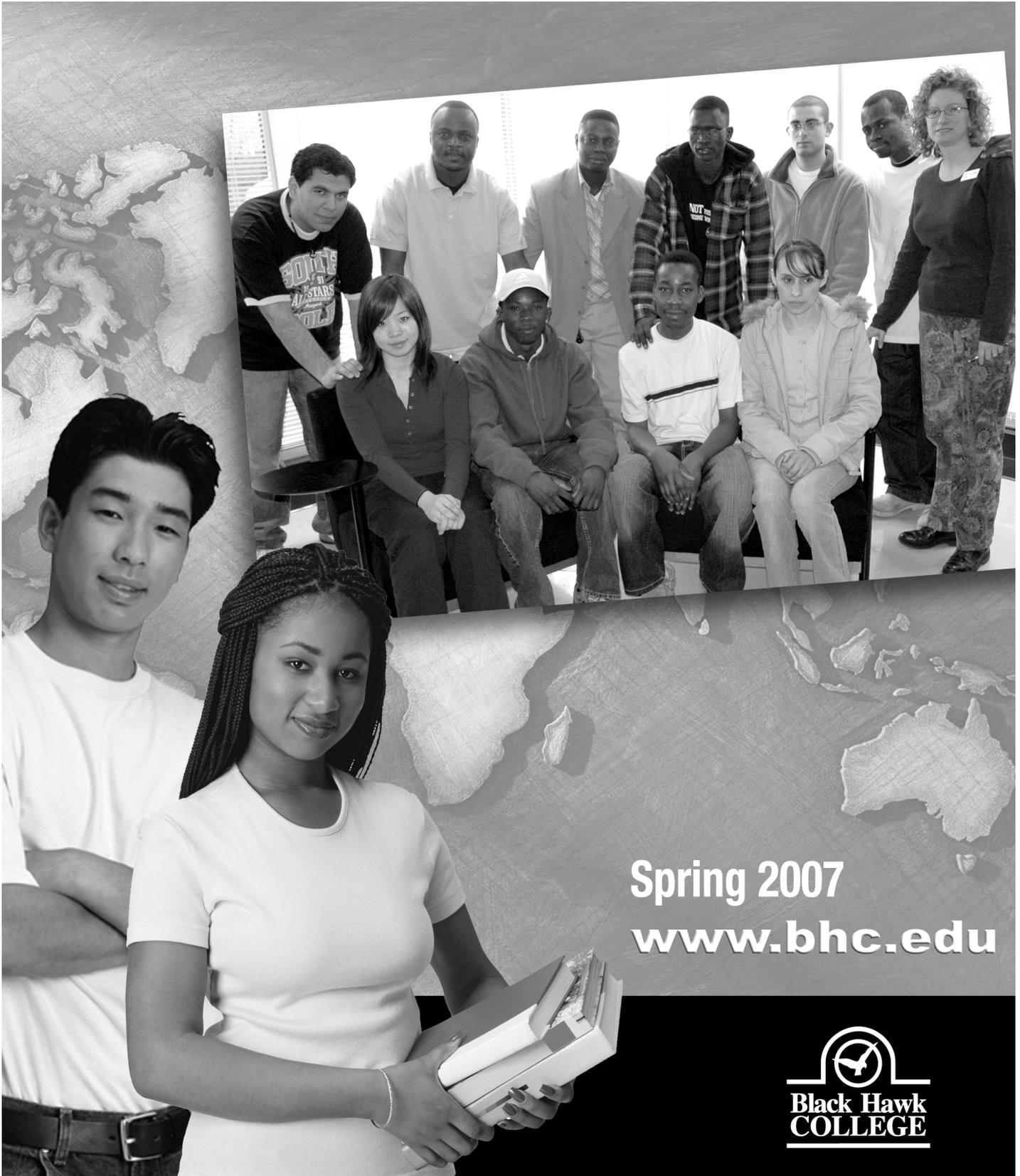


ESL Newsletter

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ESL NEWSLETTER

A publication from Spring Semester 2007 English as a Second Language Students

About the Symposium

By: Kouete Nicoue

Last semester my class, Listening and Speaking II, participated in the Black Hawk College Symposium. For my classmates and me, it was a big challenge. Many of us had never handled public speaking before. Of course, since I have started the ESL program, I have made some speeches in grammar and listening and speaking classes. Even though those were usually difficult, I was always able to handle the stress. The fact is that I was attuned to my classmates. That made things easier for me. This time it wasn't the same. The public, Black Hawk College students and its staff, are not particularly familiar to me. I remember my classmate at that time, Geeta Subedi, saying, "I do not see myself in front of that public..." I also had the feeling of wanting to flee, but one



thing I knew is that I was already on the list and my class was scheduled to show up. Dealing with the stress, I found out, was only a small part of what

I had experienced.

A month prior to the symposium, my instructor at that time, Lisa Miotto, came into the class, and she said to us, "...there is

going to be a symposium and as Listening and Speaking students, I put you guys on the list." She did this for two reasons. The first one is that the theme of the symposium was about immigration. Because most students in the class were immigrants, she thought it would be interesting to share our experiences as immigrants. Secondly, participating would build up our listening and speaking skills.

Even though my listening and speaking skills still need work, I approached Erskine Carter to get more information about this project. Professor Carter is the initiator of the symposium. He had the idea seven years ago. The symposium became a regular feature after September 11. Initially, I asked him about what a symposium is. His answer was, "It is an academic discussion, a meeting, and an opportunity for students where they can discuss about topics they are not able to talk about in class."



To fit our instructor's expectations, we started to work early on the assignment. After many reflections, I decided to talk about how misunderstanding rules and laws hurt me as an immigrant. Likewise, I thought that talking about the American lifestyle, and how some car dealerships trick us, would be interesting to the audience. Then I wrote down my thoughts as I learned. One of the skills we studied is practicing our speech. It helps to correct our spelling and to have a confident attitude.

On the day, we were supposed to show up, we did exercises like breathing deeply to get rid of our stress. Once on the stage, I gave my speech after my classmate, Sasan Ajideh, who talked about his misfortune in Iran. The audience was fascinated. Even though I practiced, I felt my voice shake a little, and my mouth became dry.



I understood better why people who give speeches have a drink beside them. Something surprising is that the public found my view on car dealerships very funny. We all made it, and our presentation was a success. According to Ruben Mojica, that symposium was a success because, "It gave us a chance to share our experiences and to learn from our own classmates."



"Actually, we don't have any difficulties gathering people. Students and staff show enthusiasm to participate," declared Professor Carter. Then, he added, "The symposium doesn't cost anything. Most material is furnished by the college." At my question of what subjects, they had talked about in the past, Professor Carter said, "So far we have talked about voting, elections, art, life and death, free speech and academics, education specialization, trauma and healing." Immigration was the theme for Fall 2006 while Spring 2007 was "The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly: The Face of Peace, Violence, and Hatred." Professor Carter said, "The one for the Fall 2007 is not decided yet."

To conclude, the symposium was an opportunity for students to express their thoughts, their views, and their concerns. More than a simple discussion, it has contributed to help overcome our fear and to share our experiences with others. Such projects need to be encouraged, and everyone has the obligation to take part.



In Memory

By: Anne Ney

A few weeks ago, the Black Hawk College ESL program lost a very special student. Her name is Yen Ho. She had a remarkable life, as many of our ESL students have, and I would like to highlight her life story.



