It’s Time for the New IEP Exam to Come
By Salman Alghamdi

For many IEP students, the current way of the IEP evaluation is not accurate in measuring their English abilities.

The IEP should test the students in what they have done and what they have been prepared for in class. Therefore, each level should have its own final exam. In fact, the current IEP and the TOEFL final exams have become obstacles for some students to go on in this program. Even good students who really like the IEP and work hard, struggle to go on and graduate from this program.

“(The) IEP should test us in what we have taken in the class” Saleh Alsheha said. Mr. Alsheha was one of the good students in the IEP and he recently got dismissed because he wasn’t able to pass the IEP final or the TOEFL final exams even though he worked as hard as he could and maintained a high grade point average. Mr. Alsheha studied at the IEP for five sessions starting in Summer 1, 2013. He came to the IEP not only to learn English but also to graduate from the IEP and go to the Maurer School of Law at Indiana University to get his Master’s degree. He started the IEP at level 1 and he passed both levels 1 and 2. However, he was stuck in level 3. When he was asked how the new IEP exam will be different from the current one, he said “from the start up, everything is different. The goals are different, the way of measuring is different and the format is different.” It “will measure things that students are learning in that specific class” he said. For example, level 1 writing should use level 1 grammar, vocabulary and writing style which is usually description. In other words, the new IEP final exam is going to match the curriculum in order to measure the SLOs.

She agreed that the current IEP classes don’t really prepare the students for these final exams. She further explained “the IEP has a proficiency exam right now and it is very similar to the TOEFL.” However, Ms. Cosgrove is excited about the changes being made to the IEP exam, admitting “I think it’s time for it to come.” The new exam will better match what the teachers are teaching in class and will be a better measure of what the students are learning in the classroom. This is important to Ms. Cosgrove who said that as a teacher, “I want what I do in a class to matter”.

She was asked if teachers help the students who are in danger of the three-strike policy and she replied that teachers usually try to help students with their weaknesses during the office hours or through some social media if they need extra help. However, “when there are ten students in a class, you have to keep all the students in mind and you cannot just only focus on one,” she said.

The current IEP exam which was designed in 1990 doesn’t measure specific criteria, it measures the range of different levels, “so it’s much more like the TOEFL,” Ryan Lidster said. Mr. Lidster is a test developer who is currently designing the IEP exam with other IEP teachers. Though he agrees that the most important thing is the class grades, he thinks they still need to have an exam outside the class, which should be the IEP exam, to provide equal opportunities to all of the IEP students.

When he was asked how the new IEP exam will be different from the current one, he said “from the start up, everything is different. The goals are different, the way of measuring is different and the format is different.” It “will measure things that students are learning in that specific class” he said. For example, level 1 writing should use level 1 grammar, vocabulary and writing style which is usually description. In other words, the new IEP final exam is going to match the curriculum in order to measure the SLOs.

Mr. Alsheha thinks the final exams are not the best measures to assess the students on. He also said “in the IEP and TOEFL exams, I faced a lot of strange vocabulary that I had never seen in the IEP’s classes”. He suggested that if the IEP wants to keep the current final exams, they should develop the SLOs (students learning outcomes) of each level to prepare the “low-level students” to pass these exams. Mr. Alsheha’s instructor in his last session was Nisha Congrove who said, “He was a good student and he worked very hard…It was a pleasure to have him in class.” Ms. Congrove has been teaching in the IEP for five years and has taught level 3 several times.
New Brazilian Students in the IEP in Spring 2 Session
By Edna Sibo
Recently, Portuguese speakers have been gaining ground in the IEP. First, a group of Angolan students arrived nine months ago, followed by a Brazilian contingent. Now, a new group of seventeen Brazilian students joined the IEP in the beginning of 2014 Spring II session.

These new Brazilian students were welcomed by the other group of Brazilians, who helped them to adapt and do all the things they needed to do at first. “They were very helpful and made us feel so welcomed” said Luandson Silva, one of the new Brazilian students in the IEP. Marilia Alves, a member of the older Brazilian group that joined the IEP several months ago explained that the more experienced students “arranged a meeting to choose who would be ‘responsible’ for them.”

