

SPRING VIEWS

Spring International Language Center, Littleton, Colorado

March 3, 2008

Adventurous Students Learn to Ski

"There's no snow in my country but lots of sand," said one of the Libyan students who joined a multi-national group of Spring students on a February ski trip to Winter Park. For most of the group, it was their first time to ski. All of the beginners were required to take a lesson before venturing down the slopes. Not only was skiing the subject of photos sent back home, but it was also a great topic for compositions when they returned to school. (See story p. 2)

Winter at Spring School was enjoyed, and endured, by more than 100 students from 22 different countries. Students kept busy in class 23 hours a week in six levels, ranging from Beginning to Advanced. A special Basic level also was offered this term. Although studying occupied most of the students' time, activities provided entertainment and opportunities to meet Americans and practice English. Other than the ski trip, students enjoyed a La Crosse game, a Nuggets basketball game, shopping at Castle Rock Factory Stores, and a Valentine's Day party. In addition, the International Club provided Tuesday Taste of Culture programs that featured guest speakers and student panel discussions. A professional storyteller was a popular program this term.

The big event for Spring term is the 29th annual International Day Wednesday, April 23. Students will decorate booths from each country and offer tastes of their ethnic cuisine along with artifacts, information, costumes, and more. The free event is open to the community and the college.



My School

Interaction Makes a Student Love His School

by Mohamed Al-Bakhiti, Saudi Arabia

“This is a very good school. You can find all that you need as an international student,” my friend, who is studying at Spring International Language Center, said to me when I was searching for a language center in the USA. Any language center that wants to be a good competitor needs to have confidence from its students. In my opinion, there are factors that a language center must work very hard to develop and keep: Teacher level, interaction (how the school deals with its students), cooperation and organization.

First and foremost, the teacher level is the most important part for any school. I have been studying at SILC for three months and I have been taught by four teachers. In addition, I found in them what I searched for. I can say that SILC has very good teachers. For example, Gunilla, who taught me writing and reading, is a professional teacher. Indeed, she has a lot of information that each student needs. Because she wants the students to write and read in the best way, she focuses and explains each word even if they are small details. I believe Gunilla does that not for the school system but because she loves teaching and believes in what she does. I see in Gunilla the dream teacher for a good student.

Interaction is a big part, not just in a school but also in the whole life. Good interaction makes the student love his school, classes and subjects. In addition, good interaction makes you learn more. Tricia, for instance, is one of the best great teachers whom I have ever met or heard about in my life. She deals with the students like her children. Moreover, she doesn't look for nationality or anything else; she looks to your brain. Tricia has a special way to explain a subject in an easy way. “Tricia is our mother” is how students talk about her. I love you, Tricia.

Cooperation and organization are factors not just for teachers but also for the whole school and each worker in it. In general, teachers get the big part of talking about school. Nevertheless, there are other workers who are in the main office doing very hard work and receiving the students with a smile on their faces. In spite of a lot of work, they try to help students as much as possible. Thank you, Debbie, Niki, Susan, Missy, and Rebecca.

Spring International Language Center has the main factors for success: teacher level, interaction and cooperation. There are three branches of SILC, and I have been studying in one of them since I came here. Thus, maybe there are even more advantages in the other branches. I hope the students reach their dreams, and SILC becomes the best language center in America...no...no...in the world.

Note: I have great teachers this term, but I can't talk about them because they are teaching me now.

I

My Favorite Sport Is Skiing...by Afaf Ramadan, Libya

Why do I like skiing? There is no skiing in Libya, so I have never tried skiing before. I wanted to ski because it was new for me. Spring International had a ski trip, so I decided to go. It was my first time to ski. We went to the mountains with other students.

Second, skiing is easy to learn and you don't need much equipment. We rented skis, poles and hats, but we had brought our own gloves and ski goggles. A ski teacher showed us how to ski. He showed me how to stoop, turn, go fast or slow, and turn left or right. Skiing is a very popular sport in the USA because almost anyone can learn to ski with a few simple instructions.

