as Balboa Park, I started speaking basic English especially when I had met people from all over the world who speak different languages, some of them even speak my native language. For example: a Moroccan lady that was there that day enjoying the sun shine with her kids! She asked me to join them, then she offered me some Moroccan cookie and tea with mint. I was very delighted! but my happiness did not last so long, the lady does not live in San Diego, she lives in San Marcos, therefore, we met only in the holidays not every week. It would have been better if we were living in the same city. Though she has been a supportive person I have ever known.

Since we couldn't meet every weekend, we had agreed to use MSN Messenger to have a video call that had made me think like we were together. This idea has helped me relieve my anxiety.

Finally, the last aspect of my challenge that has been very necessary to survive in the USA, is getting a job. In order to be offered a position by employers, I should have a work history in the USA. Thus, I must accept any low paying jobs that American people won't do.

For example: room attendant in hotel or fitting room attendant at retail store like Macy's that pays less money. Those are the job positions I had done but I had never liked them. Also, I had worked at the Post Office as a Postal Support Employee (PSE), a position that does not require a degree, to be qualified for it, candidates must be at least eighteen years old and a citizen of the United States to be eligible to take the Postal Exam 473, but it's physically demanding, in addition, Postal Support Employee position is intended to be very flexible and it can be scheduled any hours. I would have worked for the post office if it hadn't had the flexible schedule.

Even though it's a worthy job, I had decided to quit because the flexible hours had deprived me from my responsibility toward my family. still, I am struggling finding a better job that will fit my schedule, which I can obtain only if I have a degree.

In conclusion, struggling finding a job to survive in the land of dreams, feeling lonely and been disconnected from my family, and difficulty speaking English are the three aspects of my new life in the USA. Now I am still struggling in my life but I know the future will be better if I work hard to get my degree.

My Daughter Hasti, by Fnu Behista

This story was written by Fnu Behista, a Mesa College Student in ESOL 21 during Spring 2018.

I am proud to have a daughter I have a daughter her name is Hasti, she will turn in two years in 6th July, 2016, she have blue eyes curly and brown hair and big smile with beautiful face.

After I got married me and my husband came US, so we ware alone and far from our families that is why we got decision to have a baby and then I became pregnant after that my daughter born.

It is almost two years ago ,so now she become everything for us and I definitely cannot image my life without her she my whole life. She is growing super-fast I cannot believe this little angle is already two. It is just whole different thing and she is really blessing in my life I thank god every day for the gift that he given me and also thanks god for I am able to watch her growing day by day she trying to talk she knows every day different staff . She is really funniest person in my life she has been a part of my life forever I knew I am going to love her a lot, but I don't have any idea how

much I would love her she is my biggest achievement she is a little star changed my life so much for better since, when I go to pick her up from the baby setter she runs to me and laugh and give me a big hug and kiss me it is really enjoyable for a mom and she doing the same when her dad come home she runs the door I catch her dad.

My favorite thing about motherhood is the outpouring of love that's non-judgmental daughter motivates me to be a little girl again and my beautiful.

Your Challenge, by Tran N. Lu

Tran N. Lu is an ESOL 40 student at Mesa College. This is her story about her journey to America.

The American dream for a little girl like me was a thing which was really difficult to reach. I used to think it was a very comfortable life, a wealthy and perfect life which I was dreaming about. It was like a pink ocean out there that everyone in my country dreamed about. I never thought that were huge different things until I moved here.

I have faced to a lot of challenges, experiencing through lessons that I have learned while I was living here. I would name it America-the new journey of my life. Let's go back to the day when I first came here. October 22nd 2016- the day when my foot touched the floor of the Airport, the day when my skin could feel the cold of the air blowing through San Diego. My mind literally thought of the time that I have been waiting to be here is worth it.

It was 13 years ago, the day when my uncle made the document for my family to come here. We-my family had been waiting patiently for the dream to come true. There are five members in my family, my parents, my elder sister, my youngest brother and myself. The biggest challenge that I have been experiencing is how to speak English like a native speaker.

My sister and I went to a Continuing Education Center to register for an ESL class. She and I had to walk to school by walk every morning. I still could not forget all those days, all the winter morning days that we had to walk to school under the really cold weather. English was the major that I had studied when I was in my first year of university in Vietnam. I thought it would be okay to me to get into the highest level of ESL classes in school.

Unfortunately, when the test result came out made me so devastated. I had to go to the level 5 instead of 7. I could not do anything but accept what the result was. It took me about 1 semester to finish the level 5 in ESL. I passed every test with the highest score. As I said, English used to be my major at University so I asked my professor if I could take the challenge test to jump onto level 7. Then I had this opportunity to do the writing test which Mrs. Stone- professor at level 7 gave it to me.