The transition from Brazil to the United States was difficult for some, but not for Silvia Rodrigues. “For me it was easy because Bloomington is a warm city,” she said. “I am a very adaptable person.” Although she hasn’t come with the group of Brazilians, Manuela Siqueira shares some opinions with the others about the United States. “This is very different from Brazil. The weather, the people, the relationship[s] among people,” she said. “In Brazil, people are intimate with people they don’t know, so that they can feel welcomed.”

In spite of the fact that they are all living in a different country, and they are all away from their families, all of them consider this a really good and enlightening experience. They hope they can learn and enjoy the most they can.

Angolan IEP students' futsal team loses Intramural Championship Final

By Miguel Vilão
Teamwork, high expectations, and discipline were the three guiding principles of the Angolan IEP students' futsal team through the Intramural Championship at IU for more than a month. Relying on such principles and its players' skills, the team managed to make its way to the final, which took place on Tuesday, March 11, at the IU Students Recreational Sports Center (SRSC). Although the team was unable to conquer the much coveted title and come out champions, they fell with most dignity, as they considered their participation in the final as the result of good futsal playing and luck.
The team was in great physical shape and arrived at the court in time and ready for the clash, though the particularity of the game had its effect on some of the players, making them uneasy. “I was feeling nervous at the beginning.” said number 10, Camu, a midfielder who is considered by some as the team’s best player. Despite the fact that the team was missing its captain, Herman Mesquita, who could not play due to internal disciplinary reasons, they showed no signs of insecurity before or during the game.

The first kick was given at 10 pm with both teams starting the game very actively, aiming at the goal with only one purpose, to change the score as fast as possible. The score was even until the middle of the first half when a slight distraction from the defense of the Angolan team led to a fast counter-attack from the opposite side, mostly composed of American IU students, with the ball ending at the back of the net; At that point, the score read 1-0. However, the goal did not seem to shake the focus of the Angolan side. Felipe, number 14 on the team, said that the Angolan team was quite used to coming back from behind. “Most of our games, the opposite team scores first, so we’re kind of already used to it and our soccer doesn’t go down.” Felipe believes the team quality of play actually increases after they suffer a goal. “Now things start!” he said.

It took the Angolans only three minutes to manage to even the score again from a fine finish by number 10, Camu, after a strategic pass from number 11, Augusto. Galvanized with their first goal, the Angolans increased their rhythm of play to crack down the opposition’s defense and take the lead, which they did after another remarkable finish by Camu, thus giving the Angolan side a 2-1 lead until the end of the first half.

As the second half came into action, there were no substitutions on the Angolan side, with the team deciding to maintain the same rhythm of the first twenty minutes. Not relying on their partial 2-1 lead, the team kept the fast playing dynamic of the first half. The game was taken to a very high level with both sides showing great technique and desire to come out as champions, thus providing an outstanding show to the supporters present at the place, who did not stop shouting and cheering up for both sides as they followed the action on the pitch.

It took seven minutes of the second half for the first signs of fatigue and frustration to show among the Angolan players, as communication among players seemed to fail, thus decreasing the team performance and organization. The solution seemed to be the need for some fresh players, and the first to be substituted was the defender Felipe, who gave his place to Mateus, number 8, another defender. However, the substitution proved to be untimely, and almost in a blink of an eye after it, the score once again moved with the Angolan side giving away their lead as the opposition found its way to their last stronghold forcing the score to a draw. The score table read 2-2.

More substitutions were made from both sides, each trying to maintain their players in the best physical condition possible, thus keeping either team from giving in spaces to the opposite side. Other Angolan players, Miguel and Aires, got into the action and despite their nervousness, tried to help the team achieve the most needed win. However, neither side seemed able to move the score as the game neared its end. The clock broke down two minutes before the end of the match with a goal from the American side after a fine long, powerful shot from midfield that the Angolan goalkeeper was unable to stop. Scorer of his team’s two goals, Camu said he almost cried, because “I wasn’t believing that the game had changed completely, I was… Man, we don’t have time!” he said. The Angolan side immediately made tactical substitutions in order to get a draw, but all efforts were useless, as the score was 3-2 for the opposition at the end of the 40 minutes.

