

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.

Haby works, earns citizenship



U.S. District Court Judge Lloyd D. George, Haby Gory, Las Vegas Mayor Oscar Goodman, and USCIS Phoenix District 25 Director John Kramar

Vegas, where Kalilou received a job offer from a local hotel/casino. Kalilou advised Haby, “You need to get to know your way around and learn English.” Soon after, he located the CALL (Computer-Assisted Literacy in Libraries) Program and in March 2006 brought her in to take the first steps in her new language.

When CALL Tutor Ritha Burroughs heard Haby did not speak any English and had no knowledge of reading in any language, her response was typical of the experienced tutor: “I love a challenge!”

Ritha and Haby faced several cultural barriers. For example, in Haby’s society it is considered extremely rude for young people to make eye contact with the elders or to speak to an elder unless they are spoken to first. It took six months for Haby to feel comfortable with the new culture, but she’s adjusted to U.S. norms.

Ritha’s patience and can-do attitude, Haby’s drive to learn the culture and language of her new home, and Kalilou’s help and encouragement helped Haby meet her goals: a job and U.S. citizenship. She completed housekeeper training and has worked at the Luxor since June 2007. In April 2008, Haby took the USCIS exam/interview and failed the reading and writing portion. On her second try, she passed the exam and later received her Certificate of Naturalization in a ceremony attended by many dignitaries and, of course, Ritha Burroughs.

What started out as a tutor-student relationship has developed into a strong bond of friendship. Haby and Kalilou couldn’t be happier: “Ritha’s been like a mom to us!” And Haby’s new favorite food? Cheeseburgers!

Erika speaks up!

When Erika Flores first came to the College of Southern Nevada’s ESL/Civics class at Walnut Recreation Center in 2009, she spoke very little English. Her teacher, Elizabeth Lane, thought it was fear that held Erika back and saw her potential immediately: “I could just hear the ability she had.”

Erika attended five six-week sessions, with near-perfect attendance throughout. “She was a model student. She did her assignments, spoke when called upon, stayed after class for additional help, and grew more willing to volunteer in class,” said Elizabeth. Soon she began showing signs of leadership — and proclaimed herself “teacher’s assistant.”

Three signs of her success in the community truly stand out:

- She received recognition for her work at McDonald’s, earning herself more privileges, better hours, and higher pay.
- When her friend was giving birth and needed someone to translate with the doctors, Erika successfully performed this vitally important task.
- When Erika & her husband were cited by authorities regarding a driveway extension, Erika went to speak — totally in English — with city officials. She proved the driveway met the city’s standards, won her case, and received a personal apology from the individual who cited them!



TMCC Adult Ed students movin' on up to college

It is especially challenging for ESL students to transition to college credit coursework. Students have told their (non-credit course) instructors that they had no knowledge of how the higher education in the U.S. works. How do they enroll? Will they fit into the college culture? Do they have the skills — such as note-taking, writing composition, reading strategies — they need? What if their English isn't perfect — will they be accepted by the other students?

TMCC offers a special College Transition Class (CTC 101). It was designed by Tünde Csepelyi, who spoke no English when she immigrated from Hungary in 1993, learned it and now teaches it at TMCC, and is a Ph.D. student at UNR, as well. "CTC 101 follows a regular academic class schedule and addresses personal as well as academic goals," said Tünde. "In addition to instruction around specific skills, the curriculum addresses issues such as academic honesty, how to access college resources, and financial aid. At the end of the semester, each student leaves with a detailed educational plan, a financial plan to support matriculation, and a timeline for completion of a Certificate or Associate's degree."

Approximately 500 students have taken the class since 2005 — many of them have graduated from the college or are currently pursuing a degree. Here, in their own words, is a sample of how lives have changed.



Leticia designs her career

My name is Leticia Medellin and I am from

Mexico. I've been in this country for 22 years, and I started taking English classes in 2008 at TMCC; I took reading and writing. After that, I was sent to Dandini to take CTC 101 till I graduated with perfect attendance. Now I am in my 3rd semester taking academic classes at Dandini.

For me, CTC 101 was really important; having this class made me feel confident because I learned what to do next. All the information that I got was necessary to continue with my studies. Also, having this class at Dandini was perfect because I got used to going to school without being nervous.

Without this class, me and my fellow students would have let go of our thoughts of continuing our studies. Why? Because we needed more information, we needed to know what we could do and where to go because believe me, we feel embarrassed and unsure. In other words, we were scared because we did not know what to do.

I really appreciate the opportunity to go to this class. It helped me a lot, and now I have a brilliant future and I am on my way to becoming an interior designer.

Arnulfo learns, lives educational values

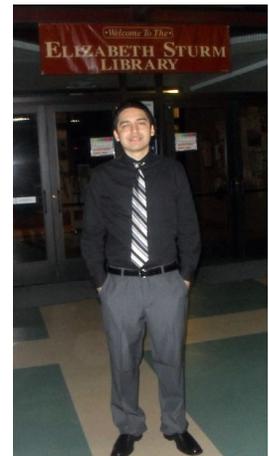
Education is the most important thing that we can do to succeed in this country. Many people think that speaking English is good enough, but what they do not know is that they will get into the jobs that they never wanted to do with a minimum pay.

I came from Mexico barely two years ago. I came for one reason which was to work to get money. After five months I changed my mind when I realized a school called "TMCC" which is open to everyone. I decided to try to learn English. The first class I took was CTC 101, the best class that I could find. This class taught me a lot about how important college is. Thanks to this class an interest arose to go forward in college.

Until this point I have taken three official classes. The first one (112A, listening, speaking) gave me the confidence to speak in front of an audience. In the second class (112C, a reading class) I learned how to read properly. That was very helpful to continue in my goal to learn English.

It was not enough to know how to speak and how to read so I took my third class which was 112D, a writing class. This class was harder than the others, but very interesting because through the semester I was learning the different methods to write. The time passed really fast, and before I knew it, three classes were done.

It has been very difficult to learn another language, but nothing good comes easy. I have set many goals in my academic life, such as to get my associate degree on Web Development. I want to be someone in this country and I know with education I will. I have been living in this country barely two years, and I think deciding to go to college was the best decision I made.



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