I was on cloud nine that she gave me the paper and told me that I could go to the level 7 without joining level 6 in school. I had such a happy time with my level 7 in ESL and of course, I had been learning a lot of things during the semester. During the time when my sister and I were studying, we hardly could drive because we did not have money to buy a used car at that time and most importantly we did not have our own driver license. That was another problem, another chapter of my life that I had been through.

I challenged myself to see how good I was in doing the test in English. I decided to take the driving test in English. At first, I was really nervous about the writing test. I had 3 times total to take it and what I got was disappointing. I spent all my chances to take the test and then failed it. I told myself to be confident, to trust myself. I realized that instead of taking the test in English, why not making it easier by doing it in my first language. I ended up choosing the best solution to solve the problem for myself.

I loved the fact that I chose not to give up, I loved the way that I kept going no matter bad things happened to me. I stated reading carefully one by one page of the California driving handouts which is written in Vietnamese. I emotionally made myself so strong that I "have to" pass the test no matter how hard it is. It took

me 5 days to finish reading all those handouts and got ready for the test.

I still remember it was on Thursday when I decided to go for a test at the nearest DMV. I woke up at 5 in the morning and get ready for it. I arrived at DMV at around 7 o'clock and then got in line to wait for it until it opened. I patiently waited for them to call my number to take the test. I was really happy that I passed the test in just the first time. I also took the diving test 1 month later and got the good result in just the first time I drove. This is what I taught myself not to give up in front of the challenge. I learned through my lesson that it is alright to fail, it does not matter to face with failure because when you fail then you get up. You can learn something new rather than giving up and not doing anything.

My next challenge that I was worried about having a job in the United State since my parent were ones who working to pay for everything. My sister and I felt that we have to be responsible for ourselves and for our family members. We are the one who have to pay everything about us, from car insurance, gasoline to mobile phone's every month fee. We don't want our parents to take care of us anymore since we were old enough to work.

We started looking for some job positions and applied for them our resume. Fortunately, the company where my uncle has been working at was currently hiring new employees. He decided to help us get that job. It was the Japanese high tech company and they were hiring more people to become an inspector which I have never done in my entire life. We had an appointment for an interview with Yesica who was in charge on the interview. She was really nice to us and guided us on how to prepare before coming to the interview room.

During the interview, my sister and I were really nervous because first of all English is not the language that we speak really often. Second of all, we were not familiar in using microscope to see tiny things so it was a bit uncomfortable for us to use it at the very first time. My hand was shaking when she told me to put the tiny, really tiny stainless steel balls into a hold on the surface of a plastic. After 5 hours in the interview, we knew that we had been trying our best to kind of get through every question. My sister was the one who doesn't like communicating, especially in English, she had to join the interview without excuse. I knew it was not easy for me to complete the interview by using another country language.

We waited patiently for Yesica to call us and tell us about the result. I had a phone call from Yesica the day after the interviewing day. She told me that I and my sister can go to work the beginning of next week. We were so happy because that was the very first job we had in the United States. We knew that we were independent and could earn money to take care of ourselves, take care of our brother and made our parents proud of us at the same time. I never believed that we had a new job just after 2 weeks in the United States. I thought working as a full time worker would be the greatest solution for this problem but what happened during the time I have been working there changes the whole things in my mind. I looked at some of the teenagers who are at the same age of mine were going to college and chasing their dream. Everyone has their own right to fight for what they want and I am not the exception.

I actually wanted to join college and study in my own major rather than working as a full-time worker. I planned to be a college student after 1 year living in San Diego to receive benefits from the government. I really love going to school, meet new friends, start new conversation with my classmates and most importantly is to study then reach my goals. I told my parents about my plan of going to college after being here one year and instead of refusing my idea they totally agree with me. I and my sister wanted to go to college at the same time so we just have one year to work there.

During the time that I had been as an inspector, my eye sight was getting really bad days after days. I could not see any words from a really near distance. I had to work eight hours per day and mostly I had to use microscope six hours in my working role. I started wondering myself that if only I had a chance to come back to the day of the interview I would have refused to work here. My eyes sight was really getting worse every day, it was watery and red at the same time. I ended up telling my supervisor that I have to go to college in Spring semester and I could not keep up this job any longer.

The last day when we worked there was so sad. All of my co-workers didn't want us to leave. That night was unforgettable and sad at the same time. My sister and I cried a lot after getting home, we had such a memorable journey with all the co-workers. They were like our brothers, sisters, aunties and uncles because they helped us a lot whenever we had a problem. I know that saying goodbye wasn't that easy but we have to know which is important for us right now. That was really a challenge for me to quit this job and look for another part-time job.