Although it was not the same as winning the championship, the second place fit the Angolan team well enough for a first participation in the event. The team also acknowledged that it was a fair score in the end, mostly because the opposite team was well prepared and made more regular substitutions throughout the course of the game. With more Intramurals to come, the team promises to be in even better shape and achieve more in future opportunities.
Record number of students get perfect grade in IEP writing exam
By Ammar Abid

To the surprise of students, teachers, and administrators alike, eighteen of the IEP students got perfect scores on the most recent IEP writing exam at the end of last session.

“I’ve never seen [it] in my history, and I’ve been here for a long time,” says Paul Russell, Master Teacher at the IEP program. He jokingly added that the large number of high scores suggested those students “don’t need us anymore”.

People may think that something needs to be fixed in the system, but the fact that half of the students in level 7 passed their reading and writing classes with 8’s, the highest possible score, can actually mean that those students learned something.

Ryan Lidster, a PhD student in Second Language Studies, and designer of the new IEP final exams said “because [if] they passed our writing class and they continued to take courses and yet they still can’t pass the writing exam, what is wrong with the writing exam! That would be my concern.”

Several of the scores were given to students who speak Portuguese as their native language. Many of these Portuguese speakers in the IEP have a better sense of Western style academic writing and also more knowledge of English vocabulary than other students. Some of them even tested into the IEP’s higher levels when they began the program. That is why most of the 18 students are Portuguese speakers, with an exception of one or two from other levels. “Having an 8 wasn’t really a surprise,” said one of the highest scoring students. “I was happy, but not really surprised.”

The grading system can’t be blamed, because teachers meet for an hour before every writing test to set up requirements that need to be present in students’ essays for each level. The essays are graded blindly, meaning that the teachers don’t know the name or grade level of the student before they evaluate each essay. Each exam is read through and scored at least twice. If the two scores don’t agree, then a third and a fourth teacher reads the essay until a consensus can be reached.

“The teachers are pretty calibrated,” said Mr. Russell, meaning that they have an equal understanding of the requirements for each level.

Having a large number of student passing levels 7 to level 8 is in fact a sign that students have learned something from the previous session. Furthermore, the irregularities in the IEP’s evaluation process will be gone by the time the new writing test starts running in the beginning of Fall 1, 2014.

“Having an 8 wasn’t really a surprise”-said one of the highest scoring students.
Global to Local

IU, Big 10, and Community
By Felipe Silva

IU is known for having one the most supportive alumni when it comes to sports. However, even though most IU students are extremely supportive and can’t miss a game from the Big Ten championship, most of the students in the IEP have no clue what sport championships the university participates in. As Miguel Vilão, an IEP student, exemplifies when asked about the Big Ten “Not really, I don’t know what this tournament is.”

In order to fit into a new culture and truly absorb all it has to offer one may need to adapt and try new things. Sports are a big part of the local community culture, so if you wish to fit in, getting familiar with a few sports that the university participates in may be a good start.

The Big Ten is the current name of a league that mainly features universities from the Midwest, including IU. The Big Ten Conference, formerly the Western Conference and Big Nine Conference, is the oldest Division I collegiate athletic conference in the United States. Its twelve member institutions (which are primarily flagship research universities in their respective states, well-regarded academically, and with relatively large student enrollment) are located primarily in the Midwest, stretching from Nebraska in the west to Pennsylvania in the east. The universities that play in this tournament are the following: University of Illinois at Urbana–Champaign; Indiana University; University of Iowa; University of Michigan; Michigan State University; University of Minnesota; University of Nebraska–Lincoln; Northwestern University; Ohio State University; Pennsylvania State University; Purdue University; University of Wisconsin–Madison. The league competes in more than twenty sports including popular events like basketball, football, soccer and volleyball as well as more obscure competitions such field hockey and wrestling.

Games are hosted by all of the universities, so students here in Bloomington also have the opportunity to get the thrill of going to a game. Do not be surprised if you see crowds of students dressed in red and white moving along the campus. They are probably just going to a game and you should also consider joining in the fun. It is OK if you don’t really like watching sports because the experience is so much more than that. You share ideas and get closer to people while understanding a lot more about their culture. Talk to people who went to a game to know what they thought of it, and they will tell you how interesting the experience was for them. It may be going out of your comfort zone, but you may end up making a lot of friends and most importantly increasing your English skills.
Places you need to visit before leaving Indiana
By One Dollar

When people get to Bloomington, they usually enjoy its ambience, but after a while seeing always the same things bores people. Therefore, people assume the idea that Bloomington is boring and the state of Indiana is as well. People usually think about New York, Las Vegas or Miami when the purpose is to have fun. This article will show some places in Indiana that you might not know anything about.

