

ENL classes help students adjust

One-third of the Pike student body is enrolled in the school's English as a New Language program

by Michelle Santiago-Salazar

[Pike Hi-Life](#)

Nov. 30, 2022



Junior Jazmin Barcedos (left) and freshman Valeria Ramos work together during Sarah Van Stone's English as a New Language class. *Photo by Michelle Santiago-Salazar*

Tania Perez, a senior, came to this country three years ago from Puebla, Mexico, with the struggle of not knowing English. She currently does not live with her family, which is difficult when everyone around her seems to be surrounded by the love of their families. Perez is one of

the 1,146 students enrolled in Pike's English as a New Language (ENL) program, which provides support for English language learners or students that don't speak English as their first language.

"That's about one-third of the school," said ENL teacher Katie Martin.

Learning a new language can be really challenging, Perez said. "It's different because you don't have any relations with English. You only speak Spanish all the time," she said.

ENL teacher Sarah Van Stone said her students face a variety of challenges that a general education student doesn't worry about. "A lot of students will struggle with communications, basics in English, speaking English, and writing the productions of English," Ms. Van Stone said.

For Perez, her struggles in school have often been with communication - even with those who speak Spanish.

"There are Hispanic people who speak Spanish but then just talk in English," she said. Even with these difficulties, Perez said, the ENL classes make her feel supported and help her understand the English language more.



A map and sign in an English as a New Language classroom highlight the different countries students come from.

Photo by Michelle Santiago-Salazar

ENL students come from a variety of countries.

“We have a lot of students who speak Spanish, French, Asian, Creole, and all different types of languages,” Ms. VanStone said. For example, sophomore Abel Ntuma speaks five languages: Portuguese, English, Spanish, Lingala and Kikongo.

Freshman Joe Ceba is part of the ENL program. His father is from Mexico and his mother is from El Salvador. Ceba, who speaks Spanish and English, said he has had a good experience in his ENL classes.

“ENL teachers really do help you a lot. They will be there for you and to help you with your struggles,” Ceba said.

The teachers help students by giving them additional support and making sure that they are following the guidelines established by the Indiana Department of Education. This establishes equity and ensures everyone receives the same help.

Ms. Martin said the ENL department is significant because all students deserve a right to an education. “We want to make sure that students are getting all the modifications and accommodations they deserve,” said Ms. Martin.

Some of the difficulties that students struggle with are tests, which often feature challenging words they don’t understand. ENL teachers assist content-area teachers with modifying these tests to make them more accessible to the ENL students.

If a parent or guardian indicates on enrollment forms that a language other than English is spoken at home, the student takes a test to determine whether they qualify for ENL services.

Ms. VanStone said that the ENL Department also helps students by giving them shelter instructions, meaning that they learn at a slower pace than regular classes. They receive extra support from teachers and extra time on assignments.