Last, skiing is good exercise. Skiing builds strong muscles. It takes a lot of endurance to ski downhill. Finally, the name of a famous skier in the USA is Brad Holmes. He was the youngest person ever, at age fifteen, to make the USA Ski Team. Brad is also known for his extreme freestyle skiing.

In conclusion, skiing is an exciting outdoor sport that is fun for people of any age. When we finish skiing, we drink hot chocolate. I hope to ski more in the future. I think every student likes skiing, too.

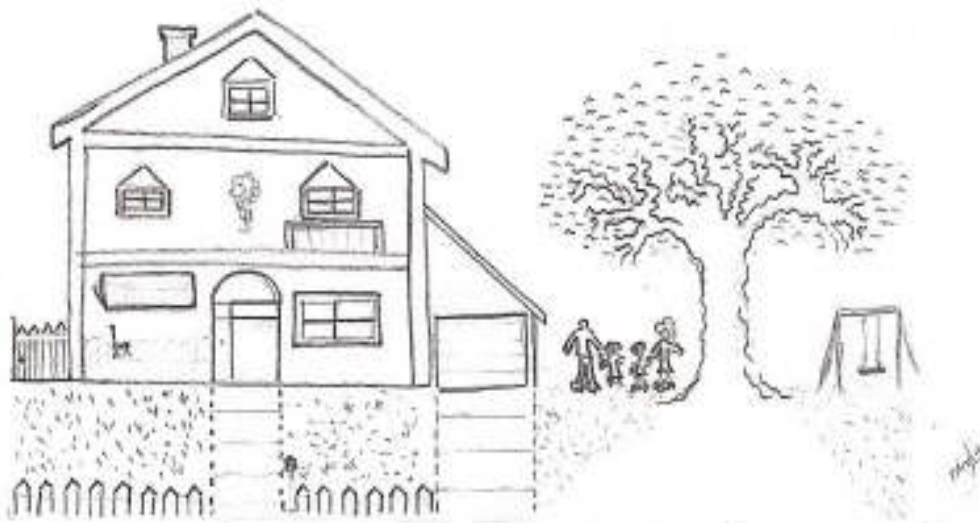
Love: The Most Important Quality of a Happy Family

by Mohammed Saud Al Asmail, Saudi Arabia

Having a happy family isn't easy nowadays, but it depends on how much the parents want to make a good, nice life with their children. It takes time to build successful people, and parents need to use that time to make their children successful men and women.

I believe the most important quality of a happy family is love and sharing between the parents. Love is caring and affection makes children be optimistic in life. Actually, everyone has many ways to educate their kids, but for me the best way is sharing between the parents that helps them 75 per cent to make a successful family.

The other important thing in your life that you need to have is money. I know money doesn't always make you happy, but it can change life to be easier. Money at least helps you when you need to buy some food, clothes, or anything. Also, when you need to let your child study in a special school, money can do that. But if you don't have money sometimes you can't realize your dreams of having a happy family



In addition, to make a happy family is the parents' responsibility. Moreover, it is the parent's responsibility for the boys until they are 18 years old when they need to help themselves. For the girls, in my opinion, they should stay at home to save their lives until they can find something for them.

Life is very hard nowadays. Parents work hard to realize their dreams with their children. Sharing and love is for a good life between the parents and their children.

A Story from Egypt...by Khaled Ramadan

Last year my friend told me a story he heard when he was in Egypt. Many years ago, there was a son who lived with his mother. This mother had only one eye. The son disliked his mother because she was one-eyed and every time he said to her, "Don't come to my school. Don't come when I play with my friends."

When he got married, he left his mother alone and moved to another place. Sometimes she wanted to see his children, but he didn't want that. After many years, he heard the bad news that his mother had died. He went to her house. That was the house where he lived with his mother when he was a child. He found a letter in his mother's room.

He read that letter. He knelt and cried. In the letter his mother wrote, "Son, I love you very much. I will tell you what happened to my eye. When you were a baby, you put a knife in your eye. When we went to the hospital, they told me, 'He will be one-eyed.'" Immediately I said to the doctor, "Please take my eye and give it to him. So one of your eyes is my eye."

When I hear this story, I felt bad. It's a sad story because the mother is a very important thing in this life.

