

Student Success Stories



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Yurie follows her plan — to grad school

Editor's note: Yurie first wrote about her ESL classes and plans for college in [Issue 1](#).



My name is Yucui (“Yurie”) Liu. I am so happy to again share my most recent experience with the ESL program at Great Basin College in Elko.

When I came to the United States in the summer 2008 with limited English, I was assigned to attend the mid-level ESL class and basic phonics class. When I took English 095, I could not write a correct, complete sentence at the beginning, and I had to use my electronic dictionary constantly in order to understand what was being taught in the class.

I have attended the ESL program since the fall 2008 and followed an individual plan for me to help me with my pronunciation, vocabulary, writing, reading, and critical thinking. I attended the regular ESL class during the daytime

and went to the ESL office to get extra help after class or in the evenings.

With the help of the ESL program and all my teachers, I have now successfully finished my final semester of student teaching in math at the Spring Creek High School — and I obtained an “A!” My student teaching also helped me to improve my oral and written communication. I graduated in May 2012 with honors for being on the Dean's List and a member of Phi Theta Kappa and am applying for my Nevada Teaching License.

Meanwhile, the University of Nevada, Reno Graduate School of Mathematics has accepted me, and I will be a Teaching Assistant this fall.

I am very grateful and thankful that the ESL program provided me opportunities to learn and improve my English. Although I could not attend the regular ESL classes during my student teaching, I went to the ESL office in the evenings to work on my pronunciation. As a teacher, I must pronounce every word clearly. Once again, the ESL program helped me step-by-step to achieve my goal.

Her first time at bat and ... she hits a home run!

Submitted by Cindy Ainsworth, NNLC, 775/356-1007, marketing@nnlc.org

“I just needed a boost in confidence,” said Kimberly Gorman when asked about her experiences while preparing for the GED® Test at [Northern Nevada Literacy Council](#) (NNLC). Kimberly wasn't sure she could pass the test, especially the math segment, but with help from NNLC instructors she received her GED Certificate on her first try!

Kimberly was without a job or a High School Diploma when Nevada JobConnect recommended she enroll at NNLC. In July 2009 she started Adult Basic Education Basic Skills classes, but soon realized that she could not continue due to personal reasons. Fast-forward to 2011, where she found it continually more difficult to locate a job. At first she was apprehensive about returning to NNLC because she felt that her math skills were very weak. “We are our own worst critics,” she said, but after some serious thought she felt it was worth a shot to try again.

Kimberly returned in November 2011, where she continued her GED preparatory classes. She credits instructor Mike Cronmiller for strengthening her math skills: “Even when everyone else got it,



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Kimberly at bat

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Mike would stick with me and go over and over the problem until I understood it.” She believes the one-on-one learning experience contributed to her success.

Before she started the next NNLC session, Data Manager Dave Weeks gave her the GED Practice Test. Her scores indicated that she was ready, but she briefly came back to NNLC the week before the GED Test to brush up on some subjects. Kimberly took the Test in January 2012 and passed immediately!

She currently works in Food Services at the Reno Aces Ballpark, the Diamondbacks Triple-A baseball affiliate. Her manager gave her a big high-five when she told him about receiving her GED and being interviewed for this article.

Kimberly plans to explore NNLC’s Career Pathway Program, [Plug Into Choices](#), in the fall of 2012. She enjoys computer and customer service work and has always excelled at people-oriented occupations.

Way to go Kimberly!

“Everyone at NNLC is so very supporting, encouraging, caring, and concerned about each student. I would recommend NNLC to anyone who is looking for a small classroom group setting when studying for their GED.”



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No stopping this nurse

Kelly Hyatt and her husband emigrated to North Lake Tahoe from Peru, where she had been pursuing an accounting degree, in 1999. She immediately began studying English, using private tutoring two hours per week and any community adult education courses she could find. “I needed to learn English — I knew maybe 10%, just my pronouns and some verbs,” she said.



In 2004, Kelly enrolled in Western Nevada College’s [Adult Literacy & Language Program](#). “She immersed herself in her studies,” said Program Director Teri Zutter, “attending many classes and practicing English outside of class.” She transitioned to GED Prep in January 2005 and earned her GED one year later. During these years, her marriage deteriorated and Kelly became a single parent to her beloved daughter Delphina. She became a citizen in 2007 and participated in an assembly celebrating America’s success at Delphina’s Elementary School that year.

Kelly wanted to become a nurse and she was far from her goal at that point. She began her prerequisite classes; sometimes she had to retake a class in order to achieve a very high GPA, a requirement for entry into WNC’s Nursing Program. (The program gets approximately 120 applications each year and accepts 40 of them.) Kelly graduated Magna Cum Laude with an Associate of Arts degree in May 2010.

She had applied to the Nursing program and twice did not make the cut. “I advised Kelly to try for the Surgery Technician Program instead,” said Teri. “I thought it might be a good alternative. She fleetingly considered it, then I saw her eyes change with a steely resolve to them and she said ‘No, I am supposed to be a nurse, I can do this.’”

Kelly used the WNC counseling office and hypnotherapy to overcome her testing fear, passed the TEAS (Test of Essential Academic Skills) on her third try, and was accepted into the Nursing Program.

Why did Kelly persevere? “Something inside me kept pushing me to become a nurse,” she said. “I like challenges and I thought I could do it. I wanted to show my daughter how you have to work hard for your goals. And I wanted her to be proud of me. She is my little voice talking to me. Now she wants me to write a book about this experience!”

Kelly graduated from WNC’s Nursing Program in May 2012 and will take the Board exams in June. She hopes to work as a community nurse where she can use her bilingual skills. “I always wanted to help people, especially kids, and now I’d like to focus on abused women.”

She also plans to continue her education with a new goal — a bachelor’s degree from UNR.