The Indianapolis Zoo is a place mostly for people who enjoy nature and wildlife. The zoo provides a large variety of animals from butterflies and sparrows to giraffes and jaguars. "You can feed a giraffe, which is so cool", says Rachel Peterson, a visitor of the Zoo. Rated 4 out of 5 stars by the Trip Advisor website, the Indianapolis Zoo received some criticisms from visitors who went there during the winter and couldn't see many animals due to the weather. Yet, the Zoo continues to receive good reviews and lots of people advise a visit. "I did their in-water dolphin adventure in May 2012, which was such an amazing experience ", Rachel explains. The Zoo is 50 miles away from Bloomington. The price may vary from 7 to 15 USD and it's a fair cost for the exhibition of what they have there. "What a neat place!" she finishes.

“You can feed a giraffe, which is so cool”

Holiday World & Splashin' Safari is an awesome theme park and water park for people of all ages who enjoy water and roller coasters. Ranked number 1 in the list of attractions in Santa Claus, Holiday World & Splashin' Safari is a good deal for a family program. Celebration of Christmas, Thanksgiving, Halloween and 4th of July are the 4 themes available at the theme park with ride, games and live entertainment. The safari-themed water park includes the world's two longest water coasters: Wildebeest and Mammoth, numerous family raft slides and water slides, two wave pools, a lazy river, two family "tipping bucket" water-play attractions, plus dedicated children's slides and play areas. Even though the park is 105 miles from Bloomington, it's a good idea to check it out. The average price per person is 40 USD, but it's advisable to check prices at their website since they often change prices from season to season.
**Children’s Museum** is a museum located in Indianapolis. This museum provides children with a combination of learning and fun. The Children's Museum in Indianapolis is the largest of its kind in the world. Activities there include climbing a limestone wall, sailing a boat, exploring life under ground in the science area, checking out what's under wraps in the mummy's tomb, and creating your own sculpture with pre-formed acrylic orbs. Well-known also because of its good prices, the Children's Museum in Indy provides to its clients prices that vary from 12 to 20 USD to cover all-day activities. The museum is 40 miles away from Bloomington.

**Michael Jackson’s Family House in Gary, Indiana** is the place that represents a part of the humble beginning of the King of Pop, Michael Jackson. The place itself is not a museum. However, if you're a Michael Jackson fan, you would like to see and get in touch with things that represent Michael's childhood. Almost 200 miles are between Gary and Bloomington. It’s an amazing experience for MJ's fans and it’s free.
Where Are They Now?
IEP Alumni Reflects On His Experience
By: Herman Mesquita

Currently a sophomore at Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI), majoring in computer science, Wilson Singui, an Angolan student, began his English course at the IEP almost four years ago when he entered the program in Level 1. By the time he left a year and four months later, he had moved up to Level 5 and received a late admission to IUPUI.

Wilson considers the time he spent at the IEP as a very fruitful and enjoyable lifetime experience. He talked about some of his experiences in the IEP, such as the IEP session events. “We got to go different places and socialize with peers and teachers.” He says. But there was another thing Wilson liked in the IEP, the weekly events such as, language table, coffee hour, reading circle, grammar circle and the Saturday morning classes. He says, “I used to go to all of the events of the IEP, I wanted to improve my English and those events were very important in my learning process.”

Besides classes, Wilson was always trying to find a way to improve his English and with this, he got involved in several activities outside the IEP. For example, he started a soccer team with people from different countries. “The only way to communicate among the team was in English,” he says. Wilson also joined the IU Judo team and said that these experiences were very helpful because they made him push himself as much as he could in order to be able to communicate with his teammates. “It was not easy, but at the end of it I could see the benefits.”

During his time at the IEP, Wilson asked to have math classes at IU, however, he later dropped the class claiming that he could not manage the work load of the IEP and the IU classes all together.

Wilson has the IEP in a very high standard, “The quality of the program is undeniable.” He says, yet, he had some critics about the IEP. He defends that the IEP should provide the TOEFL IBT to the students due to the fact that some universities do not accept the one that his given by the program. Furthermore, Wilson also thinks that instead of two exams in the end of section it should just be one. Finally he states, “The IEP should help students to apply to universities, since it is a very complicated process.”