In an autobiographical story written many years ago, she wrote that she was born in 1946 in Hue City, Viet Nam. She completed 10 years of schooling and became very ill in eleventh grade. She stayed in the hospital for twenty days, returned home and never went back to school. I assume that was the beginning of her kidney problems.

In 1970, she married a Vietnamese soldier. She had two children. One was stillborn.

Communists came into Saigon in April 1975. While living with her husband's family, the Communists came into their house and took him prisoner. He was sent to a very remote area and life was very difficult. They had no contact in the six years that he was held prisoner. She told me that he had to attach leaves together to make a blanket for himself to stay warm during the cold nights. In 1990 her health started to fail from kidney problems and her husband applied to come to the U.S. It took five years before they were allowed to come. She could not walk and was carried off the plane in the U.S. They arrived in Moline in April, 1995. She was lucky enough to have a second life here.

Yen Ho came to my class in the basement of First Lutheran Church soon after arriving in Moline. She was then doing home dialysis three times a day. She took the bus and rarely missed class, even in the worst weather. When she and her



husband moved across town, she continued coming to my class. When her health became worse and she couldn't come to class, a volunteer went to her house and they continued to study English for quite a few years.

When I saw that she had died, I went to the funeral and had a wonderful reunion with her husband and four children. All the children have or are finishing college. What a beautiful tribute to their mother.

Yen Ho's husband and a few of the children have been through our ESL program. The BHC International Student Scholarship Fund is accepting donations in her memory. Anyone interested in contributing can send a check to the Black Hawk Foundation and attach a note that it is in memory of Yen Ho.



Just a concluding note: When Yen Ho first came to register for my class, I thought it was so interesting that we were born in the same year. What different lives we had lived in those same years. I am so grateful to the U.S. for giving her a chance for a better life. I know that my life has been enriched by knowing her.



THE BURDEN ON THE ESL TEACHERS

By: Daniel Diing

Attending school has never been easy for American college students, and they turn the blame on the teachers. I have heard several voices from the Black Hawk College students saying things like, "I don't like the way our teacher overworked us with assignments." "That homework took me four hours!" "I didn't sleep a wink last night," said another. However, the more the students get frustrated, the greater is the effect on the



teachers' side. To add salt to the wound, the BHC ESL teachers are the most burdened people. Not to point my finger at one side, the ESL students on the other side feel that the pressure imposed on them at the college level exceeds their abilities to cope. These difficulties require from the ESL teachers a great deal of "emotional intelligence" to understand not only the language problems of their students but also to understand the "affective factors" that may interfere with learning.

Initially, the language barrier is "a pulling-back" factor among the ESL students. Some students have little or no English in their native countries, and when they come to America, they find the kind of English in America unfamiliar to them; therefore, their speaking and listening abilities are inadequate to fully comprehend and express their thoughts; this results in more work for the ESL teachers. The instructors have to constantly work on the students' weakness by trying not only to apply their knowledge and skills but also offer sympathy and commitment so that the ESL students can stand on their feet in the academic realm. For instance, when I came to the U.S. on Feb., 2006, I had some English in Kenya,



yet it was not sufficient to fully understand Americans. So I enrolled in the Black Hawk College ESL programs at the Outreach center.

Impressively, my teacher, Connie, helped me a lot. In fact, I remember the time she spent helping me and the rest of my classmates. For instance, she would apply activities in the classroom that would address the individuals' needs; for example, if the student didn't get the lesson clearly, she would ask the student to see her after the class to discuss the lesson more interpersonally. She sometimes used her

little knowledge of French to explain things to the students who spoke French.

Consequently, when the ESL students transfer to the BHC academic programs, they face a tough task and learning gets more and more complicated for them. As I have said earlier, the limited speaking skill of the ESL students makes class discussions hard. Sometimes the students have opinions about the subject but are worried about their explanations and what the other students might think. Another group of students may start to give opinions, but not in the same eloquent manner that they are proficient in their native language. Therefore, to make the discussions more productive, the ESL teachers have to produce their own conversational strategies. For instance, they have to speak more slowly in order to be fully understood by students. They also have to use more visual aids and charts, and ask questions. Karen Hindhede, the instructor for the ESL Writing II, said, "I try to make my lesson more visual, so that students can see and hear the material. If we are talking about an organizational pattern, I will have practice methods and then give them [the students] a handout, and finally homework." As a typical ESL instructor, Karen plans her lesson very thoughtfully to help her students have enough practice exercises before they can do their assignments.



and finally homework." As a typical ESL instructor, Karen plans her lesson very thoughtfully to help her students have enough practice exercises before they can do their assignments.

Another thing that affects the ESL teacher is that students lack the skills to maintain a schedule. For instance, right now I am taking two classes, Writing II and Reading I, and most of the time I do study one subject more than I study the other. In doing so, I hardly get time to do other necessities like domestic chores, do other assignments from my other class, and time to rest. If the assignments are hard, I will be frustrated and decide to give up doing the



homework. On the other hand, if I fail to do the assignment as required or not do it at all, the teacher will have to allocate time to see me individually. This conflicts with the teachers' daily lesson plans, and it costs the teachers more time and effort.

Again, cultural differences have enormous effect on the ways the ESL students get by with the linguistic environment. Learning requires the partaking of the students in discussions, answering questions and giving opinions about a subject. In some cultures, for example in my culture, silence during group discussion means a lot of things: the subject is apparent

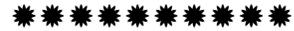


and the student has nothing more to make inquiries, or the person is thinking or mentally translating. When I do that in class, the teachers wonder if I am uncomfortable or have no idea on the subject. In addition, Saleh, an ESL student from Eritrea, said, "The American school system is different from what I had in Africa in the way that American students do courses that are supposed to be done for a whole year or so in less than six months. This is very difficult for me because I have other things to take care of along with my studies." Because of cultural divergences, it is difficult for the ESL instructors to learn to recognize behavioral changes that disrupt the class like changes in progress and absence.

The BHC ESL mentors are mentally overworked, and emotionally and socially involved in their job most of the time, and I strongly comment that they are the outstanding people who help immigrants handle a new culture and language. Although their identified role is to teach English language skills, the Black Hawk College ESL teachers offer more to the ESL



students than just English knowledge; they are great artistic cultural brokers!



SLAVE CHILDREN or “VILAMÉGBO”

By Kofi Anyage

There is saying in Togo, my home country, “The child is the father of the adult.” That implies that all children must take on adult roles in their lives. But how can a child take on adult roles if his childhood is full of bitterness and despair? How can a child blossom when more and more of her rights are abused everyday? Of all the social issues that face people nowadays, the question of children’s living conditions in the world challenges us more. In fact, all around the world, children come up against the quasi-daily violence of adults who throw them into the mouth of sexual abuse, business, trading and servant work.

In Togo, the most widespread abuse practice is using children within a household as servants. This practice, called “vilamégbo” in Ewe, a native language of southern Togo, was an old tradition, which occurred in poor families by placing their children in the houses of the richest families. These families were to undertake the child’s education in exchange for the maintenance of the house or the care of their children. But today, the practice has become corrupt, and many “vilamégbo” are simply reduced to slavery, sharing their long days between domestic drudgeries and the itinerant trading for the exclusive profit of the “tutors.”