FABLES FROM AROUND THE WORLD

Skill Helps You to Survive and Cheerfulness Brings You Luck

by Kiriko Sonezaki, Japan

Can you enjoy dancing with scary-looking monsters? It is hard for anyone to stay in threatening surroundings where you are never sure either or not you can go home. We have an old expression in Japan that "your skill can save your life," meaning that if you are an expert at something, you can survive in a difficult world. A good Japanese fable entitled, "How an Old Man Lost His Wen," show how, using his talent of dancing, a man is going to be happy and prosperous in this demanding life.

Many, many years ago, there lived a cheerful old man with a tennis-ball sized wen, or lump, in his right cheek. The lump would not come out in spite of his effort to remove it. One day he stayed in a tree hole to avoid getting wet from the rain. Then monsters came and had a party around the tree. After awhile, the old man came out of the tree and gave the monsters a lot of fun using his excellent dance skill and wit. Because of his desire to dance, he had gotten over his fear of these scary creatures. The monsters admired his talent and hoped that he would join them the next day. In this way, they took away his lump as a pledge.

In contrast to the man who used his talent wisely, there lived next to the old man another old, but disagreeable man, so he went to the party the next day hoping to lose his lump. Instead, the monsters put another lump on his right cheek that they had kept as a pledge from the first man. Because of his unskilled exhibitions, the disagreeable man ended up with two lumps.

The fable tells about the importance of skill or talent in life. The cheerful old man had been trained in dance but not for showing it to the monsters. Even so, it surely helped him not only to survive but also to lose the lump in right cheek. Three other values in this fable are the importance of having a cheerful character, an open mind, and an acceptance of challenge in a new culture. Usually people consider monsters as enemies or strange creatures. The cheerful man challenged the new, unfamiliar circumstance by showing his talent. Because of his character, the monsters allowed him to join them. Then they both enjoyed each other. As a result, it made him happy to lose his disturbing lump, whatever the original intentions of the monsters were.

All of the values in this fable are relevant to my life. Needless to say, the skill of using English has helped me to live here in the United States. I would not have tried to learn something new here without it. This new challenge has brought me a lot of knowledge. And a smile and open-minded spirit have given me fun with people. On the contrary, there would not be any fun if I had stayed disagreeable. These lessons of the fable are definitely true for me; skill is needed to live; challenging something new with a cheerful and open-mind made me happy.

This fable teaches us that any skill can help in various situations. It is good to be an expert through training effectively, developing a talent, or making an effort persistently. Any field of your special and unique expertise will help you to survive. In addition, your positive attitude will bring you more luck.

The Blind Imitation...by Mahmood Al-Zidani, Libya

In my country, Libya, there is a very famous fable. I heard about it in school when I was six years old. It is a funny story; however, it has meaningful wisdom. In fact, it is about how blindly following our companions can hurt us.

Once upon a time, there was a man who had two donkeys. The man used his donkeys for his livelihood. The donkeys were very cooperative. They knew every single road in the city, so that they could go by themselves. Their names were Kodo and Bodo.

One hot summer day, the man put a foam mattress over Kodo and 300 pounds of salt over Bodo. Then he told them to go to the store located at the edge of the city. While Kodo and Bodo were walking, Bodo felt tired. Kodo was making fun of Bodo since Kodo almost seemed to be carrying nothing. After a while they passed a huge lake, which Bodo decided to get into. When Bodo came out, the salt had melted. Bodo was laughing and very happy because he felt the load was done. Kodo got angry, so he went into the lake too. After Kodo got out of the lake, he couldn't move because the foam not only had absorbed a lot of water but it also became very heavy, making it difficult for Kodo to walk. Bodo came back and started to laugh at Kodo. The moral of this fable is that he who laughs first laughs last. In other words, you should not blindly imitate everything you see.

When I was told this fable for the first time, I decided I would neither take any action before thinking about it many times nor make fun of anyone because they would do the same to me. I know why fables can never die or be forgotten. At the same time as they influence our lives, they are also very valuable. It is important to tell such fables to the next generation because they will get lessons from these fables as we did when we were young. As it says, teaching the youngest is like sculpting on stone, but teaching the elderly is like writing on sand. This wisdom means it is hard to teach kids, but if you do so, kids will never forget. On the other hand, it is easy to teach the elderly who easily forget.

