

# *Myra Cerecero*

*Deaf Education*



*Class of 2015*

When I was fourteen years old, I discovered a passion for sign language. I thought it was amazing and absolutely beautiful when I saw people communicating with their hands for the first time in my life. I volunteered as a Spanish interpreter at a school for the deaf in Atlanta. I began taking sign language classes so that I could communicate with the students at the school. I truly enjoyed learning sign language and I knew I wanted a career that had something to do with sign language. I wanted to be a teacher for the deaf, however, at seventeen years old I had not planned to attend college because I had no idea what college was. I heard a couple of teachers in high school talk about how fun it was, but that's all I knew. I was so close to letting my ignorance stop me from reaching my goal.

As I thought about what I was going to do with my life after high school I thought about two teachers who had impacted my life. The first teacher I thought about was one of my elementary school teachers. She always yelled at me, she was always frustrated with me, she did not know what to do with me, and she gave up on me. Why might you ask? Well, I did not understand a lot of English words. I did not know how to pronounce a lot of the words. I had no prior knowledge of the topics she expected all "Americans" to have. She once told us to color "lightly" on a piece of paper; I had never heard that word before, and I thought it meant the complete opposite. She yelled at me so hard, I was in tears all the way home on the bus. From that moment on, I tried my hardest not to ever speak in school. I only spoke when I was spoken to, and I refrained from asking any questions. That experience made me want to be an educator so I could help others who had been in my shoes. I wanted to help students who struggled with school. I wanted to do for others what that teacher had not done for me. I had actually thought about being a teacher the moment that happened to me, but it was a silly thought, I had never

seen a Mexican teacher before, so I quickly dismissed that idea. Then I thought about my sixth grade teacher, whom was the complete opposite of my second grade teacher. This teacher believed in every single one of his students, and truly cared for every single one of us. For the first time I felt like I mattered in a classroom; for the first time I was excited to go to school. I asked questions for the first time, I wanted to talk, I wanted to be involved. I wanted to do that for other students. I wanted to be just like that teacher. I wanted to make school a positive learning environment for everybody.

After I reflected on my sixth grade and elementary school experience I decided I would make my dream come true. I would go to college and become a teacher for the deaf. My senior year of high school I decided to take a test I heard many students talk about. I heard it was a required test to get into to college so I signed up and took it. I had done pretty well on my S.A.T's, and I was proud of myself for doing so well on a test I hadn't studied for. I told my parents I wanted to go to college and they were very excited. My parents always encouraged my siblings and me to do our best in school; however, they did not get involved in our education often. My parents rarely helped us with homework mainly because of the language barrier and expected me and my sister to manage our own education. Despite their inability to help us, they always motivated us and expected us to do well. I finally signed up for a tour at the University of North Carolina. I loved their deaf education program and everyone was really friendly. The financial adviser said I would be accepted because of the unique area of study I wanted to focus on, however, I would have to pay out of state tuition and I really did not want to take out loans.

I then looked at the only school that had my major, Valdosta State University and decided to apply. I received my acceptance letter December 2011. I was extremely excited, but I was also very nervous because I did not know how I would pay for my education. I did not have H.O.P.E scholarship when I first started school so I was not sure how I would get loans. My mom and dad said they would pay for school as long as I did well. I was nervous about moving four hours away from house because I had never been away from my house my than two weeks. My parents are both extremely young; so we have always had a close relationship. When I went to orientation I was miserable. It was way too hot. There were way too many mosquitos and I just did not want to be away from my parents. Every time I got upset, however. I thought about how much I LOVED sign language and how I needed to follow my dreams. See, I am the oldest in my family; oldest sibling, and oldest cousin, so I knew I had to set a good example for everybody.

In May 2011 I graduate from South Gwinnett High School, being the first generation high school graduate of my family. I was so proud of myself as I walked across the Phillips Arena, I had never felt that way before. My dad was generous enough to pay for my first year of college so I did not have to take out any loans. I was extremely happy. I saw my father cry for the first time in my life as I waved goodbye to him, and went inside of my dormitory. I cried often as I felt very lonely, I knew nobody in Valdosta, but I knew it was a great opportunity to make new friends. I got the H.O.P.E scholarship right away, and I still have it as of today. I have

finished my first block in the education program and I am doing exceptionally well. To this day I have not met a Mexican teacher, but I hope I can look at myself in the mirror and see one soon. I also hope to soon be the first generation college graduate in my family. My dream is getting closer to be a reality every single day. I would like to thank my mother, and father for being so supportive emotionally and financially. I would not be where I am today if it wasn't for my parents. They are always encouraging to do my best, and I am so very thankful for their support. Really, I would like to thank my whole family for all of their support, my brother, Jerry Mosso and my sister, Gabriela Mosso, and all of my aunts and uncles. I would also like to thank my sixth grade teacher, Mr. Myrick, for all of his patience and inspiration.

I have learned so much in college; I have learned a few things the hard way, but I hope that others can learn from my mistakes. Here are some tips for future college students that I know won't disappoint:

1. Get to know the campus. Walk around and explore. Don't be lazy! You'll be surprised to see what you find.
2. Be nice to your roommate, after all you will be spending ten months in the same room as them. Get to know them and become friends if possible. Communication is important; if you do not like something about them, let them know nicely. (In my experience all best friends that have roomed together have ended up-not best-friends by the end of the year, so be careful)
3. Buy a GOOD agenda! Ladies I know you'll want to buy the beautiful ones, but those are not always the best ones. Buy an agenda with lots of space and a good monthly calendar.
4. When you get your syllabus READ it! You may find hidden messages about grades, attendance and tests. Also write down EVERY single date in your planner. I know I know, you have really good memory and you can remember everything, but just write it down! With five to six classes, there are many assignments you may forget about, and completely forgetting about an assignment is the worst feeling.
5. Go to class! The most disappointing feeling in the world is working hard in a class and then failing because your attendance points are zero.
6. Join a club. Get to know your fellow classmates. It's really resourceful when you know people in a class. If you are ever absent, they can take notes for you, and study for tests together.
7. Don't forget to have fun. Not too much fun, but enough fun so that you do not stress yourself to death.

I hope you have enjoyed my story and I hope these tips are helpful. ☺