During these interminable working days, violence and sometimes rapes are unfortunately added. These children are frequently victims as is illustrated by this testimony of Elikplim, a sixteen- year-old girl who is our neighbor’s servant in Lomé. She stated, “In the house, I must do everything while the children of my tutor sit in front of the TV or



have fun. She strikes me almost every day, especially when I do not manage to sell fritters that she entrusted to me.” Like Elikplim, there are many other children in Togo who are being denied their rights and thus deprived of a merry, successful childhood. Indeed, by going to and fro across the markets and the crossroads of Lomé, the capital of Togo, it is not astonishing to see these children, often younger than ten years old, wandering with goods on their head all day long seeking a hand which will deliver them from this constraint.

Although parents are well-informed about these facts, they cannot do anything to stop the abuse because, by living in extreme poverty, unfortunately, they cannot afford their children’s school tuition and other necessities. Therefore, they keep sending other children to relatives who swear to take care of them as a “good father of family.” But unfortunately, once these children arrive under their roof, they become what we call “vilamégbo” or “slave children.” For instance, as far as Powaiabèlè, a 15-year-old girl is concerned, her aunt had promised to her parents to teach her dressmaking since she arrived to Lomé from a small village located in North Togo. But, she was transformed into an itinerant salesgirl.



As we can see through the above examples, the practice of “vilamégbo” or slave “children” has become undoubtedly a school of suffering for many Togolese children diverting the practice from its original and principal goal. Conscious of the situation, the Togolese parliament voted a law in March 2005 repressing the traffic and all forms of children’s exploitation, but these practices are still going on in Togo. Even I was personally a victim. This fact occurred when I finished my studies in law at the

University of Lomé. At that time, I had no financial means to rent an apartment, so my uncle who owns a house asked me to live with him for my trial period as a bailiff. My first week with him was very peaceful for me, but as time went on, I was simply transformed into his servant. Therefore, I had to take care of the chores every morning and to do the other activities in the home before going to the trial period’s office. I will never forget how difficult that time of life was for me. Above all, as I look in the rear view mirror, I see many small souls that I left behind in Togo undergoing the same bitter experience. I can only say, Let us stop it! But, how can we stop it if we are so far from the field? I guess this is something many people may certainly ask me.



It is true. To come up with solutions appears difficult at first glance, mainly when we are living far from Togo. But do we have the right to live happily without doing anything for these innocent children whose only “sin” was to be born in poor families? Are we to allow them to suffer when under other skies children are living peacefully? According to Kudjo Atsu, a Togolese student at Carl Sandburg in Galesburg, IL, who was a “vilamégbo” when he was 5 years old, “It would be good to pay a visit to those children to know their problems, and in addition, create a center which can gather the children and take care of their education.” This point of view is also, to some extent, shared by Edoh Djikou, a Togolese lady and a student at BHC (Level 4) whose cousin was a “slave child” within a household at Sekondi Takoradi, Ghana, a neighbor country of Togo.

As far as I’m concerned, I think that eliminating the practice of slave children or “vilamégbo” will succeed only if we attack its first immediate cause, which is the poverty in many families in Togo. Non-profit organizations are working on it, but

unfortunately, they don't have the necessary funds to cover the needs. Therefore, I invite all good-willed people who want to help these children, to contact the below non-profit organizations which are making good in this area. By doing this, we can be sure that one day, the shadow will disappear in the life of these children and we will lead them to become veritable "fathers of the adult." We will be, therefore, proud of ourselves and can say without shame, "We made it happen!"

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 FAMME ONG
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DOROTHY, A MOM AMONG MOMS

BY: KOSSI KOUDJONOU

Dorothy is my mom who still lives in Togo (West Africa). I am very grateful for everything she has done for me. I would not be what I am today without her care. She not just gave me life, but she changed "impossible to possible" during my childhood. Even though I am far from her today, I want to say, "Mom, I thank you, and I really love you."



The youngest child of four, Dorothy gave up her studies at 14 to



support her mother who fell and broke her knee. Dorothy was needed to stay with her mom and take care of her. "We have judged that you should cease your studies to remain with Mom, and we will take care of both of you," declared Marc, her old and single brother during a family meeting with Maguy and Pauline, Dorothy's older

sisters. She accepted their suggestion as it is common for the youngest child to care for the parents in our culture. This was how the school career ended for a girl who had begun her studies well. Dorothy, however, would never give up her desire to get a better future.

Dorothy consecrated her teenager's life to the farm and to housework, hoping that her brother and her two sisters would take care of her and their mother, who were left in village. Unfortunately, as soon as her brother and two sisters left the village, they forgot Dorothy. At the age of twenty, during a funeral ceremony in another village, Dorothy met a handsome man who convinced her immediately to accept his proposal to "become his future wife, the mom of his children."

"When I met your father for the first time, I was so quiet to his speeches," my Mom said.



Due to the fact that her brother and sisters were not assisting her financially, Dorothy found that the time had come for her to have a nuclear family. Things went quickly, and a couple of months later, Dora married Emile, who would be my father. (People often call Dorothy, "Dora"). Emile was from a different village. Owing to Dorothy's responsibility to take care of her mom, she could not move and live with Emile, but this situation didn't trouble them. Things were going very well. Furthermore, Dorothy became pregnant.

One Sunday morning, the sun as usual, had risen from the East and made its path toward the zenith. After taking her early bath, Dorothy put on her beautiful jewelry and wore her best dress sewn in traditional style of bright colors to go to church. She was about to leave home when she felt sick and realized that she was having many contractions. Driven to the hospital, she gave birth to me and called me Kossi which means "Boy born on



Sunday.” As soon as Emile, my father was informed, he came to the hospital right a way with precious presents because he felt like a million dollars. (In my hometown, fathers are extremely happy when their first child is a boy.)

Emile was a bricklayer and worked a lot to provide for us. My mom, after she had me, continued to work as a farmer and neither of my parents complained. Would this harmony be for long time? Unfortunately, things went down hill when my father had to move to South Africa, which is very far from Togo. This journey should have been a source of happiness. Instead, it was a source of misfortune for my mom who had a four-month-old boy. Emile made all kinds of promises to Dorothy about supporting them. Furthermore, he did promise to bring them to South Africa as soon as possible.

Emile moved to South Africa where he worked and earned a lot of money. He sent money to Dorothy. The financial transactions passed through Abotsi, Dorothy’s uncle because Dorothy lived in a village where there was not a telephone, and her lack of schooling didn't allow her to understand the circuit of the finances. Uncle Abotsi abused his niece's ignorance. He became jealous of the wealth of his niece. Moreover, none of his three daughters had found a husband; therefore, he made a plan to separate Emile from Dorothy. After using many methods, he finally wrote a letter in my mom’s name to her husband, my father.

**Dear Emile
Hello!**

I have decided to write to you so that we “can put the points on the things.” I have told you that money that you send to us is not sufficient anymore, and this for many times through my Uncle Abotsi, but you continue by



decreasing the amount. I have decided to stop with you. I have already gotten a new husband, a public primary school director who will be able to take care of me. I will send your child to Uncle Abotsi who will take care of him. It is my first and last letter to you, my ex-husband.

Dorothy



The letter was sent to Emile in South Africa. Then, Uncle Abotsi found a man who would visit my mom, pretending to be a friend of Emile who had just come back from South Africa. This man informed my mom that Emile had a wife there with two children. My father received the letter and was frustrated. My mom became upset after hearing what was happening. All those things happened because Abotsi wanted Emile to forget his wife. My father, due to the letter, which he received, decided to get a divorce. My mom, helped by her Uncle Abotsi, divorced. Abandoned by her husband, forgotten by her sisters and her brother, Dorothy decided to raise me by her own capacity; I had never been sent to live with Uncle Abotsi. “Dorothy went to the farm at 6:00 am and came back at 5:00 pm. She sold her produce to the villagers and supported her mother, you, and herself,” explained Tseli, her pastor, to me.



