

ADULT LEARNER SUCCESS STORY

Nelofar Khamisani | **Kansas**



Adult ESL classes allowed international student, Nelofar, to engage with others in the United States like never before. Nelofar taught English as a foreign language for 15 years in her home country of Pakistan as well as in the United Arab Emirates. She was confident that when she came to the United States as an international student pursuing her doctorate that she would transition quickly. However, when she arrived, she found that she only understood a fraction of what was being said, primarily because all of her training and teaching was in British English, not American English.

Suddenly, it seemed as if all of her knowledge and training were useless. In class, she was so nervous to speak for fear of messing up that she hardly participated in discussions, rarely socialized, and almost never asked any questions. She considered taking ESL classes, but the classes she found were too expensive. Struggling and isolated, she was completely overwhelmed.

When Nelofar heard about adult education, she searched for a local program and found the ESL program at Manhattan Tech Adult Learning Center (MTALC). After enrolling in classes, she quickly found her confidence and her ability to communicate in American English began to rise. Soon, she was socializing, making friends, participating in class, joining campus activities, chatting with strangers, and even presenting her doctoral work at conferences.

Nelofar's hopes for the future are to teach in higher education and to conduct research regarding the challenges English language learners face when they come to the United States. ■

Inspiring educators so adults succeed and communities thrive