

Reading and writing have always been an important subject in my life because of the difficulty I sometimes face with them. This is because I wasn't born in the United States, I was born in Brazil. When I was 6 years old, we moved here and I started elementary school in Orlando. In elementary school after I read my first novel my schooldays only got better.

I remember when I was younger, I had just moved from Brazil and had just started elementary school. Every Tuesday at a certain time an administrator would walk into our classroom and take all the ESOL students to a special room. I would always feel embarrassed when I had to stand up and walk out the room with only one other kid. I don't know if I felt embarrassed because I didn't know English and had to be taken somewhere to learn it or because it made me look like I needed extra help with something. I just know every Tuesday after lunch time I would always be feeling anxious to being taken out of the classroom. When the administrator would take us to the ESOL classroom she would sit us down at a computer and make us do this introductory to English class on the computers. This was the part I hated the most because we weren't allowed to talk to anyone in the classroom and it was so repetitive and boring. It wasn't like I didn't know how to speak English I just didn't have the best grammar, so they kept me in the program until finally 3rd grade.

When I was in 3rd grade our teacher assigned us a reading project where we were supposed to pick a book greater than 200 pages and read it within a month. I wasn't that excited about this project because I had never read a book that long and I hated to read. I finally found a book that I thought was interesting called *Holes* by Luis Sachar. The book was about this kid that was falsely accused of stealing a pair of shoes and has to go to a boy's camp where they dig holes. I loved this book so much that I spent every day reading it and was able to finish it within a week. When I told my teacher that I had finished the book she was astonished and told me to take the AR test for the book to see if I fully comprehended it. When I passed with a 90% my teacher was surprised that I had finished the book that fast. She asked, "Dante aren't you in ESOL, how were you able to read this book so quick." I told her that I was able to finish it so quickly because I actually enjoyed the book. Later that day she pulled me aside and told me that she was recommending that I be dropped out the ESOL program because it served me no purpose anymore.

When I heard that there was a chance that I didn't have to take the ESOL class anymore I was ecstatic, ever since I started the program I had dreamed of the Tuesdays that I would be able to hang out with my peers in class instead of being isolated in the quiet ESOL classroom. My teacher gave me a letter that I had to get signed by my parents before I was able to stop taking the ESOL classes. I showed my parents and they were just as happy as I was because they knew how I felt about the classes and how much I dreaded them. The next day I walked into class and gave my teacher the signed letter and was able to stop going to the ESOL program.

Being able to finish my first novel gave me such a feeling of accomplishment I can still feel it if I think about it. That book was able to tell me a story and was able to help me get out of a class that I hated since I started. I felt like a weight was taken off me when I was able to get out of the ESOL program.