

Student Success Stories



Helping Nevada adults improve basic skills and get jobs through GED, Career Pathways, Literacy, ESL, Civics, Citizenship, & Transition to Postsecondary programs. Nevada Adult Education services are federally funded through the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, Title II of the Workforce Investment Act.

Lert learns to cook up tasteful reports

As supervising chef of Garde Manger (cold kitchen) at The Four Seasons Hotel in Las Vegas, Lertsak Seeboonruang is responsible for all cold foods served in the restaurants and at banquets. He is also known globally as a frequent competitor on the Food Network, recently placing second in the world for fruit and vegetable carving!

Lert's duties require him to write annual reviews for each of the staff members he supervises. Lert's boss, Executive Chef Michael, deemed his reports unacceptable and enrolled him in the ESL/Customer Service Class offered by the College of Southern Nevada at The Four Seasons.

Although he was focused on improving his writing skills, vocabulary, grammar, and other English mechanics, Lert had a secondary goal — he wanted to become more comfortable speaking in English and more willing to speak during weekly management meetings.

"Lert was extremely enthusiastic," said his instructor, Elizabeth Lane. "Not only did he have perfect attendance, but he came early, sought help during the breaks, and stayed late to ask questions and seek extra help. Before long, he was seen as a leader in class. His written work exceeded expectations and he

readily volunteered to speak, frequently asking questions which led to valuable class discussions."

As class progressed, Lert reported he felt more confident at management meetings and he began to offer appropriate ideas. Finally, the time for the annual reviews arrived. Lert felt he had produced thoughtful, well written, reports that were grammatically correct and would be helpful to his employees. He asked Elizabeth to proofread what he wrote. Were they good? Indeed, they were. She could not find anything to correct ... and Chef Michael couldn't, either!

Unintended consequences: Lert is on-tap to teach a non-credit course on fruit-carving at CSN. Chef Michael volunteered to support this effort by sending other chefs to help him!



On the road to a medical career



Although Veronica Adrian was working at the Reno airport for a limousine/shuttle service, she realized that she needed a career that would sustain her family. She enrolled in Northern Nevada Literacy Council's GED program in April 2010 and received her GED just six months later.

Reflecting on how the GED changed her life, Veronica said, "It has given me more employment opportunities and has encouraged me to send résumés to more companies. Now I don't have to skip over those jobs that require the GED certificate. I am not scared any longer to go for it when applying for jobs. And now I'm getting call-backs from companies!"

Veronica plans to continue her education in the medical field and become a phlebotomist. Truckee Meadows Community College (TMCC) in Reno offers the classes she needs and she plans on entering the program once she purchases a computer. "My weird work schedule right now makes it hard for me to attend school but as soon as I get a computer I will be able to take many of the TMCC classes online. I have a young son and that would allow me to stay home while taking classes. Once I complete those classes, I will then continue on with the hands-on-training."

Justifiably proud of her GED accomplishment, the young mother also has plans for her son. "How can I preach to him when I messed up in school? I will inspire him to stay in school and graduate from high school!"

Budding math teacher — in her own words

My name is Yu Cui Liu (Yurie). I am a student at the ESL center of Great Basin College in Elko. I have been studying at the ESL Center since I came to America.

The first time that I went into the Learning Center, I could not understand the teachers, and they could not understand my Chinese English. In November 2008, I took the placement test at GBC; my basic grammar scored 84 out of 150 and my reading comprehension scored only 46 out of 150.

With the help of my ESL teachers, I worked on my English — including listening, reading, speaking, and writing.

In the spring of 2009, I took some college classes for my major (I attended ESL class at the same time). It was so hard, and I had to struggle. I could not read the textbook by myself, nor could I understand what the teacher said in class. I could not understand the meaning of my assignments. Even though I had many questions, I never asked them in class because I could not pronounce the words.

It was the ESL program that helped me. The advanced ESL

“The ESL program is like a ladder, which is helping me climb to the peak of success.”

class taught me grammar, vocabulary, and practical English. The conversation class improved my speaking and listening. Also, I went to the ESL Center for personal

tutoring after class. The teachers in the Center were very patient with me. They taught me to pronounce every letter and every word correctly. They helped me to correct my grammar mistakes and taught me reading skills. At the end of my first semester, I obtained all A's for my four courses and was listed on the Dean's List at GBC.

In order to enter the teaching program, I must pass the Praxis of the National Education Test Series (ETS), which includes mathematics, reading, and writing. It was so hard for me. According to education psychology, English language learners can only have normal conversation with peers in an English-speaking area after two years. And it takes another five-seven years to reach an academic level. I do not want to wait that long, and I know the teachers in ESL always can help me.

I scored 175 on my Praxis-I Writing Test (the passing score



Yurie (far right) works with GBC teacher Louise Tousignant

is 172) in June 2010. I also scored 173 on my Praxis-I Reading Test (the passing score is 174). Although I did not pass the Praxis Reading Test, I am very satisfied with my progress in reading and critical thinking and have confidence that I will pass it the next time.

For my practicum class, I taught geometry and algebra classes at the Spring Creek High School in the fall of 2010. I know as a future teacher, I must speak fluent standard America English. After class, when the students gave me “high fives” and said “Awesome!” I felt so happy that my lead teacher and the students completely understood what I had said in the classroom!

I will finish all my courses by the fall of 2011, and I will be a student teacher in the spring of 2012. I appreciate every teacher in the ESL center very much. They not only teach me English, but also help me toward my academic success and give me useful advice toward my studies and future career as a teacher. They are like cultivators — always plowing and weeding their students with their diligence, wisdom, and love.

Nevada Adult Education works!

In 2009-10, Nevada's 9,193 Adult Basic Education students showed exemplary gains:

- 64% of qualifying students advanced two or more grade-level equivalents
- 70% of those who took the GED Test passed it
- 54% of those seeking employment found it
- 83% of those wanting to retain or improve their employment did so



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