Wilson is just one of the many who came and benefited from the quality of the program and are now taking advantage of all the knowledge that they gained in the IEP in their academic and daily life. Despite some criticisms, Wilson acknowledges the importance of the IEP in his life. “I could have gone to another school, instead I went to the IEP and for that I am very thankful.” Wilson states.
Tips for Reading Faster

By Paulo Jaime

Learning a new language is not always an easy task. To succeed at this process, much effort is needed. For instance, people learning English have to struggle with a lot of challenges such as listening comprehension and pronunciation. In particular, many people consider reading the toughest part. To be a good reader it is not only necessary to have a good understanding of what you are reading, but it is also crucial to read quickly. Then, the question becomes: How to read more quickly? Here are some strategies that can help you:

**Practice as much as you can.** The best way to become a good reader is to read continuously. As Gail Pontius, who developed the IEP’s Extensive Reading program, explains, “You have to train, like you are training for a race. Get a series of reading [books] and time yourself.”

**Block your mind from the exterior environment.** Put your attention only in the text you are reading. It is very important because even a quick look will be enough to distract you and take away your reading focus.

**Try to skim before starting to read.** A pre-read will give you a little idea of the context and main ideas. Focus on key terms such as names or words that are defined. Identify transition words to understand the function of paragraphs.

**Do not read words individually.** Instead of reading word by word, try to read a group of words or full sentences if possible. Start out by choosing the amount of words that make you more comfortable and which you can easily understand; then, increase the number of words in parallel with your skills.

**Pay less attention to punctuation.** At this point, punctuation is not very important. So, being focused on it will decrease your reading speed. Your focus must be on words because they hold the meaning of the text.

**While reading, be as comfortable as possible.** Body posture can assume an important role. Try to be comfortable whenever you are reading. A chair with support for your back can be very useful. Avoid lying down while reading, because it is very likely that you will fall asleep.

**Use your finger or something else to guide you in your reading.** It will keep you from getting lost. The movement of “the pencil sharper” or finger should be combined with the movement of your eyes. And never move it back. If you do not understand something, just move on.
Opinions

Students Opinion on Language Table & Coffee Hour
By: Edna Sibo

Language Table and Coffee Hour are two activities from the IEP that take place every Tuesday from 5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. at the restaurants in Forest Residence Center, and every Wednesday at Read Hall, respectively. These activities focus on improving students’ speaking skills, and also give them the chance to get to know one another in the process.

Coffee Hour is the most attended activity between the two, and it is the one that got the best reviews by students. “Coffee Hour is the best thing in the IEP,” said Augusto Antonio when asked what he thought about the activity. “We can practice our English, and we can eat.”

“It’s my first day here, and I don’t like it already. All the Arabic speakers are together, and all the Portuguese speakers are together.” Suzaneth Miranda.

Students pictured at the Coffee Hour

However, there are also negative comments about it. Suzanete Miranda lamented “It’s my first day here, and I don’t like it already. All the Arabic speakers are together, and all the Portuguese speakers are together.” This is a very important issue that was cited by the majority of students.

Language Table is another activity that is less attended by the students than Coffee Hour. One reason for this may be that it is not during class time, and teachers don’t take attendance. Yet another reason may be because of its new location. Restaurants at Forest Residence Center are more expensive than those at Wright. “I preferred Wright Food Court because the food was less expensive” stated Ahmed Alzahrani.

Jayson Deese, one of the people responsible for arranging these activities says that “there are new restaurants at Forest with many more options than our old location.” When asked about whether or not there were any problems with the activities, he replied, “There haven’t been formal assessments.”

However, he noted that the IEP surveys students about the Language Table and the Coffee Hour at the end of each session because, “we want students to be involved and participate in the activities.”

Although there are some mixed reviews about the activities, it is undeniable that they connect and help a lot of students from the IEP. Even if some of us don’t see any benefits in it, we should try to attend the activities anyway. It is a way to help us, as well as others to improve our English, make new friends and have fun. Also, they have free donuts.
The IEP Voice faces lack of female representation.
By: Felipe Silva

Coming towards the end of the last IEP Voice issue two weeks ago something surprised me. The final picture with all the “pseudo-journalists” had only one representative of the female gender. Among a group of more than 10 people, Lyailim Kenchimova was the only woman who chose this elective. In one way or another, the IEP newspaper is supposedly the most “influential” elective of all, since it reaches all IEP students and staff. It should, therefore, attract many people regardless of gender, age and any other social distinction, but it did not.