Dorothy supported me until I finished my studies at the University of Lome (Togo).



She would never reconcile with my father who later remarried and had five boys. My mom also eventually got a new husband and four daughters. Uncle Abotsi died in 1993. Nobody found the truth of this “crime” until my father came back in October 1994. Both realized that Uncle Abotsi was the cause of their divorce.



Unfortunately, it was too late. My mom had raised me with a total attention, so I graduated from the university in 2002. Then, I won the Diversity-Visa to come to America. My mom was proud that, even though my father stopped supporting me, she did a great job raising me and making me a good man. “By the grace of God, you are what I want you to be,” my mom said. Today, I provide everything for her, and she is in freedom. I am so grateful to my mom, and I thank her for all things she has done for me. I find that my mom is an exemplary woman. She often circulates from village to village, town to town to encourage and to help women, especially those who have a similar situation as she did.



FAITH

By: Adriana Garcia

In a humble village in Mexico a long time ago, a woman called Teresa woke up praying to God for help to feed her twelve little children because the money that her husband had given her was gone, and she also owed a lot on the street market. As usual, she was cleaning the house that morning when she was asking God to find the way to buy food for her family. After finishing her household chores, holding an empty purse, she went to the street market. En route, along the river to downtown, Teresa begged God to get the precise money for food. She knew she needed only 37 cents. She was walking when she saw some coins shining on the ground, so she picked them up and found they were what she needed.

As with Teresa, interviewing several people, I found that Katsue, Lupe and Ms. Bollati have a specific idea of faith related to religion; similarly I do. For instance, Ms. Bollati said, “Faith means that you have a

belief in something that is higher than yourself. Something that is more powerful than you are. Something makes the meaning for everything to belong to us here.” However, my friend Sasan said that there exists another type of faith like faith in us or in other things. His answer is very close to one of the theological terms described in the Encyclopedia Americana; one of the meanings of faith is, “On many occasions a person uses the term faith to say, in effect, I believe in a certain person or thing. Faith, then, means confidence and trust in other.”



When I say, I believe in God I visualize Jesus Christ in my mind because it is joined directly to my religion that I grew up with like Lupe who is Teresa’s daughter; similarly, Ms. Bollati said that there is something higher than we are, God, who is love. In contrast to us, Katsue, who is from Japan, was raised in the Shinto religion, which has around 800 gods. For example, some of these are for nature like the God of Sun, God of Rain, etc. and some others for studying or guiding us after death.

The difference between faith and religion is indistinguishable for Katsue and me; however, Lupe and Ms. Bollati have another viewpoint. For example, Lupe said that there are many different religions, but faith is just one in what you believe; likewise, Ms. Bollati said, “Faith means that you have a belief in something that is higher than yourself, and religion is one way how you organize your life to make sure that you spend time developing your spiritual life.”

In the last few years, faith has become the base of my existence and gives me a reason for everything. “Everything I do is because of God because I want to do everything according to God,” Lupe said.



Likewise, Ms. Bollati said, “Faith is the center of my life that I cannot live without in

this life. I arrange my life in a priority order: first God, second my faith, then my beliefs, my family and my career.” In contrast, Katsue said that she actually doesn’t have a strong feeling about God, but she does follow some ancient Japanese traditions such as to ask a god for a good year at New Years.

I am sure everyone at least once has experienced a mystical meeting with God. For instance, Lupe said that one of the most remarkable experiences that she has had was “When I was five months pregnant with my first girl, I had a pain in my abdomen. I visited the doctor who told me that I needed surgery because it was appendicitis. The doctor explained to me the risks of the surgery, and he said that only one percent of the women who present this difficulty during pregnancy could keep their baby safe. I was so scared that I felt the pain was gone. Although my husband and my mother-in-law were supportive of me, I began to cry and entrusted my baby to God, asking Him to



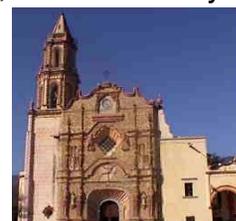
keep my baby safe. In that moment, I knew that there is nothing impossible for God. While the doctor was operating, he realized that the problem was not

appendicitis; instead, it was a tumor set in my left ovary. I am sure it was God. Now, my daughter is thirteen years old, and I am happy to have her with my other two daughters and my husband.”

Different from Lupe, Ms. Bollati has met God through people. One of the most interesting experiences that she has lived with in the past years was when she was dealing with a tough time, she was searching for an answer and one day she went to church and during the ceremony, the African priest said “Courage.” Ms. Bollati continued, “I realized that I had to be brave. The very next day, it was Monday when I came to school, and an old ESL student from Senegal came to visit me. I hadn’t seen

her in a long time, so it was unexpected to me. We had a conversation, and she began to talk about her life and everything that she was doing. When she had to go, I hugged her, and she walked out, and then she turned around and said, “Courage.” So, what was that? Why did she come to me? Where was that from?”

As many people in any place in the world, I have a story to tell. I was almost twenty-one years old when I went into a mission in the Sierra Gorda in Queretaro, Mexico in Holy Week. One of the most remarkable moments that I have experienced in that time was when my colleagues, an eight-year-old child from the community and I had to



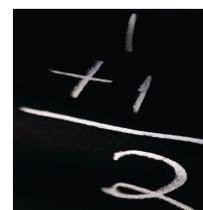
go to church at 5:00 am to pray the rosary with the habitants of the town, Ayutla. Our house lay in the other side of the village, so we had to walk for almost ten minutes to get there. While we were on way under the moonlight, three huge threatening dogs came to us and wouldn’t let us walk. We were so frightened because the dogs threatened to bite us in any second. Just then, I thought, God, let happen what you



want, and I took the child by his shoulders with confidence and peace and headed in front of the beasts. In that moment, they stopped

barking and calmed down. My partners followed us while the dogs turned and laid down on the ground, so we arrived at church without any injuries.

Also, I had to handle another dramatic episode there. It was around noon when we went to the river with some young people from the community, so they got into the river to swim, and stayed in the far side of the river. After a while I went to reach all the guys by the side, but I didn’t know how



the water pushed me into the middle and I was sinking while everyone came around me, but nobody tried to rescue me except for one young lady, Eloysa who was on the river side trying to get my hand. I was so mixed up in the water trying to jump or swim, but then I calmed down and said myself, God, whatever happens is what you want not what I want. At that moment, I felt a lot of peace and then I heard Eloysa asking for my hand. I remember that my fingers just touched hers, and somebody pulled me out.



SCHOOL SYSTEM IN TOGO VERSUS SCHOOL SYSTEM IN THE US

By: Kodjovi Agbemadon

Even though I had no idea about school, I discovered a desire to attend school when I was very young. My mother told me that when I started talking, I used to say all the time, "I'll go to school, and I'll go to White people's country." In fact, my dreams have become reality because I did go to school and obtained a Bachelor's degree, and I am now in America, which is considered by most Africans as, "White People's Country." Being enrolled in the ESL program for almost a year and half, I have found, besides a few similarities, that the school system in the U.S. is more flexible than the school system in my country of Togo in terms of education.



