

Elizabeth Zepeda – University Transfer House I

First Year Experience

After graduating from Cerritos High School, I knew that the jump to college would be both difficult and stressful. I was leaving behind my school, friends, family, and home, and going off to explore a new place, make new friends, learn new things, and set out my own priorities. I was aware of the amount of stress involved in making so many big changes in such a brief period of time. Luckily, with the help of the FYE program, not only was the transition to college much easier, it also helped me grow and develop as a college student.

For some students, choosing a career is easy. They know exactly what career path they want to follow and already have a major picked out. Personally, I went into college, not knowing what I wanted to do for the rest of my life, let alone, the career I wanted to pursue. Fortunately, the FYE program exposed me to a variety of subjects and tools that expanded my knowledge and, intimately, helped me pick a career. I never thought that I would be interested in pursuing a career in Psychology, but with the constant assistance, support, and motivation from teachers I was finally able to focus on a career.

Professors Ashe and Gaffaney's constant support and hard work to provide us with high-quality instruction motivated and inspired me to work harder in order to achieve my goals. Even while working a part-time job, school has remained my top priority.

Prior to college, my life revolved around academics, sports, and work. Putting so much emphasis on these areas prevented me from developing a stable social life. I never went to parties, school functions, or to school dances – including prom. Although, at times, I have regretted not doing these things, my spirits were immediately lifted when I realized that the FYE program would provide me with a fresh start. The opportunity to become part of a special learning community has since given me the opportunity to form study groups. Most importantly of all, these study groups have since developed into lasting friendships. In addition, through the experience of being involved in Learning Communities I have been provided with the opportunity to mature socially as a person. Today, I am no longer isolating myself from others, or afraid of “fitting-in”, instead I am eager to come to school and meet new people from various backgrounds, cultures, and ideas. I now look forward to collaborating and participating with my classmates and in as many activities as I can campus wide.

Not only has Learning Communities helped me participate more often in class lectures or outside in off-campus activities, it also motivated me to become a more well rounded student. Recently, my fellow colleagues and I have helped design the

Learning Communities display case featured in the library. Having experienced the program first hand, we wanted to expose other students on campus to the benefits of the Learning Communities Program.

Overall, the Learning Communities has provided me with all the essential tools I need in order to succeed in the future. I feel very fortunate being able to enroll in the Learning Communities. The knowledge I have acquired throughout this process has been very helpful. Throughout the semester I have learned all the different strategies that make a student successful in college, but most importantly I have acquired skills that will help me throughout my life.