

IF families take first step toward overcoming language barriers

By Robert D. Martin, USAWC Public Affairs Office 04 October 2017



From left to right, the ESL beginner class consisted of Tatu Betram, Tanzania; Houreya Sampana, Mali; Zakia Tamar, Morocco; Binita Khadka, Nepal; Zehane Abdoulaye Hamidou, Niger; Instructor Mrs. Sharon Haseman and Ashlea Cordell - Lowe, Sponsorship



From left to right, the intermediate English class: Dinora Juarez, El Salvador; Janneth Romero, Colombia; Desislava Gyudzhenova, Bulgaria; Vanesa Lanz Rujana, Argentina; Maja Radulovic, Montenegro; Marina Monaco, Italy; Martina Mikulova, Czech Republ



From left to right, the intermediate English class: Dinora Juarez, El Salvador; Janneth Romero, Colombia; Desislava Gyudzhenova, From left to right, the advanced ESL language classes. Admita El Osta, Lebanon; Alketa Allajbej, Albania; Cathrine Klinge

Everyday communication for family members of international fellows living here in the United States can be puzzling, confusing and, at times frustrating, as they try to navigate the day-to-day world of the Carlisle community.

However, the Army War College International Fellow's program has a solution, and offers an 8-week English as a Second Language course taught by certified ESL teachers. The course includes a Beginner, Intermediate and Advanced Level English class, to meet the needs of the spouses. Spouses who participated are evaluated and placed with others who have a similar understanding of the English language.

As an example, the beginner's English class discussed how to express feelings, say the time or handle U.S. currency, and covers Basic English language concepts such as vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, conversation and comprehension.

“The program is more than just learning a second language,” said Col. Frank Intini, International Fellows Program Director. “It is really an opportunity for a diverse community of spouses to build friendships from literally around the globe.”

“It is very easy for families to go into a foreign country and stay in the protection and comforts of their home and not venture out,” said Intini to the graduates. You all have taken the option of learning more and exploring more, and I want to thank you for participating in this program,” he said.

“In the beginning of the program the spouses were shy and uncomfortable about communicating, but we get into a method of talking to each other and go over some basic language.” said Andrea Jacobsen, ESL instructor. “The most important thing is practice and the bonds they form with each other. Through those bonds language skills develop, it’s really wonderful.”

“The advanced course subjects were very interesting because we can use them every day,” said Admita El Osta from Lebanon. “They were about fashion, how to use your credit card, how to shop at a super market, how to make a doctor’s appointment. They were very practical and very useful.”

“Apart from improving my English -- which was important -- the opportunity to meet a lot of spouses from other countries which otherwise would have been impossible was special,” said Begona Bernal of Spain. “We spent a lot of time learning about different countries and their cultures, and by the end you become very close. For me it has been a very good experience.”

“It’s a shame we are finished but we are going to see each until June, we are on the same team, we have the same problems, we are in a foreign country so we have to get closer together,” she said.

Intini commended the graduates during the ceremony held at Upton Hall.

“I hope this course was worthwhile and each of you are not only improving your skills in a second language but also had a chance to see what the local area has to offer. I hope this course open doors for you and now that this course is over it is not the end of your exploration. You will continue to get together and go out to see some of the sites in the area,” said Intini.