Similar to the U.S., the school system in Togo starts with elementary school in



which students are required to spend six years learning educational basics, but unlike the U.S. where people start their second educational step in junior high school and high

school, the second step in Togolese school

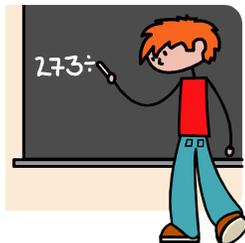
system is *college*, a four-year school, and *lycee*, a three-year school. Once in the lycee, the student can choose a short career by going to a technical lycee or going to a vocational lycee commonly called "academic lycee." After the lycee, which prepares them for the university, some of the students from technical lycee are ready to work while others continue their specialization in the university.

One big difference between students from both countries is the job opportunities that each of them have. In high school, a U.S. student is allowed to study and work in part-time jobs whereas the Togolese student, due to his status of full-time student, spends the nine months of school calendar only studying. When I was in *college*, I used to work at clothes outlet only during the summer break.

Another difference is the university. Just as the university in the U.S. is for four years, so is the university in Togo. Nevertheless, while two years of required general academic study are mandatory for the U.S. student, the Togolese university student first chooses his major, learn the basics of his field for two years, and specializes in this field in the last two years. For example, I graduated from the academic lycee and chose the economics field in the university. For two years, I studied the basics of economics including accounting, mathematics applied for economics, statistics and English applicable to business, and I chose to specialize in business and administration for another two years ending up with a bachelor's degree in this field. Kofi Anyage, an ESL student who studied law after his academic lycee, also spent his first two years of the university learning basics in law before ending his last two years of the university with a bachelor's degree in private law.



Unlike the U.S. schools, Togolese students in both public and private schools, including religious schools- Catholic and Islamic- are required to wear uniforms from elementary school to the lycee. This uniform, specific for each level of education, is essentially composed of kaki pants or shorts for males and a kaki skirt and white blouse for females. For instance, boys wear kaki shorts with a short-sleeved shirt in public elementary school, a pair of kaki trousers and short-sleeved shirt in public college and lycee. Girls, on the other hand wear a kaki dress in public elementary school, a kaki skirt and white blouse in public college and lycee. Private schools keep the kaki color but choose another color for the shirt and blouse to make a difference. For example, students at Notre Dame des Apotres, a Catholic college, wear kaki for pants and skirts and green shirts or blouses. When interviewed about the school uniform, Anyage said, "I particularly like the idea of uniform because it puts students in the same spot and avoids discrimination regarding wealth. It also makes students look professional and helps parents to save money on school clothes."



The school system in my country is also different from the school system in the U.S. in the teaching methods used. In fact, the school system in the U.S. is more practical. The teacher provides students with all the materials they need to learn the lesson and makes students practice what they learn. For instance, when we were learning how to do some research through the Internet, we were brought to a computer class at the Black Hawk College library where, learning

the research process, we practiced at the same time. In contrast, the Togolese school system is more theoretical and based on memorization. The teacher prepares his lesson, makes a lecture in class, explains the lesson and copies it on the board. The student copies the lesson in his notebook and memorizes it for quizzes, tests, or exams. When I was in college, I learned chemistry only in books and at school without any practice. I am able to give formulae, but I have never conducted experiments with them. However, in the US, students have more practice classes, and visual aids which help them comprehend the lessons.



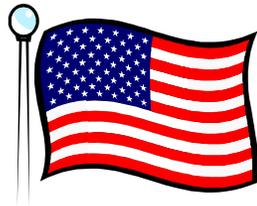
As Malcolm S. Forbes said, "Education's purpose is to replace an empty mind with an open one." Although America and Togo chose different systems to educate their population, the goals are the same. Similar to the U.S. student, the Togolese student learns basics and discovers sooner or later his skills, which help him to choose his career. However, I would like the school system in Togo to be more flexible and practical for its students.



VISA ISSUES

By: Charles .Adzalo

Before in Togo, it was very difficult to have visa to travel to U.S., but almost ten years ago, the U.S. government opened a new way for lucky people to enter the U.S. by the lottery visa. Nowadays they are approximately 50,000 Togolese in the U.S. You can find Togolese in Texas, Nebraska, Illinois, North Carolina, and New York. To add, there are approximately 300 hundred or 400 hundred Togolese in the Quad-Cities.



Today most Americans would ask themselves why there are a lot of Africans in the Quad Cities, especially Togolese. I am going to let them know about it. Each Year the U. S. Government organizes a lottery for the immigrant visa in my country. To be eligible for that visa, you have to fill out a form. You must have a high school diploma, or you must have two years of experience in your job. One day when I came to my mother, she asked me to fill out the form and try my chances to see what would happen. She said, "You are my only son; I expect to see you one day travel to the foreign country."

My mother brought me the form to fill out, and then I took it with my both hands. I said, "Mother, do not be anxious. We are in the hands of God. God is able to do whatever we can not do." I filled out the form and sent it to U.S. One year later, when I came back to school, I was at home when my mother approached me with an envelop that had my name on it. She told me I had won the lottery visa. When I opened the envelope, I found the U.S. government had scheduled me for an interview at the U.S. Embassy of Togo.

Before that, I had to go to Locko Donou clinic for a physical. After the physical examination, the doctor told me that I qualified for the first part. The day that I had the interview, it was June 18, 2002. I went to The Embassy of U S A in Togo.

Then when I entered the room, the first thing I saw, was President George W. Bush's photos on the wall, followed by President William Clinton's photos. The second thing I saw was U.S. flag.



Moreover, the room was so nice; I thought I could stay forever. The first thought that came up in my mind was, I have a big chance to enter the U.S. Embassy Consulate room which was not authorized for everybody in my country.



Furthermore, I saw a lot of people inside the room who were scheduled like I was. We sat down like we were in the line. One lady who worked there called us one by one and suddenly, she called the person who was in front of me, and I said in my mind that it would be my turn after him. Five minutes later, she called my name and I never hesitated to approach her at the desk. She started to interview me about my paper work. She just asked me only three questions: What was my name? How old was I? What led me to travel to U.S.?

I was able to answer her questions. Finally, fifteen minutes later, she told me that I qualified for my visa, and she shook my hand and said "People like you are needed in the U.S." She was very nice and friendly with me. From that day, my happiness kept improving until I got my visa and bought the ticket for my journey to U.S. The day I took the plane, I said, "All my suffering has ended." This is the reason why I became permanent resident in this country.



I came to this country with a legal immigrant visa, and I will thank my God to guide me to be a good citizen.

HOW I GOT RESCUED BY THE US MARINES

By: Paul Khairallah

In the summer of 2006, after I graduated from high school, I decided to go back to Lebanon for one month to visit my mother before I started college. My flight was on June 6 in the morning. I traveled from Moline to Chicago then from Chicago to Milan, Italy and then to Lebanon.



For three weeks in Lebanon, I enjoyed spending the days with my friends by swimming in the warm Mediterranean Ocean and sitting under the burning sun, enjoying my ice-cold beer. Then at night, we would meet again and we go to the coffee tents on the beach.

One night, after my dad went back to the U.S., my friends and I planned to spend the next day in the middle of the ocean in my friend's boat. My friend planned this as my goodbye party because my flight was coming in three days. That morning about nine o'clock we heard on the T. V. that



Hezbollah, a group within the government, shot twice at Israel for no reason. The Lebanese people and the army were scared because they didn't know what was going on and why

Hezbollah shot at Israel.

Before noon, I called my friends and asked them if they still wanted to go. They said, "Yes." We got in the boat, and we left the marina, but five minutes later, we saw a Lebanese army boat coming toward us, and the soldiers told us that we couldn't leave the shore and had to go back and dock the boat.