As time went by I found out that you could not do anything if you don't have money with you in the United States. I submitted my resume in different places and waited patiently. I also registered to become a new student at Mesa College. I still had to wait for a call from one of the places that I applied. I saved the money that I had earned from the first job to spend for the extra fee through the coming months. That was really a big challenge for me since I have to suffer from finding a job and spending my saving money to maintain the life.

Finally after 3 months of waiting I got a new job. I have worked as a cashier in the Asian supermarket until today and I really enjoy every moment of it. College is currently the next chapter of my challenge. Entering college for the first year is really hard to be a part of it because I have to get used to the work of a college student. I am maintaining and balancing between working and studying in order not to miss anything in both categories. I am looking forward to seeing my result in this very first semester. I am trying my best to get good grade and hopefully I can make that dream come true.

Well everyone in this world has their own challenge. Overall I think that I have learned and experienced through a lot of good and bad things during the time when I have been living here. I was taught how to be positive and to be grateful with things that happened to me no matter how bad or good they were. I am improving myself to be better after every challenge.

Finally I have a big thank you for all the challenge that I have been in because it helped me to become more mature than I used to be. I am using all my abilities to make everything as good as I can and I really hope that I can make it happen.

Cultural Body Language, by Asma Barakat

This story was written by Asma Barakat, a Mesa College Student in ESOL 21 during Spring 2018.

I believe that there are important differences in body language from culture to culture. I am from Syria and the body language we use is very different from American culture. In my country, Syria, women do not

shake hand with men. Instead, the women and man will put their hand on their chest and greet the other person. They will usually say "hello" when they greet the other person. In American culture, I see men and women hugging when they are greeting each other which is a big difference from my culture.

Furthermore, when I see Americans hav-

ing conversations sitting down, they always cross their legs when talking. In Syrian culture, if your shoe is facing the other person, it is very disrespectful and rude. If I can see huge differences in body language from American culture to other cultures just from my day-to-day life, there must be even way more differences in other cultures as well.

K B U Q Q F B F C E N T E R S P H M P F
 G P B Q Q O H Z P J H I P E K F D R P Z
 J J D P O L Y M P I A N S P D N D U B H
 T P H R H Q Z C K D E Q Z W O C E L M S
 I M O F H M R N C O L L E G E U E K G R
 A L Q C V V S U M M E R 2 0 1 8 M R J Y
 C N M E A V N S P Y H B B F D J E S H P
 M M K Z M Y V O F L D B B V E N S Q O G
 J S S D P A D R E S S G R A M M A R Y E
 C X A Y K W R I T I N G U T P Y Z M C T

MESA
 CENTER
 SDPADRES

COLLEGE
 VAMP
 OLYMPIANS

WRITING
 SUMMER2018
 GRAMMAR

My Opportunity, by Dao Nguyen

This story was written by Dao Nguyen, a Mesa College Student in ESOL 21 during Spring 2018.

My opportunity to come to the United States I was from Vietnam. My mother brought my family to the United States on the ODP (Order Departure Program). Before, my husband and I were teachers in our country. We have two daughters. My eldest daughter came to study in the U.S. a few years ago. She graduated from UC San Diego and is currently working here. My younger daughter is studying at Mesa College.

When we just moved to the United States, my husband and I had been in San Jose with my mother and my siblings for one year. At that time, I was often stressed because we both did not have a job. Besides, the cold weather and the language barrier were also hard for me. I had wanted to come back to Vietnam

many times, but I then wondered why I had to come here.

First, I thought that I had to come to the U.S. to reunite with my big family and my eldest daughter. Second, I preferred a clean air environment and a fair society. Consequently, instead of coming back to Vietnam, my husband and I decided to continue to stay in the U.S. and to come to San Diego to live with our daughter. We enrolled to study ESL at San Diego Continuing Education. I have not studied English for over forty years, so my English was not good. I am really thankful to the teachers here for teaching and helping me enthusiastically.

Now my English is a little better. My dream is to become a Math teacher here. I want to have opportunities to teach some students of Vietnamese families at home. There-

fore, I registered to study Math and English at Mesa College.

In the beginning, I had problems with math vocabulary and too many new English words. I was old, so my memory was reduced. For me, in order to remember a lot of new vocabulary is bit difficult, sometimes I intend to give up my goal. Then I thought again with the enthusiastic teaching of the teachers at Mesa College and the encouragement of my daughters I was determined to try studying. Thus, I studied very hard and was regularly in class.

What I expect is integrating into the social community in English and having a job that suits with my abilities. In summary, I am very grateful to the United States' government and the teachers for creating favorable conditions for me to study. I hope that my dream will come true. I will strive to be a good citizen and contribute little by little to the U.S. society.