

Project SOL (Students from Other Lands) Newsletter Year 2



A Note from the Project Directors




Dear Participants and Friends of Project SOL:

Project SOL is now in its third year and we will be doing our last round of student interviews and parent surveys this year. We want to let you know what the project has accomplished so far and what we plan to do in the future. As we view the early results of the study, we continue to be very excited about the project. We believe that the information that we are gathering will be helpful to all of us who are interested in giving students from other lands the best possible opportunity for success.

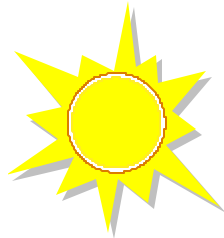
We also want to take this opportunity to say "thank you" again to the many students, parents, teachers, principals and school staff members who have participated in this important project. We hope you enjoy this brief overview of our progress as we look forward to the next phase of the project. If you have any questions, or just want to chat about the project, don't hesitate to call us. Our number is 305-919-5953 and we are always happy to hear from you!

Best Wishes to Each and Every One of You,
Dr. Mary Levitt, Dr. Jerry Levitt, & the SOL Staff

Project Goals

-  To learn what it is like for students from other lands to go to school in the U. S.
-  To learn how moving to a new country might affect students' social networks, their feelings about themselves at school, and how well they do in school.
-  To learn what schools can do to help students from other lands achieve success.

Florida International University



Project SOL

Accomplishments

What We Have Done

In the first year of the project, our staff interviewed 638 students in grades 3-4, 67, and 9 who had recently arrived in the United States from Argentina, Colombia, Cuba, Haiti, Jamaica, Bahamas, Cayman Islands, Dominica, or Trinidad & Tobago. We also gathered information about school achievement and behavior from participating teachers and from school system records. After removing any information that would identify individual participants, all information gathered in Year 1 of the project was entered into our computers.

During the past year, the students who were interviewed in Year 1 were interviewed again about their social networks and how they are adjusting to school in the United States. Students who were interviewed received new prizes and certificates of appreciation. As before, schools and teachers participated by providing information about the students' school performance. Parents also participated by completing a survey about their children's educational experiences and their family's adjustment. Parents who returned the survey received a \$25 Publix gift certificate.

What We Have Learned

Our findings so far indicate that adjusting to a new school in a new country is a challenge for most students. We are learning more each year about how social relationships, school experiences, and community conditions contribute to students' ability to meet this challenge. These findings begin to give us a general picture of how students from other countries adapt to their new school environments in the United States. We will know much more after we complete our final round of student interviews and parent surveys this year. We look forward to sending you a complete report of our findings as soon as possible.

Read on for more study info...

On the second page:

Some interesting facts about our project

What's next?

Brain Teasers

Here are some findings from the Project SOL Parent Survey that may interest you...

Last year we told you about some of our findings from the Student Survey. We thought you might want to know what parents said about their experiences.

Why parents came to the United States

When parents were asked why they came to the US, their answers were very much like those that students gave when the students were asked why their families came here. The most common answers were hope for a better life and to seek greater opportunities in work and education. Some other reasons were to escape political and economic problems and to join other family members already living in the United States.

Worries or problems

We also asked parents and students if moving to the United States had caused their family any worries or problems. About half of our parents answered "Yes" to this question. Several parents and students talked about the difficulty of leaving family behind and adapting to life in a new country. Parents were more likely than their children to mention language issues.

Parents' expectations

We asked parents whether life in the US is different than they expected. Over half of the parents who answered the survey said "Yes." Some parents thought things were easier, but others thought they were harder. When asked how life in the US was different than they expected, many parents talked about differences in customs and lifestyle, ease or difficulty of finding work, the fast pace of life here, differences in people, or language problems.

What's Next?

We will complete our final round of interviews this year, with new prizes for students and new Publix gift certificates for parents who return our surveys! We will then share the Project SOL findings with all those interested in the success of students from other lands.

We will send more news about the project next year, so stay tuned!!!

Brain Teasers

Find the School Words Below

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| T | A | A | P | Z | T | E | I | S | S | E | C | C | U | S |
| R | R | T | E | A | C | H | E | R | S | O | S | T | B | E |
| U | T | N | D | S | S | R | E | T | U | P | M | O | C | T |
| I | D | G | E | C | P | R | I | Z | E | S | N | M | O | A |
| F | N | O | T | H | C | S | T | U | D | Y | W | A | E | M |
| K | O | E | E | O | E | O | N | C | F | D | T | T | C | S |
| R | S | G | R | O | R | E | A | D | I | N | G | H | N | S |
| O | S | D | M | L | I | K | I | C | R | S | S | C | E | A |
| W | E | E | I | M | A | L | C | A | H | N | T | N | I | L |
| E | L | L | N | U | F | L | E | W | O | U | R | U | C | C |
| M | R | W | E | S | Y | L | I | M | A | F | O | L | S | O |
| O | N | O | F | I | E | L | D | T | R | I | P | I | C | R |
| H | E | N | L | C | R | T | X | O | S | E | M | A | G | K |
| J | C | K | T | A | H | I | S | T | O | R | Y | Y | E | S |
| E | Z | P | L | A | Y | G | R | O | U | N | D | O | H | A |

| | | |
|------------|------------|----------|
| history | learn | school |
| study | lunch | homework |
| math | science | success |
| prizes | classmates | teachers |
| coach | reading | fun |
| knowledge | music | computer |
| art | games | lesson |
| playground | field trip | |

Unscramble the Words

nkasc _____
 tenterin _____
 uesoh _____
 ghorineb _____
 tomcunimy _____
 ahceb _____
 mumers _____
 reetaliv _____
 tioncaav _____
 yptar _____

Answers: snack, internet, house, neighbor, community, beach, summer, relative, vacation, party, sports