After we docked the boat, we went to the beach to swim like other people. After half an hour, we heard the sound of an



airplane coming toward us. We got scared. Ten seconds later, the jet flew straight over our heads; it was so close that I could actually

see the two rockets hanging on each side of it, and the big long tank placed in the middle of those two rockets. It was an F16. Then two seconds after it passed, we heard a sudden boom!!! We felt the whole ocean shaking, and we saw a giant black mushroom rising toward the sky from a hill of a mountain. The bomb was dropped about a mile and a half away of us. Everyone began running toward a safe place, behind the walls, between buildings and toward their houses.

I finally made it to my dad's house. While I was taking a shower, the phone and the doorbell wouldn't stop ringing. After I opened the door, I saw my cousin shaking and telling me that he was supposed to help me pack my clothes and take me to my mom who was waiting for me. When we were reunited, she said, "We are heading to Beirut so you can spend the night close to the airport before they start to bomb the bridges so you won't miss your flight."



On our way to Beirut, at 90 MPH, our car broke down. Luckily, one guy stopped by and helped us fix it; the gasoline pipe was broken. On our way, we received a phone



call from my aunt's husband who was working for the Lebanese police. He asked us if we passed Saida Highway. We said, "We just did."

He said, "Good, don't stop. Keep going and hurry up a little bit." Then less

than a minute after he talked with us, we heard sudden “boom” and the whole car shook while we were driving. We knew that Saida Highway Bridge had been bombed.

Finally, we got to my aunt’s house in Beirut where we were joined by my cousin, Souraya, who would travel to the U.S. with me. The next day, just one day before my flight, we heard on the news that the Jewish army was going to bomb the airport soon. It happened after four hours. I was so mad and frustrated because my flight was the next day. I needed to leave, but now couldn’t go. I still had to go register for my college classes. Also, the five weeks that I took off from my job were over. I didn’t know what I was going to do, so I called the U.S. Embassy and I talked with them because I heard that they were taking American citizens back to the U.S. They said, “Do you have a passport?”

I said, “No, but I have my green card with me.”

They said, “Sorry, priority is for the people with a passport.”

After that, we called the Abo Merhi Cruise Lines. The owner has one of the biggest cruise companies in Lebanon, and we were hoping he could get my cousin and me out of Lebanon. Luckily, my aunt’s husband and his brother know that guy. He said, “I am very sorry about that, but there is nothing I can do right now because the U.S. Marines rented the boat from us, but let me see what I can do for you.”

A half-hour later, he called. He said, “The only thing I can do, is to have Paul and Souraya take the place of two of my employees that work on the cruise ship.”

We went right to his office and finished up all of our papers for the next day trip. My cousin and I had to pay \$2000 each just to



get on the boat without getting checked by the U.S. Marines. At eight o’clock the next day, my mom took me to the port, with my luggage to get into the ship with the employees. When we were entering the boat, we saw all of the U.S. Marines searching all the people before they got into the boat, checking out their papers and crossing of their names from the list. At noon, the ship started to sail. The ship was filled with the U.S. Marines. They were standing everywhere on the outside of the boats, looking around the area with binoculars to see if there were any Israeli planes flying around. Also, we were followed by a U.S. helicopter all the way, until we passed the border of Lebanon.

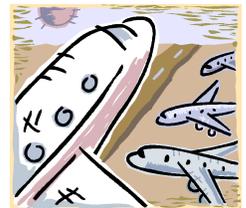
On our way to the open seawater, we saw two huge submersible boats, and a U.S. Navy ship. It took us eleven hours sailing from the port of Beirut to the Port of Larnaca in Cyprus.

When we got to Larnaka, we called my cousin’s uncle, so he came to the airport to meet us and help us through the problems that we had in the airport because, neither of us had a US passport. After we struggled for half hour, the officials let us go. On the outside of the port, there were four buses waiting for us to take us to the airport in Lymasol.

After getting to Lymasol, we had to wait six hours to board. From Lymasol we flew to an army airport in Germany. We rested for an hour while the crew cleaned the plane and fueled it. Finally, we were able to drink water and eat pretzels. Then we got back into the plane heading to the New Jersey airport. Luckily, we knew some people, on the plane, and they let us go to their house where we could sleep until we found a flight to Moline.



It took us four and a half days in the sea, in the air, and on the roads from leaving





the port of Beirut until we got to New Jersey. The minute the plane landed in New Jersey, I felt happy, and safe



DIFFICULTIES FACED BY EXCHANGE STUDENTS.

By: Omar Badam Gul

My name is Omar Badam Gul. I am a student at Black Hawk College. I came from Uzbekistan, which is located in Central Asia, north of Afghanistan. My family and I moved to United States in November 3, 2003. I started going to high school as a junior, and I took a couple of summer classes to get the credits



that I needed for my classes in order to graduate from high school. I was so nervous at first when I went to high school, and I couldn't understand what people were saying or what was going on around me. I felt like I was trapped inside of something that there no way out. I realized that the only way out was to learn the language as soon as possible.

During my freshman year in high school in Uzbekistan, I took additional an English course outside of school, but even though the classes were three times a week, I went there only once a week. Every other time the class was cancelled or the teacher didn't show up or I didn't show up because I was lazy, and I never thought about moving to United States. I didn't really think I needed to learn English. In addition, we used to learn British English, which is a lot different than American English. After six months at Rock Island High School, I started to pick up some English from other students around me.



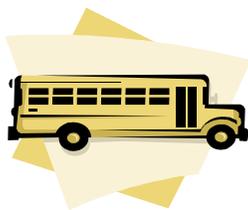
Today I am writing about some other students from other countries that are going to school at Black Hawk College. I wanted to know how they felt when they came to the United States. I wanted to know if it was the same way I felt when I came here. I interviewed an exchange student from Japan. Her name is Katuse Tada, but she prefers to go by "Kat." She has been a student at Black Hawk College for almost two years, but every summer she goes back to her parents. While she is in U.S., she lives with her host parents. Kat says, "It's not hard to stay with a family that I didn't know at all." According to Kat, "My host family treats me like one of them." Even though living with a host family hasn't been difficult, her first day in American school was.

When she came to her first class, she didn't think about anything else. She just had fear and curiosity. Her first day in college looked the same way as mine in



high school. I asked Kat how an American school is different than hers and she said, "The schools in Japan don't give a lot of homework." In Japan, entering the University is very difficult because

students have to take an entrance examination. Japanese students study well for the entrance exam, but after entering the University, most students don't study well because it's easy for them to graduate. The hard part was entering the college or university. Kat said, "However, in American schools, the students can enter the college easily, but they can not graduate easily. It's exactly the opposite."



Another question that I asked Kat was, "Why would you come to study here instead of your own country?" Kat said, "I want to get a qualification in America because when I get the qualification, I will be able to speak English much better."

Kat's favorite things to do in United States are to go to different festivals or visit her friends or just go out dancing in the clubs. She likes to chit-chat with her friends



and teachers in school because she can learn English much better when she is around them, and also they can correct her words or

teach her how to pronounce the words. Kat is a friendly person, and she likes to meet new people and find out a lot of things about them or about their country. The only place that she has been in United States is the Quad Cities; she hasn't been in any other states yet. Kat says, "It's good to have a lot of different people from other countries around me at Black Hawk College."



