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Short session has long been a mixed bag of legislation

FIVE QUESTIONS FOR ...

# Javier Gonzalez and Anna Bau

Student and teacher, The Literacy Alliance

**1** Were you concerned about your difficulties with learning to understand and speak English when you came to the United States?

**Javier:** When I moved to the U.S., I didn't have any prior knowledge of English since I didn't study it in my home country. Initially, I was not concerned about it, but an event made me realize the importance of communicating and understanding English.

During the first months of living here, I got lost and I didn't know how to communicate my problem. Luckily, I was helped by a kind person who guided me home, but that experience made me realize I needed to do something to learn English.

Soon after that, I started taking classes.

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**Carletta Harris and Halime Djimet attend a class offered by The Literacy Alliance last winter.**

**2** Has learning English changed the way you think about yourself or the world?

**Javier:** Yes, it has. I feel more confident about myself and my own skills.

Now, for instance, I can help other people who struggle with the language barrier, and I feel like I am giving back.

I also gained more respect for myself, and I feel I can accomplish more challenging tasks and goals. Learning English empowered me to explore new opportunities in my life, and it has opened the doors to new possibilities.

**3** What advice do you have for people who are struggling?

**Anna:** To those who are struggling, I would advise them to join a school as soon as possible, especially if they are struggling to learn English.

Often, people can feel hesitant and scared to start their journey, but there is nothing to be scared about. Many people share the same feeling and are in the same situation, but with the support of the class, the experience is more enjoyable and less intimidating.

**4** Why did you become an adult education instructor?

**Anna:** My prior experience includes teaching English to children and young adults, and when I had the opportunity to become an adult education instructor, it felt like a natural progression.

Being a non-native English speaker myself, I find sharing my knowledge and passion for English with my students extremely rewarding. It is a way for me to give back to the community that has helped me learn and become confident.

I want the same for my students, and I want them to feel empowered and confident in their skills.

**5** What is a common misconception people have about adults learning English?

**Anna:** Many people believe that there is an age limit to learn English, or any other language. Some think they are too old to learn, but this can't be further from the truth.

Adults can successfully learn and retain a new language, regardless of their age. It is truly amazing to see the progress an adult student can make, and sometimes it happens rather quickly.

If a student is motivated and determined to learn, they can successfully reach their goal.