I have never forgotten this fable because I have been using its moral wherever I go. For example, I do not like to make fun of others, so I have found that others respect me. Also, I try not to make quick decisions before thinking about the consequences, and sometimes I have asked the elderly and have taken their advice.

In conclusion, life lessons are being inherited and transported from one generation to another either by fables or by experience. Therefore, we ought to learn the moral from the fables or experience; otherwise, we will be in trouble or in a bad situation without the wisdom we need to solve our problems.

Brothers United...by Ibrahim Al-Kuwari, Qatar

Do you think you are stronger alone or with your brothers? A very old fable that my father told me, and his father told him, talks about an important value in my culture. The fable says that if you are with your brothers, you will be stronger than being alone. There was a family whose father thought his sons should be together to help each other. The three brothers were so strong because they always helped each other. After many years, they forgot that, and everyone just helped himself without caring if his brothers had a problem. The three brothers were no longer like in the past, helping each other and working together. They had a lot of problems and they became weak.

When their father became old and before he died, he brought all of his sons together. He also brought interlocking pieces of wood with him. He gave the first son the pieces of wood and told him to break them, but he couldn't. He did the same with the second and third sons, but they could not break the wood either. In the end, he told them, "Do you understand now that you couldn't break the wood when you tried by yourself? Now work together to break the pieces." The three sons worked together and managed to break the wood.

It is clear from the story that when we are together with our brothers, we will be stronger than being alone. I believe that this value is popular in Arab culture because we live together throughout our lives. For example, all the houses next to my house are for my family, like my grandfather's and all his sons'. In fact, we have all known each other since we were children. My father is almost 50 years old and he sees his brothers every day. Also, he helps them and they help him in everything. I think we should teach our children that fable to make them strong and unified.. For example, I remember when my father was with my brother in a hospital in Germany. All my uncles helped my father to finish some business, and they also helped me with money whenever I needed it.

This fable has affected my life by making me stronger. One day, for example, I had a misunderstanding with my father on some topic. After that, he was so angry with me that I couldn't go to tell him that I was sorry because I thought he wouldn't understand. I was sure that no one could help me except my brother. After I talked to him, my brother went to my father to help him understand the problem. My father was so happy, not only because my brother had gone to him but also because my brother and I are very close.

In conclusion, I really love this story because it teaches us how to be strong and solve our problems by having a good relationship with our brothers. I have really worked to have a good relationship with my brothers. I think everyone should keep his relationship with his brothers strong to avoid facing all the problems by himself. As the fable teaches, you are stronger when ;you are with your brothers.

Nonverbal Communication Is Important ***by Faras Al-Ghafainah, Saudi Arabia***

Why do people need to learn about nonverbal communication? One reason is that it helps them to communicate with other people who are not from their country. It is difficult for people who are not native speakers of the country they're living in to understand the new culture's nonverbal communication. Therefore, it may be confusing when they talk with native speakers. There are five channels of nonverbal communication: kinesic, proxemic, chronemic, oculosic, and haptic; however, the most important one of them is kinesics.

Proxemics is the use of interpersonal space. This channel of nonverbal communication is usually different in most countries; even within one country there may be different uses of interpersonal space. For example, in Saudi Arabia the comfortable conversation distance between two people is about three feet. The chronemic channel is the timing of verbal exchanges during conversation. For instance, when an American guy talks to another guy from a different culture, and the other guy leaves silence between each statement, this silence for the American guy may cause discomfort because in American culture this may mean that the person is shy, uninterested, or uneasy about the conversation.

The third one is oculosic, which is eye-to-eye contact or avoidance of contact. In American culture, this is considered as a sign that the other person is listening. However, in many countries there are complex rules that determine when you avoid another person's eyes. Haptics is the form of communication that involves touch. That means whether or not people touch each other is culturally based. This form of communicating doesn't often happen in American culture, but there are other cultures whose people usually touch each other as they converse, as in Arab culture.

