

English as a Second Language Classes Provide Valuable Learning Opportunity – Father Hugo Erazo

Written by Melissa Lachcik

Father Hugo Erazo, O.S.A. is a priest at St. Jude Catholic Church in New Lenox, Ill. Earlier this year, he was assigned to serve at this parish from his Augustinian order in Peru, South America. Father Hugo speaks Spanish and at the time had limited familiarity with the English language. However, he would need to become more fluent in English in order to conduct mass and communicate with parishioners.

He was referred to JJC's ESL program from an area high school teacher. The timing was perfect for him to attend an information session and enroll in classes. Father Hugo is having a positive experience in the program. He explains how this program has helped him with reading, writing, speaking and comprehending the English language.

The instructors provide a relaxed atmosphere and are patient when students are learning these new skills. Father Hugo also enjoys the camaraderie with his fellow classmates. He said, "It is a rich experience for me with my classmates because they are from different countries in the world and we explain in our class about our countries. We also share our customs with each other. I like that." He explains how this interaction helps him converse in social settings in addition to the books, videos and other learning resources that are utilized.

He is continuing with ESL classes this Fall to build on his skills. Father Robert Basler, O.S.A. who is the pastor at St. Jude Catholic Church added that Father Hugo is "Happy, Healthy and Holy." When Father Hugo talks about the ESL program at Joliet Junior College, his eyes light up. He is very grateful for his experience at JJC and expressed his thankfulness that these classes are available to him at no cost. He said, "I appreciate this great opportunity to learn English."

The ESL program assists individuals who need to improve their English skills for academic, professional, or personal purposes. These classes are designed for all non-native English speaking adults. Six levels of instruction (beginning through advanced) are offered. Students are placed according to levels via standardized testing. Instruction is offered 4-12 hours per week. Integrated skill modules focus on listening, speaking/pronunciation, reading/vocabulary, and writing/grammar.

JJC's Dean, Applied Arts, Workforce Education & Training, Amy Murphy said, "The ESL program is just one of many excellent programs that we have available through our Department of Adult Education & Literacy." She continued, "It's very rewarding when we find out from our students how we helped to make a difference in their life. We want our community to know that we are here for them with the programs and services that we have to offer."

JJC's Department of Adult Education & Literacy is located at the City Center Campus, Room 3019, 235 N. Chicago St., Joliet, IL 60432. For more information or to register in the ESL program, call (815) 280-1334 or (815) 280-1300 or visit [Adult Education](#).