As the IU anthropology professor Beth Buggenhagen discussed in one of her Anthropology lectures, “the best way to represent a certain group or a certain culture is with much cooperation with the group itself, by allowing it to expose reality the way it sees it.”

Similarly, Lyailim adds that, “both man and women can represent the female gender, but when a woman does it, she will be more accurate putting in more details than men. Men just see the general picture.”

More participation of women on the news means more awareness for the world, for sometimes, men do not pay enough attention to topics that concern women. TED talks have been featuring women, especially Muslim, a lot more, recently. “They have been talking about the hijab and human rights, because the western media makes it look as if women who wear it have no rights and live under male dominance,” says Lyailim. This is crucial for making western societies better understand the condition of Islamic women. They explain their rights and how they feel about the situation deconstructing stereotypes and clarifying issues.

As a man reads an article written by a woman, he gets, in many cases, a totally new perspective on the subject. This happens because women and men tend to think very differently. It is reasonable to assume, therefore, that the advantages are not only for women, men may also benefit from a larger female participation on the media. Men love saying that women are too complicated, maybe by reading more things written by women they will be able to decipher them.

Far in the past were left the times in which only men went up a stage to take female roles. Women fought and today they are allowed to do almost everything. Women seem to be the most pro-active social groups of all, and the IEP group of female students should not take this for granted by refusing the opportunity to represent themselves in a small but somewhat important media out-let.

The IEP Voice is:

- Ammar Ahmed D Abid
- Salman Abdullah N Alghamdi
- Emad Saad S Alsaeed
- Haozhe Chen
- Benjamin Luzolo Eduardo
- Jose Manuel Da Costa Francisco
- Paulo Francisco Ferreira Jaime
- Jessica Samira Lopes Matias
- Herman Jorge Pereira Mesquita
- Cleopatrio Soares Neto
- Carlota Fernanda Do Rosario Paihama
- Edna Veronica Da Fonseca Sibo
- Felipe Alexandre Guerreiro Da Silva
- Miguel Garcia Rodrigues De Vilao
Reviews

An incredibly popular dumb game

By Jessica Matias

For a couple of months or so, there was a game appearing from nowhere, Flappy Bird. The game became so popular worldwide once it came out that it was insane.

The game consists of a yellow, big-lipped, bug-eyed bird and green pipes displayed using really basic graphics. All one has to do to play the game is tap the phone screen. This sounds really easy, but the game is not. Indeed, it was a difficult game and even got some people frustrated to the point of violence.

A 28-year-old Vietnamese guy, Dong Nguyen created Flappy Bird. Nguyen did some computer programming for a living. When he first came in contact with a touch screen cellphone he got fascinated by the ease and capacity that these mobiles have. He thought about making a game for people that were always in a rush and didn’t have enough time to actually sit and play a “more elaborate game”.

The popularity of the game even reached the IEP. For instance among some of the Angolan students, when one students got 62 points, a high score for those familiar with the game, it sparked a race amongst everyone else to see who could beat that score.

Miguel Vilão is one of the Angolan students who got really into the game, and after almost everyone gave up on the game, he showed up with a staggeringly high score of 245. Asked about how he got this score and if he did not have anything more important to do he said humbly “It was only a 5 minute game”.

Even though the game was a viral sensation there are still some people that are not familiar with the game. “This is the first time that I have heard about the Flappy Bird” said Vance Schaefer, one of the IEP teachers.

After a few months from the release of the game, the creator, Dong Nguyen, decided to take the game out of cellphone stores because of the repercussion it was having. At first it was really famous, but then people started speculating that it was plagiarized. The main reason for the accusation was that the graphics in the game look like the Super Mario game from Nintendo. Contrary to people’s thoughts, Nguyen did not hack into the system to steal the basics of the game, he really took the time to create it.

Although a little challenging, the game looks kind of stupid, and it is a great waste of time, unless one doesn’t have anything more important to do.

