



Finding Time for English Class

Stefany Granados Merino

BEFORE YOU READ: How do you “find time” for class? What do you give up to get to class? How do you decide how to prioritize your time?

Taking Advantage of Opportunities

This country gives us many opportunities. Sometimes we have opportunities, and we don’t see them. Since I came to the U.S. in March 2013, one of my goals has been to learn English. I live in Chelsea, Massachusetts. Many Hispanic people live here, and there are many programs that help our community.

When I first came to the U.S., I wanted to have two or three jobs so that I could pay all my debts quickly. But I could have only one job because I am a single mother. My son was three years old, and I had to support him and myself. At the same time, I needed to study English so I could talk to my son’s doctor. I knew someday he would go to school, and I wanted to be able to talk to his teacher.

Juggling

I had to juggle working, taking care of my son, and going to English class. It was hard, but I

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knew it would all be worth doing. When I was tired, I just thought about who I want to be in the future. My job finished at 7 pm, but I asked my boss if I could leave at 5:50, so I could get to English class by 6:00. My boss said yes. She has always been a good person. I will always be thankful to her.

The first school I went to was called the Williams School. I went every Tuesday and Thursday after work, from 6:00 to 9:00 pm. I paid



\$40 for two months. I met great people and made new friends.

When I finished that class, someone told me about a program that offered free classes – Centro Latino. I registered, and they called me to say that they had accepted me. One of the best things was that they had free child care while I was taking class. Unfortunately, they closed in 2015, but they put me and all my classmates in Bunker Hill Community College. I finished my last level with them in 2017.

Recommitting to Learning English

After that, I got pregnant and I decided to take a break to take care of my children and to enjoy being with my partner as a family. For three years, I did not study English. At my job, most people spoke Spanish, so I realized that if I wanted to learn English, I needed to find another class.

In 2019, I registered for the Intergenerational Literacy Program (ILP). I was on a waiting list for one year, and then they finally called me. I am still there today, and I will continue. I feel very comfortable with my teacher and all my classmates. The ILP helps us not only with English class but also to find jobs and to progress in our careers. They always find a way to help us.

In the beginning when I started to study, I did not understand anything in English. I always got mixed up in class. Learning English is not easy. But little by little, if we want, we can do it. In this program where I continue studying, I have improved my English. By my own measure, my comprehension for reading and listening is around 85%, my grammar is 75%, and my speaking is 65%. But I hope to get to 99% for everything.

I feel so proud of myself, and I will continue trying to do my best every day to help my Hispanic community. If possible, I hope to be an interpreter or an English teacher.



This picture of Stefany and her family was published with her other Change Agent article, “A Sad Hard Story: Will It Turn Out Well?” It is on p. 12 of [Issue 56](#) and is available in [PDF](#) and [audio](#). You need to log in to access this content. Log in with the credentials provided by your program or state, or buy a [subscription](#) for just \$30 per teacher per year. Students log in for free using their teacher’s credentials.

Stefany Granados Merino is a student at the Intergenerational Literacy Program in Chelsea, MA. She is 34 years old, and she is a person who never gives up. She loves to learn new things, and she is so proud that her English has improved. She would like to continue studying as long as possible.

What Do You Juggle?

What are some of the ways Stefany manages herself and her time? Be detailed and specific.

Stefany says she had “to juggle working, taking care of [her] son, and going to English class.” What do you have to juggle in your life?

In English, we sometimes use “dropping the ball” as a metaphor for not getting something done. Try using the metaphor in a few of your own sentences.