I asked her: "What's your major?" Kat said, "My first goal is to learn English. After I learn English well, I am going to choose my career." She is the same way as me. I haven't decided what major I am going to study.

The last thing I asked Kat was, "What do you think is the most important thing



about representing your country?" Kat said, "I think we need to be able to explain the history of our country." Kat said that when our ancestors moved to

other countries, they were building everything step by step. Telling people how our ancestors established themselves in another country is important because of pride.

In conclusion, I am glad that Kat is one of my classmates. Every day I learn a lot of new things about her and about her country. She learns a lot about my country, so we both have something in common.



MY FAVORITE SPORT

By: Katsue Tada

When I was in Japan, I didn't try to do judo. My image of people who practiced it was that they were scary and strong because most judo players have big muscles and big bodies. I had some girl friends, who were doing judo in school, but they were not feminine in my mind, and I was not interested in judo. However, when I came to the U.S., I toured a judo class for the first time because of my boyfriend. My boyfriend has been doing judo for 15 years, and he invited me to try it. When I saw the



judo skills, I thought these were so cool because the judo players threw their opponent strongly and speedily using skills that I didn't know, and also I thought if a girl could do that, it was going to be cool, so I decided to try judo.

I didn't know about judo rules until I began judo, but my judo classmates taught me about them. In judo, I am the winner if I throw my opponent and put my opponent on his back using judo skills while I control my opponent's movement, or I pin my opponent to the floor for 25 seconds. Also, my judo classmates taught me that Judo has some ranks indicated by the color of the belt. I am a white belt now because I am a beginner, but as I become more skillful, I can get the next color belt, yellow. The next belts are

orange, green, blue, purple, brown, and black. The black belt is the highest rank, so I am practicing to get a black belt.

My classmate, Paul Khairallah, said to me "I don't know the differences among Judo, Karate and Tae Kwon Do. They seem the same martial art." Also, Omar Badam Gul said, "Judo players practice the kicks, punches, chops and thrusts." I think most people may think that same way because I



also didn't know about the differences among these martial arts are. However, they are totally different because of different rules. In a Judo match, the Judo player can use the "throws" and "holds"

skills, and pin the opponent on the floor, but they mustn't use kicks and punches like in Karate and Tae Kwon Do. Also, they don't wear protective body and headgear like they do in Tae Kwon Do. Unlike Judo, Karate and Tae Kwon Do players can use the kick and punch skills, but they don't use those Judo skills. Also, the Judo uniform is thicker than the Karate and Tae Kwon Do uniforms. Thus, Judo, Karate, and Tae Kwon Do seem similar, but they are completely different sports.

My Judo classmates asked me, "Why do the Japanese only wear a white-gi in Japan? In an international game as such the Olympics, the blue-gi is for one player and the white-gi is for the opponent to distinguish the players easily." When I heard that, I realized the Japanese usually only wear the white-gi. In Japan, the Japanese never wear a blue-gi because of tradition. The white color expresses clarity and purity for the Japanese, and I heard an interesting reason why the judo-gi is white from my Japanese friend. According to Japanese tradition, after a person dies, we put the body, wearing a white kimono, with many



flowers and a little money in the coffin. In the past, the Japanese people thought that if a judo player died in a match, other people could not take off that player's gi because of rigor mortis. People had to put player's body wearing the white-gi into the coffin. The body could be buried properly. I don't know if that is really true, but it was



interesting for me.



I am taking judo class three times a week with about ten men. I am the only woman. Judo is an attractive sport for me because a small girl like me can throw a big man

easily using judo skills. When I throw my opponent who is a big man, I usually get confidence; I can say, "I may be strong actually." Also, I have to use all parts of my muscles while doing judo, so I can build a well-balanced body. When I began to do judo, I had many bruises all over because my body was not strong, but in the course of practice, my body has become strong. Now, I have the muscles all over instead of bruises and fat. However, judo's charm is not only that. Sasan, my classmate from Iran, who has known judo since he was 14 years old, said, "I learned Judo has three basic rules: power, technique, and speed, but the most important rule of judo is respect and humility. I love to do judo because judo is the way you can challenge, propel and respect other people at the same time." His master was a sheriff officer who had gotten a black belt in Japan, and he was the head of Judo Federation of Iran. Sasan was proud to be his student. I agree with his opinion because I also feel that I have learned to respect and to become strong from judo.





While doing judo, I usually realize my fear and my slovenly and haughty attitude. In the judo class, we do a practice called, "randori." In this practice two players try their own skills against each other like in a match. My opponent was much stronger than me, so I should have done randori without fear because my opponent knew my ability, but I couldn't. I noticed that I was not afraid of my opponent, but I was afraid of challenging myself. Moreover, when my opponent falls, I sometimes get annoyed at my opponent because I know my opponent falls down on purpose. I want to throw my opponent because of my ability, but this is haughty thinking because I am a beginner. I sometimes forget my opponent practices with me to help me. After doing randori, I sometimes flopped on floor slovenly because I was very tired, but I shouldn't have done that because nobody behaved like me. I noticed my behavior expressed my thinking; it showed soft-mindedness. When I realized my fear and my slovenly and haughty attitude, I felt great shame in front of my judo classmates, but I also knew that this realization was connected to my improvement. I learned about my negative mind set and my rude behavior from judo. I think if I am thinking about myself, I will not improve personally and make a good relationship with my judo classmates. I need to respect them. I also think that I didn't have a strong spirit before I began doing judo. It's the most attractive point about judo for me.

Everybody has been surprised when I tell him or her that I am taking a judo class because although people don't know a lot about judo, they know judo is a martial art. When they hear about judo, they have some stereotypes about me because I am a girl. However, Adriana Garcia, who is my lovely classmate, gave me her image of judo. "Talking about judo, I believe judo is an integrated sport that combines spirit, power, brain and body, but more than that, it lets everyone develop his or her abilities or

capacities. At least, that's what I learned from my classmate, Kat. Judo sounds like an exciting sport by the way Kat has described it. Women are able to do anything. They can perform any kind of sport as well as men do." When I heard that, I was so happy.

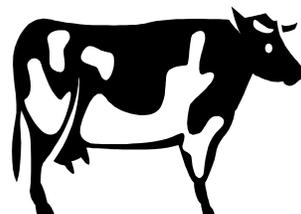
I like to do judo since I can do it everyday. Judo is more interesting when you think about it. If you are interested in a martial art, why don't you try judo? If you do judo, you will get great judo skills and a healthy body; also, you will be able to improve your personality. Trying something doesn't have to be futile for you. Try judo!!



COWBERTHA: A FABLE

By: Luis Silva

Cowbertha was a lazy and disobedient young white and brown cow who lived with her parents in a small old farm. She was always complaining of the peaceful life in the farm because Cowbertha wanted to go to Cowlywood to be a famous cow



celebrity. She would dream every day, imaging her picture on spectacularly big billboards around the country. She believed that she didn't have to do anything to be a well-known luminary. Her parents told her that study and hard work are the best ways to prepare for the future, but she was very lazy and careless and didn't listen to any of her parent's advice.