The last one, which is the most important one in my view, is kinesics. Kinesics is the movement of the body. It is important because there are many kinesic differences between most cultures. For example, in Saudi Arabia, it is okay if people point at something with their middle finger, but in the U.S. it means something bad.

In conclusion, there are a lot of differences between cultures in this world. Nonverbal communication is one of these differences. however, I think that people who visit or travel to another country should know about its culture, so they don't get into trouble over nonverbal signals.

Love in Starbucks

To Whom It May Concern . . . by Mohamed Albakhiti

"Mohammed, I have fallen in love," my friend said to me. Everyone knows love;; nevertheless, it is difficult to explain it. You don't know if you search for love or love searches for you. Even though my friend wasn't a teenager, his love was teenage love. The story started in Starbuck's Coffee Shop and ended in Starbucks.

On a cold day, a normal day in Denver, we were on the road to our school. The time was early, so my friend asked me to stop to drink coffee in Starbuck's. Because of the weather, I immediately agreed with his idea and stopped at a supermarket which the café' inside it. My friend went to the café' while I went to the ATM. A few minutes later, when I arrived at the café', my friend was talking with the girl who works there about his goals! The next day, my friend asked me again to stop at the same café'! In addition, he asked me to wait for him in the car!! fifteen minutes later, my friend came with a big smile on his face.

"I'm sorry for being late, but the machine was broken," he said.

"Something's fishy," I thought.

This same event happened every day for three days with different excuses. The next Saturday night, we were in an Indian restaurant.

"Mohammed, I have fallen in love," my friend said to me with a baby face.

"Who is the happiest girl in the world whom you are in love with?" I answered. He erupted when he heard my answer.

"This is a serious subject," he said. Despite not believing him, I asked him with a serious face, "Who is the girl?" he answered me with the baby face, "The girl who works in the café." This answer was a bombshell for me.

My friend was searching for a way to tell the girl about his love, so he asked me to help him. "I don't have experience in this situation. I'm sorry," I said. He was angry. "You don't want to help me? Because he is one of my best friends, I didn't want him to be angry with me.

"I'll tell him a crazy idea," I thought. "Then he won't be able to do it. At the same time, I won't be angry with me."

"My friend, I have found a way. You should...must write a poem for her in English"

"I don't have enough English to write a poem. Indeed, I don't have enough English to make a good conversation!" he said.

"Love makes the impossible possible" was the strong answer from me.

A week later, he gave me a paper said "Read it and give me the answer tonight. I'm not going to sleep until I hear your opinion."

As soon as I arrived home, I opened the letter:

**"To whom it may concern
I fell in love, I fell in love
My lover, listen to my heart messenger says: I love you, I love you
When I look at you, my heart talks
When you look at me, I can't move
Stop my heart bleeding by saying 'I love you'
If it is 'not,' please don't tell me
Let me live in my dream"**

I didn't know what to do. Should I laugh or should I be saddened? Until I read his poem, I thought he was kidding about his love.

"My friend, it is very good, but...but..." I couldn't say anything more.

"I'm glad because my poem took your interest," he said. "You are my best friend. Indeed, we need a way to give it to her. I need the answer tomorrow," he said with a huge smile on his face. it was the worst time for me in the last ten years.

"Kiss me and smile for me," my friend was singing when I arrived in class. Immediately he asked me about my plan. Even though I was certain about her answer, I said, "Put your letter in an envelope and give it to her and ask her to put the answer in an envelope the next day when you go again to Starbuck's." I was sorry that I couldn't tell him what I was expecting to happen.

My friend went to the café' and followed my plan. In addition, I wanted him to hear the answer from her. The next day in the supermarket parking lot, I was waiting in the car when he came with the envelope.

"She didn't say anything, just smiled at me. I think everything will be okay," he said.

The envelope was closed and written on it was "To my friend." I thought to myself, "This is a problem. There's a big difference between best friend and lover." He opened the envelope and there was a letter and a picture.

"My friend
You are a good guy
I bet you will find a beautiful girl
I put a picture in here of my family: my husband, my son, and me."

Quiet, no talking, just breathing. I started to drive and sang, "Kiss me and smile for me...."