

Silvia Rojas



Silvia Rojas may not be a traditional student, but she comes bearing a wealth of knowledge and life experiences that make her journey at UNC Charlotte unique! Silvia is 44 years old and was born in Lima, Peru. Her major is Special Education and Elementary Education with a Child and Family Development Minor. She immigrated to the United States in 1987 and was studying at Florida International University, close to beginning her Student Teaching internship, when her life took a drastic turn. She was diagnosed with endometriosis after two years of experiencing excruciating pain with no diagnosis, which unfortunately resulted in cancer when given the wrong type of medication.

Silvia reflects on this experience and her eventual journey to Charlotte:

“The cancer took a while to leave my body, however as soon as I hit my 4 year mark I jumped in my car and moved to Charlotte, North Carolina. Being the state where the Accountability and Curriculum Reform Effort (ACRE) was initiated, I was all too happy to start my new life as a student.”

Silvia has truly kept her eyes on the prize throughout her journey. Her goal is to graduate as a Special Education teacher and later become a Child Life Specialist. She deeply enjoys the ability to be with and help children, and feels privileged to have worked with children throughout most of her life.

She shares with us some wise and useful perspectives on her journey, dreams, life experiences, and benefits of being an adult student at UNC Charlotte:

“I understand that I am not your typical student, but if anything, I am a student with much experience in children and life that is not found in textbooks. I understand children, the way I understand myself. I know about their fears, hopes and expectations, as well as understand their needs or frustrations. In many ways to be with a child, a part of you has to remain a child, and I am not ashamed to say that this describes me perfectly.”

Because of everything I have gone through, I have a unique perspective on life. I always see the good in people. I am patient, understanding and kind to everyone, especially children. Even though I have not been a full time student for many years, I have stayed in tune with current curriculum relative to my field of interest – Special Education. Not only do I teach Faith Formation at my church (for the past 3 years) but I am also a member of the Disability Committee and volunteer at Levine’s Children Hospital (Child Life Department). Being curious by nature, I have a passion for research and new techniques. On a personal level, I enjoy crafts, traveling, reading, music, writing poetry and short children’s stories. My creativity and sensitivity allows me to see beyond the surface and I know that is a winning combination that will hopefully make me a great Special Education teacher.

Being an adult student is an experience I could have never imagined. I have earned the respect and admiration of the other students, and we are able to cooperate with each other, on many levels. Another benefit, that has made an impact, is that teachers see me as someone who is honestly passionate about her career of choice. Not only am I above the age of most teachers, but I have also managed to keep many of them as friends. I love school, and I love that I am appreciated for who I am, and what experiences I can share with others.”

When asked about a word of advice she would give to other adult students, Silvia said:



“If it is your lifelong dream to comeback, do it! You owe this to yourself! The teachers are amazing! Not only will you be getting an education, but because of our maturity, you will be able to see things in a different perspective. I was a bit shy about making new friendships, but I have managed to make friends in all of my classes. Don't be afraid to ask questions, if you don't know something is okay, and the best part is that teachers are always available to meet with you to discuss your needs.”

We are happy to see Silvia excel in her studies and admire her passion for the field she soon would like to join. Her future plans are to complete her minor in child life, take her teaching certification exams, and apply for the Levine Children's Hospital Internship in Child Life. Silvia hopes to one day pursue a master's degree, possibly in Counseling!

Silvia's story is an inspiring account of what determination, passion, and a go-getter attitude can provide you in Education. We hope you've enjoyed reading more about one of our many talented adult students. If you are interested in sharing your journey or success story with us, please visit: <http://oases.uncc.edu/student-information/student-success-stories> to learn how.