

## From Dreaming to Doing

When I was a student at college, my friend told me about her sister who was studying in the USA and I started to dream of studying there also to pursue advanced degrees. I will stay true to my dream and do whatever I can to achieve it. I kept this dream in front of my eyes, so I graduated with high grades. I was picked from more than 20,000 students to get a scholarship to study in the USA. Now I feel that I put my feet on the first step to achieve my goal.

It was not easy to make this decision to travel abroad for the first time in my life. I prepared and dreamed about this day with happiness and excitement to see the world and learn new things. However, not everything happens as we want it to be. There are obstacles that will appear, but we need to overcome them. In my country, I used to be surrounded by my family and get help and support from them, but when I arrived at the Washington airport, I asked myself how I could go to Delaware. I realized that I was alone now, and I needed to make all these decisions by myself. At first, I could not do everything by myself. I called my mother every day to ask her what I should do about even simple things such as making food and going to different places. However, day after day I noticed that I was becoming a stronger and more independent woman who could stand on her own feet without needing help. These situations have shaped me and made me a more responsible person.

Struggling with English before I came to the USA, I had only the basics in English that I could use to deal with others. However, once I arrived here, I found English was completely different from what I had thought it was. One day, an American friend invited me to a party, but I could not fit in with them. I felt frustrated because I had studied hard to improve my English, but I still faced difficulty. Sometimes I ask myself if I am in the right place or not and if I can do

it. However, I was lucky that I was surrounded by a good host family, teachers, tutors, and friends who always supported me and encouraged me to persevere. In addition, I changed my idea about how difficult English was, and suddenly everything was much easier for me. I learned how important it is to be more positive and how that would affect my life. In conclusion, learning English in the ELI has taught me a lot of things, not just English but also about life. I have expanded my knowledge about other topics that have opened my eyes about my life.

Shutting down school and switching from in-person classes to online classes was not easy, especially for learners of languages. Learning behind these screens has been difficult. When we communicate with each other, we sometimes have difficulty understanding each other and that is what makes the process is hard. Avoiding distractions such as the phone in order to focus on my lessons is also not easy. In the ELI, there are teachers who come up with creative ways to deal with these issues and make the classes fun and enjoyable. Furthermore, with online learning, I have built a strong relationship with my tutors that would never have happened if there had been no online classes. I spend 2 to 3 hours a day with them, and I learn many things from them that I could not learn from studying or traveling.

Last year was different for me not just because I live in the USA, but also because of the pandemic that has happened all over the world. When the pandemic started, I decided to go back to my country. I thought it would be safer for me if I were with my family and in my country. One day I received the news that all my family had gotten COVID-19. So, I canceled all my plans and stayed here. During this time, I was very depressed about the death, the loss of jobs, and the difficulty of getting food and supplies. Also, I was wondering if I would ever see my family again. After that I shared my feelings and fears about Covid-19 with my teacher, and she gave me advice that I believe changed my life forever. She told me it was time to reevaluate my

life, ignore the media, and just look at myself and build good habits. After her advice I started to look for new activities that I could do during this time, such as meditation and yoga, which have become a part of my life. Finally, I realize that Coronavirus has reminded us to be grateful for what we have and not take any of it for granted.

In conclusion, I think that this is one of the best decisions that I have ever made because living in the USA and studying at the ELI have transformed and changed me a lot, and these enormous changes will shape me in a great way. The ELI has given me so much, and I am happy and excited to say that I will be a member of UD next fall semester.