

Si Se Puede: Yes, It's Possible

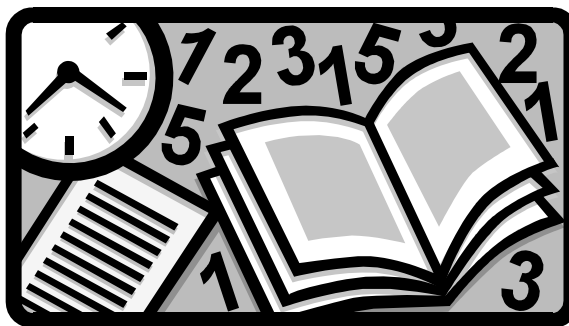
by Emma Banuelos de Banuelos

I am a woman from Mexico who has only eight years of education in my native country. I am now in adult school in Los Angeles, California, and it's difficult, but fun.

In my native country I didn't have the opportunity to continue with my education. I was born in a small town in Mexico. There wasn't any chance to go to high school. I started middle school, but I didn't finish it. I could go to continue my studies at a neighboring city, but it was far away from my town. Therefore, I was resigned to start working in a small market. Besides this, my culture said that I, as a woman, should stay home, get married, raise children, and clean the house. But always in my mind I was thinking bigger because I always wanted the best for my family and for myself. One of these days, I said to myself, I might have the chance to increase my education. Then I got married. I was only in my teens and the hope to improve my knowledge vanished. My husband didn't encourage me to go on with my studies. He takes after his father. He never had the chance to finish his studies. And besides that, he is the kind of man that doesn't like the idea that a woman knows more than he knows. He was my main obstacle.

When we moved to the U.S., I had a hard time because of the language and the change culture. I only went to ESL school for a short time, but I had the opportunity to get a bit of English. Then I had the

opportunity to get a job in a fast food place. I was as happy as a spring morning. During the first month working there, I got the employee of the month award. This encouraged me to work hard. Soon I was promoted to be a shift manager. Thus my salary increased a little bit, and of course, I had more responsibilities. I was determined to get ahead even in the face of bad times. Unfortunately, I had to leave my job for personal but happy reasons. I was pregnant. I couldn't work or go to school for a long time.



Now, since my sons are getting older, I want to excel in my studies. So far I'm an ESL student but I'm trying to get the Adult Eighth Grade diploma and the GED certificate. I am taking some high school independent classes for credit. My English isn't as fluent as I want, but I'm getting it little by little.

I wish I could demolish all the obstacles along my way. I am a capable woman and I will become more educated. I want to take advantage of all the opportunities open to me and not waste them. That's why I'm speaking out. I've learned about the importance of being informed and well prepared to play a good role in society and in my family, too.

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