

Interviewee: Olga Acuna (ESL coordinator)

Interviewer: Abelid Dominguez

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AD: What was your first involvement in Century High School?

OA: My first involvement was when I asked to be transferred to Century to become a Spanish teacher.

AD: Why did you choose to come here?

OA: Because as I said before, I wanted to be a high level Spanish teacher, so I requested my change to Century and they gave it to me.

AD: What other schools have you been involved with?

OA: I was working in Glenco, there I was involved with the special ^{ed} students. From there I got a lot of experience.

AD: How would you compare that experience to your experience at Century?

OA: I like Century very much, is a good school; Glenco was a good school as well, so in both, I have had really good experiences, and a good time.

AD: I understand you are the ESL coordinator here at Century. What is the ESL program?

OA: The ESL program, is a program designed to teach new comers who don't speak the language to learn it. (English as a Second Language).

AD: How did you become involved with the ESL program?

OA: When I started to teach at Century, I was a Spanish teacher, but then I got interested in the ESL program because I myself was part of it once and I know what is like to come to another country without knowing the language. So I wanted to teach other students who don't speak English.

AD: How did the ESL program develop?

OA: I don't know, when I came 3 years ago, the ESL program was already part of Century's migrant program.

AD: How do you decide whether a student is eligible for the ESL program?

OA: Well, they are requested to take a test in which we determine the level of English they have and how much they know the language. Having the results of the tests, we determine the class they have to take, it could be ESL 1 or 4, it depends.

AD: Is there a time span in which the ESL students remain in the program?

OA: No, some students learn the language pretty fast, some others can even take 6 years to learn the language fluently. Our goal is that they will be out of the program in 2 years or less.

AD: Are the ESL students required to take a third language?

OA: No, but we encourage them to take another language if they feel comfortable in doing so, and we have had students who decide to take another language while they learn English.

AD: When it comes to forecasting for the next school year, are the ESL students allowed to elect their classes? Are they allowed to participate in the school activities?

OA: Yes, they can choose all of their elective classes, some classes we have to choose for them, like English or Social Studies. And yes, they are allowed to participate in the school activities. We are always encouraging them to be involved in leadership, Jax Crew, and Sports.

AD: How many people from the school staff are actively involved in the program?

OA: Currently, about 20% of the staffs plays some ^{role} in the ESL program. There is a ESL Health, ESL Sciences, ESL Social Studies and of course, ESL (1,2,3&4).

AD: How do you feel the ESL program has been handled here at Century, do you feel the program gets the attention it deserves?

OA: Well, compared to other schools the ESL program gets the attention it deserves, we are treated as part of the Century staff, and have a voice in the school's decisions regarding the ESL program. Though there are always things and issues as in any other school, and that is expected, but we are OK.

AD: Do you think the ESL program helps students assimilate the culture?

OA: We try our best in teaching the students to assimilate the culture. We want them to feel that they belong to some place, and want to help them in their new experience.

AD: Is there anything else that you want to say that has yet not been asked?

OA: (Thought for a moment) You asked really good questions... Well, the ESL program is one of the best programs in the District and we are really fortunate to have the best

ESL program of all the High Schools. We have clubs and we offer tutoring after school and so far we are the only school that offers that to students, we are really proud of that.

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