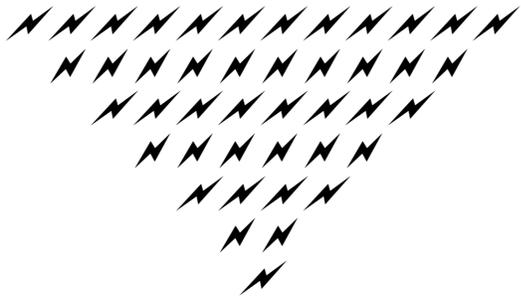
One day when she was daydreaming alone in the farm's grassy green field, a deceitful big bull



named Bullberth approached her. Bullberth had been observing Cowbertha for many days until he noticed that she was the naive cow that he was seeking. Easily, he convinced Cowbertha about how fast he could transform her in to a famous Cowlywood star. Cowbertha had packed her belongings when her mother found her leaving the farm. Her mother tried to stop Cowbertha, but she was a very obstinate cow, and her mother couldn't stop her. Before she left the farm, she told her mother that in a little time she would see her on the billboards.

After some days passed, Cowbertha's dreams finally came true. She must have done something right because her picture was on all the national billboards.

She was a tasty, big, and juicy round double-meat hamburger.



Kouete Nicoue



I came here at the end of 2004 from Togo where I was majoring in biology at the University of Lome. My family was living here for a while before I came; this made things easier for my arrival. I like working on the computer, and my studies will involve something with computers.

Adriana Garcia

I come from Mexico. As for hobbies, I like reading novels, swimming, and spending my free time with my friends and my family. I have been living in America for two years, and my wishes are to learn how to play the piano and to earn a Master's degree in science in the USA.



Daniel Ding



I'm from Sudan, Eastern Africa. I lived in a refugee camp in Kenya for ten years before coming to the US in February 2006. I really like the American spring season because of its magnificent blossoms. I take pleasure in associating with my American family. My ambition is to earn a degree in Computer Information Management. Watching TV, biking, reading books, and shopping are my chief pleasures. I speak English, Swahili, Arabic, and Dinka. Spanish is my next goal. I am happy to be part of this great nation.

Kofi Anyage



My first name is Kofi, but I'm known as Dedier. I'm from Togo and have been living in America almost two years with my wife, Gloria. I graduated in Public Law and was a law teacher in my country before moving to the United States. As for hobbies, I like soccer, traveling and listening to gospel music. My goal is to earn a degree in International relations with a focus on human rights.

Kossi Koudjonou

According to our culture in Togo, people are named by the day of the week they were born. People call me Kossi because I was born on Sunday, but Florian is my common name. I graduated in management at University of Lome before coming to US in July 2004. I work full-time at Farmland Foods in Monmouth. I am the president of the Moline chapter of P.A.D. (Partners for Africa Development). Moreover, I am the General Secretary Assistant of African United of the Quad Cities. I am married and have two children: Jonathan and Brightney (Bright). My goal is to become a great leader to move the world toward "positive actions," like Martin Luther King. Soccer is my favorite sport.



Paul Khairallah



I moved to the USA in July 2002. Right now, I am 19 years old. I have been taking ESL classes and non-ESL classes since I came to the US. My

current goal is to get a degree in architecture.

Katsue Tada

I am from Japan. My hobbies are shopping, judo, and talking with friends. When I was in Japan, I used to go out on weekends with my friends; we enjoyed eating in restaurants. I've been living in America since May 2006 with a host family, which takes care of me perfectly.



Kodjovi Agbemadin



My name is Kodjovi Agbemadin. I am originally from Togo. I have been living in the US for two years. I like music, especially gospel, and I like to hang around my

friends. My goal is to enter the American business world.

Yawo Adzalo

Yawo is known as Charles. He is from Togo. He works full-time and hopes to major in electrical engineering. He plays tennis, listens to music, and likes to dance.



Luis Silva (not pictured)

Luis has been observing Writing II. Because the class has enjoyed his presence, we asked if he would be willing to contribute something for the Newsletter. He agreed to a fable, which he wrote in his Grammar II class. Luis is a computer consultant from Mexico. He enjoys watching science-fiction movies and computer related technology.

Anne Ney (not pictured)

Anne has worked in a variety of capacities at BHC since 1988 and tutored in the ESL Program on the Quad Cities campus for the last three years. She has two grown sons. She loves to travel and will be visiting China in May. In addition to travel, Anne enjoys community cultural events and talking with people of diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds.

Mohamad Omar Badamge (not pictured)

Mohamad is known as Omar. He is originally from Afghanistan. He lives with his family after arriving the US a few years ago. He likes to play soccer and video games as well as surf the Internet.

Each semester the Writing II students create the ESL newsletter. We are indebted to Anne Bollati, Anne Ney, Sheryl Gragg, and Akiko Edmondson for their assistance. We also appreciate the photos taken by Mike Winter.
--Karen Hindhede, Writing II instructor

ESL

English as a Second Language Program

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION:

The ESL program is an academic program designed for non-native speakers and international students who need English skills to participate in American society, to enroll in vocational or academic programs at the college level, or to enter or advance in the workplace. Students will attain and refine language and study skills as well as deepen their knowledge of U. S. culture through a series of specially designed courses in sentence structure, reading, writing, speaking, listening, pronunciation, and conversation. Students have access to computer, video, and lab equipment through the Independent Learning Center. Individual and group tutoring can be arranged free of charge for any student needing help. Students may also participate in college clubs and attend all extra-curricular activities.

TESTING:

Students do not need to present a TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) score to enter Black Hawk College's ESL program, but students should have a beginning knowledge of English equivalent to 430 or 117 on the TOEFL to move through the program efficiently. If the student has taken the TOEFL, he/she should report the score to the ESL Coordinator, for this and other test scores will help place the student accurately in the program. Before class registration, all first-semester students will be given the Michigan Test of English Language Proficiency. The test is composed of three segments:

1. Michigan Test of Aural Comprehension (listening)
2. Michigan Test of English Language Proficiency (grammar, vocabulary, reading)
3. Writing Sample (composition)

Placement on the test is as follows:

60 or below	beginning level
60 to 69	intermediate level
70 to 80	advanced
80 or above	academic program

PROGRAM PROFILE:

Students attend classes 5 days per week. The average class size is small and the average course load is three hours each day. Students are given daily assignments as well as special projects that are completed outside of class. Students take the equivalent of 12 credit hours for a full class load. Upon finishing the program, students receive a certificate of completion at the spring graduation ceremony.

INTERMEDIATE ESL:

Students who enter this level have decided to begin academic or vocational programs. All reading, writing, speaking, listening, and sentence structure activities are taught in the context of a variety of academic disciplines. Students study the simple sentence from a linguistic perspective, write paragraphs using all rhetorical modes, write college essays, give 5 to 10 minute oral presentations, use the computerized library resources, listen to academic lectures and take notes.

Courses of this level: ESL 061 Simple Sentence Structure
ESL 063 Reading I
ESL 065 Writing I
ESL 067 Listening/Speaking I
ESL 069 Pronunciation and Conversation

ADVANCED ESL:

Students in this level advance their language skills and knowledge of the academic culture so that they can enter academic classes or vocational programs. They study complex sentence structure, write documented academic essays and research papers, read a variety of texts from many disciplines, read a novel, listen to lectures and take notes, and give 10—15 minute speeches. Students at this level participate in a number of special projects. They create an ESL newsletter that is distributed campus-wide; listen to lectures given by Black Hawk College professors, and interview professionals in their chosen fields. Students take field trips related to class readings.

Courses of this level: ESL 073 Reading II
ESL 075 Writing II
▲ COMM 105/ESL 072
Essentials of English/Grammar II
▲ COMM 100/ESL 078
Communication Skills/
Listening/Speaking II

* All of these courses are offered at Black Hawk College.
▲ Students receive 3 transferable credits for each of these courses.

For more information contact:

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