According to an official video about the game, it was played by 5 million people around the globe. That is a case to say that the game had a “15 seconds of fame “phase.”
12 years of slave, a story about freedom

By Benjamim Eduardo

The movie 12 Years A Slave shows up on many lists as one of the best movies of 2013. Based on a real story, the movie portrays the life of Solomon Northup (played by Chiwetel Ejiofor) at the times of slavery in The USA. The film won three Oscars in the categories of best picture, best-adapted screenplay, and best supporting actress for Lupita Nyong’o.

The movie tells the story of a slave man in the 1840s. Solomon was a free black man living in New York with his family. Because he was black, he was captured by two white men and taken to Georgia to work as a slave. For twelve years, he worked on a couple of properties. Fortunately, Solomon eventually met a white man, also an employee, but not a slave, who helped him to write and send a letter to New York so that Solomon could be found and rescued by his family. Once home, Solomon decided to write his story in a book that inspired this great movie.

The movie has good quality. It was recently rated as 8.3 at IMDB and it is still passing on the movie theaters. There are some shocking scenes, but nothing to provoke a nightmare to children. Of course, it may not meet the expectations of everybody. “It is a good movie, but I was expecting something bigger. He looks like a happy slave” said Herman Mesquita, an IEP student who also watched the movie, and would prefer “Django Unchained” if choosing a movie about slavery in USA.

“Django Unchained” presents more shocking scenes, although such scenes really represent the way life was in the lands along The Mississippi River during the time of slavery. The movie Django Unchained portrays the story of a slave man recently set free by a bounty hunter, and they start to work together. While the bounty hunter tries to kill a couple of brothers wanted dead or alive, Django tries to rescue his wife who is working as a slave in a cotton farm. The movie has received good criticism and is ranked 8.5 in IMDB.

Nevertheless, 12 Years A Slave is reasonably appropriate for people who like drama. For IEP students who are curious about American history in the time of slavery, both movies are recommended, but 12 Years A Slave is especially good because it is the recreation of a real story. The movie lasts a little more than 2 hours, but it is a story worth this time.

“It is a good movie, but I was expecting something bigger.”- Herman Mesquita
There are so many books to choose from in such a huge variety of topics and languages. That makes choosing a book a relatively hard task. In this article we bring the book America the Beautiful, written by Dr. Benjamin Carson. Dr. Carson is a well known African-American neurosurgeon, best known for his pioneering the hemispherectomy — the separation of conjoined twins joined at the head. For more than three decades he was Director of Pediatric Neurosurgery at the Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore, and since 1990 he has written five best-selling books including his latest America the Beautiful.

Although mainly written for Americans themselves, this book provides a lot of information that will give international students the possibility to see a different America from the academic perspective of our daily lives. And since the IEP community consists of a great number of conservative and religious students — mostly Muslims and Christians; and the author is a conservative professional himself, most students will probably relate to the *nonpolitically correct* ideas and solutions the author suggests. In general, this book is highly recommended to anyone who would like to know more about America, “the child of every other nation”, as the author suggests.

*America the Beautiful: Understanding What Made This Nation Great*, was published in 2011. It is a modern day reflection on what made America a world power. The book starts with something one could call a time travel. The author takes us back to ancient Rome, Egypt, Greece, and Great Britain to explain what made those civilizations great, as well as what made them decline. “As they began to decline, they all experienced some similarities,” Dr. Carson suggests, including “an inordinate emphasis on sports and entertainment, a fixation with lifestyles of rich and famous, political corruption, and the loss of a moral compass”. Often presenting ideas that sound politically incorrect, the author also discusses and tries to provide answers to what he calls “moral loss” in American society. And goes over the definition of marriage, as example of that.

Furthermore, he examines the idea and impact of a “moral compass” in other important areas of American social life such as healthcare. He writes, “We [physicians] should be concerned not only about the health of individual patients, but also about the health of our entire society.” Drawing on his own expertise in the medical field, the author tries to answer the question “Why is healthcare so expensive?” in the US, as compared to some other countries, like Australia and Saudi Arabia. Dr. Carson insists on the idea that health is a people’s right and a government’s responsibility. And he advocates for inclusive healthcare policies that contrast with the unsteady and profit-driven policies of insurance companies that currently lead the public health market in the country. Overall, America the Beautiful is a book that inspires some controversy and discussions.